

# Holston Home Receives Bradley County Support

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IN HONOR of Flavis Casson, Deb Miller offered a generous donation to the Holston Home during the Holston United Methodist Home for Children Benefit Luncheon. The money will go to the music program. From left are Lee Casson, Nancy Casson, chair of Friends of Children Committee; Miller; and the Rev. Charles Hutchins, Holston Home for Children vice president of resource development. Banner photo, HOWARD PIERCE



HOLSTON HOME PRESIDENT Bradley Williams provides some information about the home during the Holston United Methodist Home for Children Benefit Luncheon. Banner photo, HOWARD PIERCE

BRYAN JACKSON, Holston Home board of trustees member, introduces Scottie Mayfield during the Holston United Methodist Home for Children Benefit Luncheon. Banner photo, HOWARD PIERCE



Scottie Mayfield delivered the keynote address. Banner photos, HOWARD PIERCE



THE REV. TIM BRACKEN of First United Methodist Church opened the Holston United Methodist Home for Children Benefit Luncheon on Wednesday. Banner photos, HOWARD PIERCE

THE HOLSTON HOME Youth Choir perform at the Holston United Methodist Home for Children Benefit Luncheon. Banner photo, HOWARD PIERCE



“The Sweetness of a Child” was celebrated with chocolate, ice cream and brownies to support bettering the lives of youth through the Holston United Methodist Home during the Friends of Children Luncheon held Wednesday.

Stories of young people who had found success through the home’s programs were highlighted at the event.

Program graduate Cory Walker said he gained life skills through the independent living program and Beacon School.

“It’s keeping me on the right track,” Cory said in a video.

He is now enrolled at Carson-Newman University.

The Holston Choir sang showcasing the home’s music program.

Holston is located in Greeneville.

“For our region, we primarily use Holston for the PTC (primary treatment center) assessments and evaluations. They also have the only PTC for females in the state,” said event committee chair Nancy Casson.

Children from Bradley County have gone to Holston. In the past year, 37 PTC children from Bradley County have been served by the home.

“They have averaged three to four placements a month, so that is why Cleveland/ Bradley County support Holston Home,” Casson said.

Guest speaker Scottie Mayfield, who retired from Mayfield Dairy Farms and is active in organizations in Athens, began his talk by reading aloud the stories of children. Some were orphans, some had been mistreated and unwanted — all were lonely.

“My name is Jeff. I hate the word orphan. I am one and to me the word encompasses, well, negative feelings that I have associated with the death of my parents,” Mayfield read.

The letter continued that orphans are not necessarily the tough troublemakers many people think they are.

“We have an enormous capacity for love, and can even be empathetic to the feelings of others,” Jeff stated.

Mayfield then contrasted the stories of these children with his own childhood.

“My name is Scottie Mayfield, and I grew up like many of you with a different story than those I just read. I grew up with caring, loving parents,” Mayfield said.

He recounted how he started working on the family farm at age 11.

“My starting pay the first year was 35 cents an hour,” Mayfield said. “I will never forget my first paycheck. It was for three months and it was \$66. I was rich.”

He recounted a special trip with his father for his 10th birthday.

“There are many stories of my mother and my father, family times and the memories are great,” Mayfield said.

Mayfield said Holston Home is a place where positive memories are created for youth as they receive support and help in developing into successful adults.

Friendships with staff and other supporters of the home give the youth opportunities to be loved.

Pulling from the biblical “Book of Luke,” Mayfield read the story of Mary and Martha. Martha was busy preparing dinner and complained to Jesus that Mary was not helping her. Instead, Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him.

“Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken from her,” Jesus said in the passage Mayfield read.

Mayfield explained the verses had always been hard to read, “because I am much more of a Martha than I am a Mary.”

A new perspective came to him as he thought of the verse in the context of Holston Home for Children.

“Jesus was not condemning Martha. His response was protecting Mary, recognizing that someone had to do the preparation,” Mayfield said.

He explained that those who work at the Holston Home were “the Marys in the room, the rest of us may be Marthas.”

Mayfield said those who support Holston are providing the needed preparation through financial and other means.

He said the staff has chosen “the better way, helping our children.”

“I am glad that we have and hope that we will always have enough of you Marthas so that we can let these Marys continue,” Mayfield said.

Holston Home focuses on education, work, worship and recreation.

Bradley Williams, Holston Home for Children president, said the children served through the home come from a variety of backgrounds.

“We want to give every young person, first and foremost, the opportunity to form a real and meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ,” Williams said. “We believe that Jesus is in the life-saving business, and he can heal and grow and have bright futures for these kids.”

Williams said as staff “does life together with these kids,” they build trust to where they can share about Jesus, and the youth will listen.

“We want to approach life as every moment is a teachable moment,” Williams said.

Programs also require the youth to do chores to develop a good work ethic. Recreational opportunities ranging from sports to music lessons are also offered.

The four pillars came together for one 20-year-old at the home during a mission trip to Guatemala. While serving as a preschool teacher and assisting with vacation Bible school, the woman experienced a closeness to God she had not felt before, and discovered new purpose for her life.

Bryan Jackson, a member of the Holston boards of trustees, said the ministry “is often a last resort for some of these folks (children and families) who so badly need to be put back together ... to receive the support that we can give them.”

“Holston United Methodist Home for Children provides hope and healing for a brighter future by sharing the love of Jesus with children and families struggling with life challenges,” according to the event program.

Those in attendance were asked to consider making donations to the Holston Home for Children. A special donation to the music program at the home was made in memory of Flavis Casson and in honor of his son and of his wife, Nancy Casson.

The event was hosted by First United Methodist Church.

More information about the work of the Holston Home can be found at [www.holstonhome.org](http://www.holstonhome.org) or by calling 423-638-4171.