

Our mission is to deliver educational and cultural programs to children, families, and communities, primarily in Southern Appalachia. We serve by sharing and spreading centuries-old traditions of song and story.

## A Taste of Milk & Honey

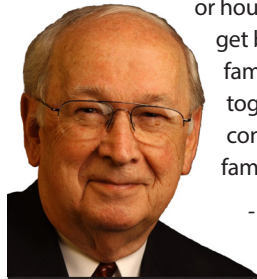
**My Vision...** My vision for The Craddock Center is clear and firm: that we keep our pledge, in some way, every day, to enrich lives through service.

This means that all who work in and through the Center, paid and volunteer, infuse every act and word with the grace of God. This is achieved not by an abundance of religious talk but by being gracious as God is. To be gracious is to welcome all without distinction. Some have and some do not; we make no distinction. Some give and some receive; we make no distinction. Some have been here for generations and some arrived yesterday; we make no distinction. Some are young and some are old; we make no distinction. And every one of us has been, is, or will be a minority person, so who would presume to make distinctions?

To build such a community is difficult but not impossible. It takes time and effort to build trust so that those who have known only isolation or rejection will accept hospitality. Some are so needy that they have not realized what or how much they have to give others. A few come running but many must be sought, and none are to be forgotten.

The program of the Center is determined by need. In some cases, it may begin with food, clothing, or housing, but that is only the beginning. There is no commandment, "Thou shalt barely get by." Every life needs enrichment and that means classes in health care, job training, family economics, child-rearing. It means music and art and storytelling. It means getting together to listen to each other's stories and to enjoy one another. It means to include the confined, by visits, cards, calls, and gifts. It is to say, "This is a good place to live, to raise a family, to build friendships, to grow old, and to die." This is my vision, and to it I give my life.

- From Dr. Fred Craddock, February 2004



## From the Executive Director

A non-profit's vision and mission are its reason for existing, its purpose, where it is "headed". A successful nonprofit always remains focused on the vision and mission. In a successful and healthy nonprofit organization, like The Craddock Center, vision and mission are not just words on a plaque on a wall – they are alive every day. Dr. Craddock's vision for The Craddock Center is truly clear. His words are powerful and insightful and provide the framework for what we have done and what we should do going forward towards our next 20 years.

**So, what should we do going forward? When you read Dr. Craddock's vision above what ideas come to mind?**

For me, we continue to focus on the children. That is a no brainer. These children need us. They need the "music, the art and storytelling" that Dr. Craddock writes about. What we do to help them prepare for Kindergarten is needed. The statistics support what we do and a child ready for Kindergarten is more likely to succeed throughout all of their schooling.

We are **The Craddock Center for Child and Family Enrichment**. Our history on the "Child" part is amazing! We have served approximately 26,000 children in our 20 years and given away approximately 100,000 books.

That brings us to the "Family" part. It appears that Dr. Craddock has given us some direction in his vision. We have an amazing meeting space on our campus. I see Dr. Craddock's hope for "classes in healthcare, job training, family economics, child rearing coming to fruition" happening in that space.

The Board of Directors of The Craddock Center and I are currently working on the strategic plan for the next three years. I know that Dr. Craddock's vision will resonate in our hearts and minds as we perform this planning.

Dr. Craddock touched so many of you over the years. And because of what you have done these last 20 years, The Craddock Center has touched so many in our southern Appalachian community. Thank you!



YEARS ANNIVERSARY

## Why the Title Milk & Honey?

Have you wondered why the newsletter for The Craddock Center is titled Milk & Honey?

**The following is from Dr. Craddock in the first edition of Milk & Honey in February 2004.**

"OK, so *Milk and Honey* is a bit unusual as the title for the newsletter for The Craddock Center. It's not that I have anything against titles such as *Herald, Messenger, FYI, Courier, or Report*. Those are quite acceptable: clear, straight forward, free of puzzlement. However, this monthly piece will be more than a report or journal. Rather, every issue

will attempt to remind the reader who we are, what we are attempting, and the vision before us. In ways direct and indirect, we will always center on our purpose as stated on the logo: "Enriching Lives through Service." Our aim is to lift lives above barely getting by; to add some joy, relief, and pleasure; to enlarge sympathy, understanding, and aspiration.

And so, *Milk and Honey*. The image is biblical. To a people in slavery, God promised "a land flowing with milk and honey." To a people wandering in a desert, the promise was of "a land flowing with milk and honey." To a people exiled, marginalized, and without place or power, the promise was "a land flowing with milk and honey."



## With Thanks For, and Apologies to, Dr. Fred Craddock

The first time I heard Fred Craddock, it was at an Advent service at Oxford College of Emory University. The Sonny Houston Band was playing. Steve Darsey was leading the choir and the singing. Fred Craddock was telling "stories with a message" as only he could do.

This particular story ...I forget. The story's message ... unforgettable. In a single sentence at the end of this story Fred Craddock said, "If you lean your ladder against the wrong wall, it won't matter how high you climb." To me, it was a powerful message about life. Yes, I have leaned some of my ladders against the wrong walls, but Fred Craddock's words helped me find more of the right walls.

With apologies to Fred Craddock's memory, our resources...our gifts...our dollars are like our ladders. For most of us there are some dollars left each month after the bills are paid. We decide where to put them...what purposes or efforts to support by leaning our dollars in support of them.

Dr. Craddock did not give his "ladder message" to raise funds for any cause. I apologize (but not too much) for taking his message and making it a Craddock Center message to urge you to lean some of your ladders--some of your support--to The Craddock Center's work for children and families. My latest check/ladder to support the work of The Craddock Center has just been mailed.

**Mark Musick, an alumnus member of The Craddock Center Board**

## CRADDOCK CARES Expands

Craddock Cares is an outreach program sponsored by The Craddock Center. Craddock Cares was formed in 2020 to support children, women, and the elderly who find themselves in emergency situations, displacements, and other significant crisis events. The Fannin County Sheriff's Department placed an order for 30 kits, and we delivered! Our Craddock Cares kits include selected items placed in 2-gallon, water-proof bags. The bags are designed to be easily carried by first responders for emergency use when transporting or caring temporarily for children or adults in transition. One Craddock Cares kit includes: Lightweight tote bag, Blanket, Bottled water, Stuffed animal, Toothbrush and toothpaste, bar soap, Hand towel, Hat, and gloves (winter months).

The program has now expanded to include all first responders as well as agencies working with the homeless. In March and April 2021, we gave kits to the: Gilmer County & Fannin County Fire Departments, Fannin County Family Connection, Faith, Hope and Charity, and Good Samaritan Catholic Church.



**Thanks to Georgia Mountain Health** for donating toothbrushes and toothpaste for the kits!



# Summer Send Off 2021

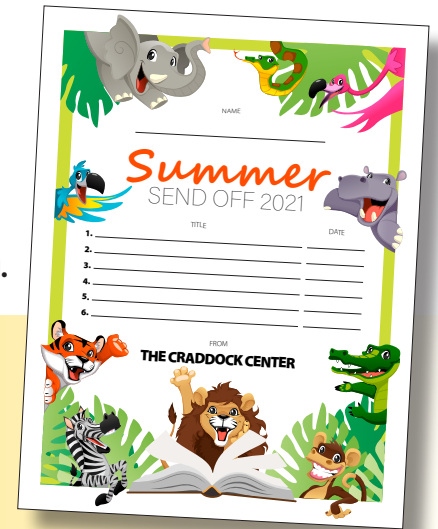
On May 13th, The Craddock Center launched its newest program...'**Summer Send Off 2021**'.

Each of our 1,100 children received a bag of goodies as their pre-K and Head Start programs ended for the Summer. The goal of this program to provide our children an opportunity to continue learning even as their formal learning programs suspend for the Summer. The Summer reading achievement gap can be closed by a child reading 4-5 books during the Summer.

Each child received a brand-new 'Golden Classic' book, a book reading log to record the books they read during the Summer and arts & crafts supplies needed to make a couple of hand puppets.

**Thanks to South State Bank of Blue Ridge, Sue & Mike Hriljac, Joanne Verbery, Richard Zigler, Camille Boyd, Richard Coombs, Lewis & Sandra Derose, and Donna Jones for their monetary support of this program.**

**Also, thanks to the following volunteers for their work on making this program a success: Sue & Mike Hriljac, Pat Kassal, Beth Roberts, Milly Hastings & Steve Stevens, Joe Cantwell & Patti O'Dell.**



## From a Teacher and Supporter of The Craddock Center

**Best wishes to all of you as you deliver Happy and Hope! Wish I was there to help!**

I do hope this check will buy a few books for the "Summer Send Off 2021"! I am eighty-five-year-old retired first grade/reading teacher who really knows and understands how important reading during the summer when school is not in session really is! And how much these new readers will lose over the summer if they aren't reading. **Camille Boyd**

## A Big Thank You...

**Summer Send Off 2021** is the newest program of The Craddock Center. Our ability to do this program is due largely to the generosity of the North Georgia Community Foundation (NGCF). The NGCF awarded The Craddock Center **the NGCF Coronavirus (COVID-19) Relief Fund at the North Georgia Community Foundation**. We received a grant of \$3,000 to support the purchase of new children's books to be provided as a part of this program.

Founded in 1985 by a group of citizens interested in encouraging philanthropy and strengthening communities, the North Georgia Community Foundation was built by the community to serve the community and exists today to strengthen our region by inspiring giving, investing in nonprofit organizations, and mobilizing action.

The NGCF recognized The Craddock Center's need and desire to provide the children impacted by the pandemic additional educational opportunities during the Summer of 2021. The Summer Send Off program will help reduce the reading gap that children encounter as they leave pre-k and move onto Kindergarten.



Happy & Hope... We Deliver



## Thank You to the Harrison High School FBLA

Claire Hellman, a sophomore at Harrison High School, and on the Executive Board of the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) reached out to us in March. She let us know that her club's community service project for March was to collect brand-new children's books for The Craddock Center.

She said they were inspired to pick us as their project because of her church's, Due West United Methodist, involvement with The Craddock Center and that her father, Mark Hellman, and her late grandmother, Louise Hellman, volunteered with us. Mark is currently a member of our Board of Directors and Louise was very active in our bookrooms.



## So, Today We Come Together to Dedicate This New Sign

Thousands of cars pass by The Craddock Center on Hwy 515 every day and unfortunately most probably do not know we are here. Or what we do. It is important to improve the visibility and awareness to those drivers and to our community.

The new sign was dedicated on Friday, 4/30...the birthday of Dr. Fred Craddock. This special event was attended by Nettie and John Craddock, many of our Board members, donors, friends of The Craddock Center and the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce.

Our new sign, featuring our new logo, is nearly 20 feet tall and 8 feet wide and blends very well into the woods that surround The Craddock Center.

The graphics were designed by Michael Kilpatrick and the rustic wooden frame was designed and built by Sisson, Carder & DuPont. The stonework was done by Nick Patterson's Outdoor Services. The sign was donated to The Craddock Center by Michael Kilpatrick and Kirk Cameron.



It is a new sign, but our mission remains the same and steadfast.

We dedicate this sign to Dr. Fred Craddock and Nettie Craddock for the work they started and the example they continually set for us.

We dedicate this sign to the children and the families that we serve. For 20 years The Craddock Center has responded to their needs.

We dedicate this sign to our volunteers and those that work at The Craddock Center. We could not do what we do without YOU!

We dedicate this sign to all of our donors who make what we do possible.

### LET US PRAY

Almighty and gracious god, thank you and bless all those gathered here today. And blessings to all those that support the work of The Craddock Center that could not be present today.

Please bless us and guide us in all that we do to serve the children, the families, and our community. And blessings to the children, their families and to those in need in our community.

Always keep us humble in all that we do.

Please use this new sign as a way to spread the good news of the work of The Craddock Center.

We ask this in your name. **AMEN**

# The Craddock Center



## YEARS ANNIVERSARY

20 years ago, this month on a bright sunny day, the Angel of the Chosen was asked by God to find a person for a very special assignment. The Angel of the Chosen had always done a good job doing God's bidding and this special assignment was very important. God said, "Your next assignment is to go to the Southern Appalachian mountains and find a preacher, who is a great storyteller, who has a passion for children, and who loves words. This preacher must have a faith that can move mountains, hope that can change lives and love that will never end." The Angel of the Chosen said, "This is a tall order, God. I don't know about this task."

But before long the Angel of the Chosen came back and said to God, "I have found the preacher, Dr. Fred B. Craddock, in Cherry Log, GA and have asked the Head Start teacher in Ellijay to invite him to tell a story to her class." God smiled, and said knowingly, "perfect!"

Of course, the children immediately stole Dr. Craddock's heart. The next thing you knew he had located professional storytellers and musicians to give those precious children words through songs and stories. Then he realized that these children needed new books to keep, and so a bookmobile was purchased to take donated books to the children. The Craddock Center grew from its inception in Gilmer County to 6 other counties in north Georgia, plus Polk County, TN and Cherokee County in NC. During these past 20 years thousands of preschool children have had their lives enriched by the services provided by The Craddock Center.

When it was discovered that children were suffering from hunger on weekends, a Snack in a Backpack program was started. When folks needed assistance to keep their heat on, The Craddock Center provided funds. When furniture was needed after a fire or eviction, The Craddock Center started The Living Room. When the children needed warm hats, The Craddock Center invited knitters to send handmade "boggins." Wherever Dr. Craddock preached around the country and told the story of The Craddock Center's outreach ministry, new support would follow: wooden toys from Texas, Florida, and local woodworkers, knitted hats, books, mission trips to provide summer day camp and the necessary funding to continue to make a difference in the children's lives.

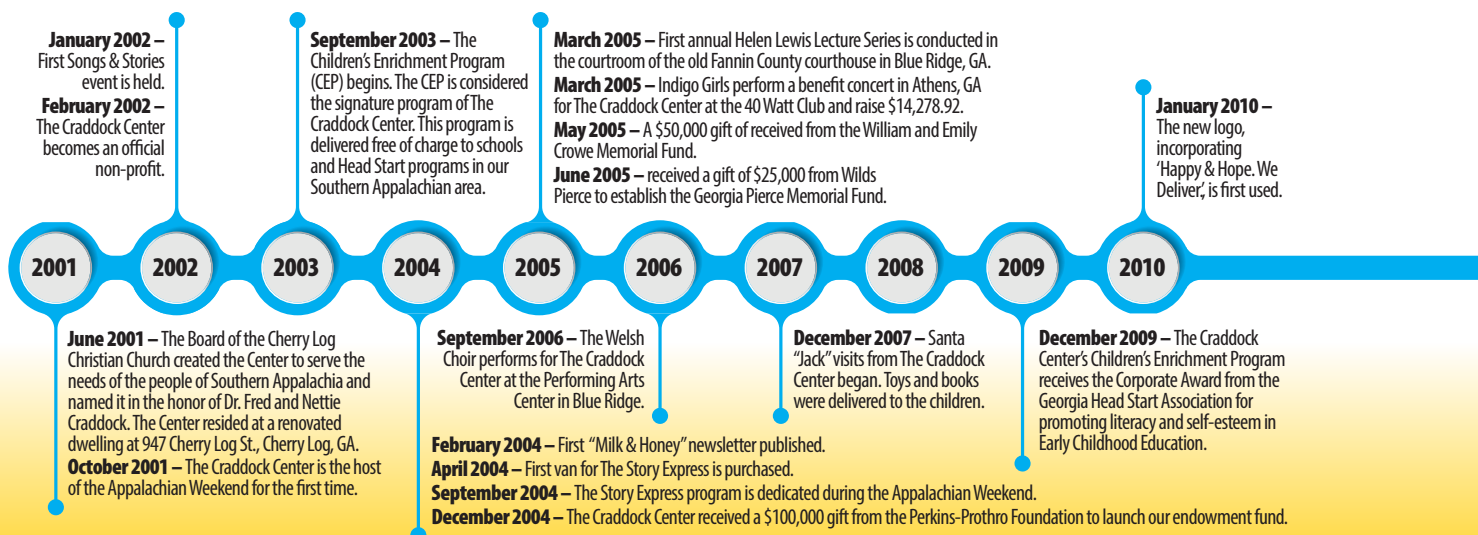
When I came to The Craddock Center in 2007 and learned that many of these children had never had the experience of a visit with Santa, my husband, who is a professional Santa, agreed to visit all the schools served by The Craddock Center. What a joy to watch the children light up with excitement when Santa enters their classrooms. Dr. Craddock loved to hear stories of the children's responses when enrichment was brought into their lives. One of his favorites was when Miss Amanda had a child with autism in her music class. At the beginning of the school year, he never spoke nor participated in the classroom activities. He simply laid on the floor. But when Miss Amanda came with her keyboard and started singing, he crawled over and lay in front of her with his little hand on her foot as she kept time with the music. As the weeks passed, he started sitting on a chair beside her, and before long he began singing. By Christmas he was standing with the class, singing joyfully in the program for the families. His grandmother, who was raising him, was in total shock when she saw him perform. The classroom teachers said that Miss Amanda's music was the key to unlock his ability to communicate, participate with the other children and thrive.

Another story Dr. Craddock loved was of a little 4-year-old boy, who all year long had rarely made eye contact, and just shuffled along with his shoulders stooped, looking at the floor. But when he was given a new handmade "boggin," and Miss Crystal held the mirror for him to see himself, he stood tall, turned to her with a big smile, gave her two thumbs up and excitedly said, "Miss Crystal, now I am one cool dude!"

There are thousands of stories just like these, testifying to the amazing difference The Craddock Center has made, bringing "Happy and Hope" to these precious children of God in Head Start and Pre-K in Southern Appalachia. We are so grateful to all the donors and volunteers who support The Craddock Center, making sure Dr. Craddock's legacy continues to provide what the Angel of the Chosen called him to start 20 years ago.

Blessings upon The Craddock Center, and all who keep the mission alive!

**Dr. Trisha Lyons Senterfitt, Former Executive Director**





# The Craddock Center



YEARS ANNIVERSARY

## Milk Crates and Books

My adventures with The Craddock Center began in 2013. My wife, Rev. Amy Lignitz Harken, was Senior Pastor of the Mattapoisett Congregational Church (UCC) in Massachusetts. She was working to find a mission opportunity and organize a summer mission trip for members of the congregation. Amy reached out to The Craddock Center, and Camp Craddock was on the books for summer 2014.

In the course of planning the scope of a week long mission trip, it became clear that there was an opportunity to help The Craddock Center devise a system for using dozens of milk crates to sort and organize hundreds of donated books for distribution via the Story Express van. Piles of books and stacks of milk crates were on the floor and tables of a garage that was attached to the house functioning as The Craddock Center offices, located adjacent to the community garden and grounds of Cherry Log Christian Church (DOC).

The assignment was given to me: build a shelving system that made it easy to use the milk crates to sort and transport books. A traditional books shelf was found to be problematic. It was too difficult to place books into a milk crate that was resting upright on a shelf. Besides, once in the upright crate, it was too difficult to see what books were in a given crate. Placing the milk crates on their sides was also problematic: books tended to fall out. I was asked to build shelving that would allow books to be easily sorted, allow contents of the crate to remain easily visible, and keep the contents of the crate safe from falling on the floor.

Pipes! The idea actually came from looking at shoe racks that use pipe racks to organize closets. What if milk crates would sit on pipes at an angle? I am glad to see that the idea worked well enough that the system was relocated from the garage of the old location to the sorting rooms of The Craddock Center at the top of the hill on Fred Craddock Drive.

The Craddock Center has been a fulfilling part of my life ever since that Camp Craddock week in June of 2014. I continue to enjoy working with volunteers and fellow board members deliver happy and hope.

**Bruce Harken**

To All Craddock Center Friends Past & Present:

## Congratulations on this being The Craddock Center's 20th Year Anniversary!

It's hard for me to believe it has been that long. I think of all the supporters, volunteers and children's lives that have been affected in this span of time. My family moved to Blue Ridge in the late 90's from the Georgia/Carolina area where I had been teaching music enrichment classes for children for over a decade. Shortly after moving to Blue Ridge, we decided to open Lindsey's Malt Shop on Main Street. That is where I first met Dr. Craddock, one of our favorite customers. I always hoped there would be time for me to stop and chat with him during his visit. We never discussed my music career, or the possibility of a Foundation being started in his and Nettie's honor. Mostly we talked about the activities of mine and Craig's four children and local news.

In the Spring of 2002, during the national "Week of the Young Child", I offered to present a musical concert for the children at Fannin Head Start. A reporter and photographer attended and took a photo of me singing with the children. The article appeared in The News Observer that week. The next day Dr. Craddock called me and said, "Tell me about your music program for children". In July I received a letter from Dr. Craddock saying the Board of the Craddock Center voted unanimously to sponsor a weekly music program in the Head Starts of Fannin and Gilmer Counties for the 2002-2003 school year.

From this point on Dr. Craddock and I were "joined at the dreams". The program grew every year and activities for the children were expanded and enhanced by the generous donations of all the supporters of The Craddock Center. Being a part of The Craddock Center has been one of my life's greatest blessings. Thank you to everyone for this unique opportunity.

**Pam Lindsey**

**October 2011** – Former U.S. Secretary of Education, Dick Riley visited The Craddock Center and observed the Children's Enrichment Program. Dr. Craddock used this time to stress the importance of early childhood education.

**October 2013** – Dr. Fred Craddock's book, 'A Taste of Milk & Honey', is released. This book compiles nearly 10 years of stories and articles from the Milk & Honey newsletter.

**June 2016** – First mission group for Camp Craddock stays in the "dormitory" at The Craddock Center.

**April 2021** – Dedication of the new sign on Hwy 515.

**May 2021** – The "Summer Send Off" program begins. This program is designed to promote reading during the Summer.

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

**June 2014** – The first Camp Craddock! Mattapoisett Congregational Church put on a traveling day camp in three locations.

**April 2015** – Celebrate the move of The Craddock Center to its current location (and the Center's original home).

**October 2015** – First Christian Church from Tyler, TX donates the original storage facility for The Living Room.

**April 2018** – First charity golf tournament.

**September 2018** – The Bear mascots and Happy & Hope introduced.

**October 20, 2018** – First annual storytelling competition.

**March 2020** – Craddock Cares program begins.

**March 2020** – Ethel and Clay Hock donate the second storage facility for The Living Room.