

HOLSTON HAPPENINGS

newsletter
WINTER 2025



PROVIDING HOPE AND HEALING
FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE BY
SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS...



A publication of
Holston Home for Children

FROM THE PRESIDENT



HOLSTON HOME'S MISSION:

Holston Home for Children provides hope and healing for a brighter future by sharing the love of Jesus with children and families struggling with life's challenges.

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I might be a little weird but I always love shows or movies that move back and forth in the timeframe of the storyline and plot. They seem to capture and hold my attention better. Hopefully, you do too because I'm going to do a little of that with you. First, Merry Christmas to you and your family as I know that's where we are real time and I LOVE Christmas! I know I would normally relate to the Christmas story and I believe I am... just differently. God sent His Son as the perfect gift to us and did so in such a sweet and humble way. And yet it was also with the most purpose of any gift ever given – to be Immanuel “God with us.” Jesus came and lived to show us God's nature and heart and then asked us to follow Him in living out the gospel and God's love with the whole world – Joy to the World and Light in the darkness!

Lance suffered a stroke as a baby, and it led to his left arm being drawn up with limited use. As a child this condition made him a target for some of his peers to make fun of him. His mother left him and his dad due to her addiction to alcohol and drugs, and Lance fell into a pit of anger and bitterness which can too often happen when a child faces so much hurt and rejection. Next, he began to get into trouble at school and fall behind academically. Along the way, Lance says he met a Student Resource Officer, Jerry Lawson, who started encouraging him to not be defined by his mistakes or the hard circumstances he had faced. Officer Lawson also told him about Jesus and the gospel started to crack the walls Lance had put up to protect himself. Sadly, just as he was starting to make some progress he and his dad were evicted, and they became homeless.

One of the most tragic stories happened shortly after Jesus was born. Herod the king ordered that every male child two years old and under living in and around Bethlehem be killed. I can't fully comprehend that atrocity or the evil that the enemy employed to bring this kind of pain and suffering for those families. That same enemy is still unleashing evil to destroy families all around us today, and yet God keeps sending His people to bring the hope of Jesus into dark and despairing situations.

Paul reminds the church at Corinth that, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.” (I Cor. 3:3). We see the same process playing



out often today at Holston Home for Children. Mr. Lawson planted seeds in Lance's life and then it was time for the caring staff at Holston Home to water them as Lance came to live here about six months ago after finding himself homeless. One staff, AJ Crawford, really connected with Lance early on and would spend time working outside and doing campus projects with him. Although you might

think having only one physically able arm and hand would limit this young man, everyone was blown away by his incredible work ethic and pride in doing manual work. This work ethic has become so important to Lance that he has worked closely with AJ and some of his peers to serve others including a widow with landscaping needs. Since living with us Holston Home has secured physical therapy for Lance along with Botox injections, and he is gaining increased mobility and strength in his wrist and hand. He will be continuing this treatment for his arm also over time.

Working side by side is a great way to have rich conversations with kids. AJ has been able to have beautiful discussions about the Lord and His love and goodness with Lance while acknowledging the brokenness and difficulties of the world around us. Lance has given his life to the Lord and recently

“Jesus shows me the way to deal with things. It can be tough, but He tells me I can get through it.”

followed Him in baptism. Lance shared in his testimony, “Jesus shows me the way to deal with things. It can be tough, but He tells me I can get through it.” Indeed, God is causing the growth! And the purpose of God’s gift to mankind that first Christmas is given day after day to child after child two thousand years later.

Thank you for your prayers and gifts for the children living at Holston Home. You are a critical part of the purpose of Christmas as well as the planting and watering that happens in the lives of our youth. I give thanks for you and your commitment to caring for children, and I pray God’s blessings as you and your family celebrate the holidays. Merry Christmas again and I pray you experience God’s very best in the new year!

In Christ,



Listed below are prayer requests some of our youth have publicly shared. Please pray with us.

- I’m struggling with depression and anger, and I want my family back.
- Pray that I get a foster home with my sister and that my mom can go to a drug program. Pray that I can eventually go live with my aunt. Pray for my sister to make better choices.
- Pray for me to go home to my dad and that I can stop giving in to peer pressure.
- Pray that God will guide me back home and to do what He finds is best for me. Pray for my friend, who is struggling to get better.
- I’m struggling with my depression and not wanting to forgive people that hurt me.
- I’m thankful for my nana and pray for a happy life when I transition home and that I don’t lose any more family.
- I’m thankful for my mom trying so hard to get me home. I’m struggling to sleep at night and with my anger issues. Also pray for my uncle who has cancer to get better.
- Pray for my sister and brother who are in a foster home. It’s hard being away from my mom and dad. Pray that me and my sister and brother get to be in the same house.
- Pray that I can get a job that pays enough, and for relationships and friendships to be restored back at home. Also pray for me to be strong and healthy as well.
- Pray that God will give me a good future and bless me. I have trust issues, sleep issues, and am struggling to believe that everything is going to be okay.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

George and Pat Pickel are faithful partners and wonderful friends who reside in the Knoxville area. George served in the U.S. Air Force, is a Vietnam War veteran, and was an educator at various trade schools. During George's tenure in the military, he assisted orphanages in Japan and Vietnam as time allowed. Pat was an office manager and accounting staff person who worked for different practices in the medical field. Both are retired now.



George used to visit Holston Home with his parents, Blaine and Monnie Pickel, on Sunday afternoons in the 1940s and has a lot of memories from those early days. His dad, Blaine, owned and operated a service station in Johnson City and treasured Holston Home's work. In addition to their regular financial gifts, George and Pat have shared their love for our ministry by using Holston Home stationery when writing personal notes that they mail to loved ones. We recently caught up with George about their long-time relationship with the Home.

When and how did you first connect with Holston Home?

Many years ago, we were introduced to the home with our parents. My dad would always fill his suit pockets with nickels and dimes and share with the children. They later told us that was called sharing with those who had less.

What excites you about Holston Home's ministry?

The Home provides for those in need. Where else could these children go if they did not have the Home to rely upon? The Home brightens the hearts of young people and creates a new person.

Why do you support Holston Home?

God speaks to us each month and says it time to share with those who have less. You've got your paychecks and ask yourself what am I going to do with this money? I look at it and say, 'It's Holston's time.'

What do you want others to know about Holston Home?

The Home is a place where young people can go and be showered with love by a staff that is so well educated in preparing a new way of life for the needy.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Yes. Each month as we prepare to share with those who have less, I encourage others to add a few extra dollars for those needy hearts at the Home. There are so many ways you can show your appreciation because the kids are well worth it. That's what it is all about!



Holston Home is celebrating 130 years of caring for children and families. Thank you for supporting our mission!

STUDENT SUCCESS

Both of Damian's parents struggled with addiction when he was younger, and they spent time in prison. Damian's homelife was erratic – full of fighting and strangers coming in and out of the house. There were many times when Damian did not have food, and he eventually went to a foster home.

When Damian turned 13 years old, his dad was released from incarceration and then entered a recovery program. To his credit, Damian's dad faithfully attended recovery meetings, kept a job, maintained housing, and because of his good choices, he was able to get Damian back.

However, as Damian's dad worked to rebuild his life, Damian's behavior became rebellious. Damian carried a lot of sufferings and was constantly angry and confused. Unfortunately, poor decisions led him to juvenile detention where he lived for a couple of months before he arrived at Holston Home.

Damian will tell you that coming to Holston Home was the watershed moment that he needed. During his time in the residential program, he worked on building a stable relationship with his dad, peers, our staff, and most notably, Jesus Christ. Damian also renewed a relationship with his mom.

Additionally, Damian worked in our café on campus serving food where he was known as being very personable!

"He would work the charm in the food serving line so well that I thought he was running for mayor of Holston Home," quipped Ella Price, hospitality director.

Damian's time at Holston Home was marked by significant growth and we are proud of his progress. Damian's hope when leaving campus was that he would be able to share God in his hometown and

be a light to his friends there.

With a passion for music, Damian planned to write songs about his experiences and share how the Lord carried him through life's challenges.

Damian lived at Holston Home for 183 days. By the time we provide the basic needs, caring staff, counseling, and education, the cost of care for kids like Damian is great and your support is needed.

Will you prayerfully consider giving to support youth like Damian?



HOW CAN I HELP?

- **Donor Advised Funds (DAFs), Appreciated Stocks, and IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)** – are meaningful ways that you can express your support to make a lasting impression on youth served by Holston Home. Our EIN is 62-0515531.
- **Become a Foster Parent.** The need is great and the families are few. Would you prayerfully consider caring for a young person in need of a loving Christian family?
- **Become A Mentor.** Spend at least 1 hour each week investing in the life of a child.
- **Give an In-Kind Gift** such as personal hygiene items: shampoo, body wash, and deodorant, as well as bath and hand towels and body poufs. River Academy is always in need of school supplies such as composition notebooks, pens, Clorox wipes and facial tissues. For a complete list of items, visit our website at www.HolsonHome.org/wish-list-in-kind-giving/

*Please call Susan at 423-787-8753
if you're interested in supporting Holston Home
for any of these needs.*



Holston Home for Children
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To protect the privacy of our youth, photographs of children in this publication may or may not represent actual youth residing here.

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