

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.



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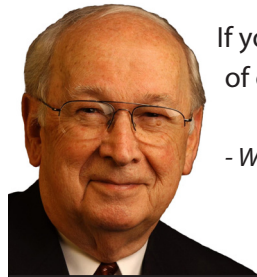
# MILK & HONEY NEWSLETTER

## A Taste of Milk & Honey

**WE WAITED OVER AN HOUR** for the start of a meeting that never started. There were nine of us, we had no agenda, the conversation was random, the subject matter ranging from trivial to significant. But for some reason the vocabulary was limited. You might think that we had been so seduced by speed communication that we could no longer make full sentences. Single-word responses and short phrases abounded. And surprising, at least to me, was the frequency of the use of one word: issues. Listen to this: I have issues with my boss; I have issues with my daughter's friends; I have issues with the school system; I have issues with my doctor; I have issues with my heart, kidneys, with my left knee, and on and on. How many times during that hour was "issues" used? A conservative estimate would be four million, six hundred eighty-three thousand, four hundred seventy-one.

I think I was the only one of the nine who did not use the word. And why not? I already had a word that functioned just as well, if not better, when you are talking but not wishing to say very much, at least not specifically. My word? Trouble. Some of you probably use it: I have heart trouble, stomach trouble, liver trouble, trouble with my neighbor, trouble with my knees, trouble with the church, the government, the school system, and on and on. It says enough but not too much, so why should I trade troubles for issues? If you already have troubles, who needs issues?

Now, I'm not saying I will never use the word. Very likely I will, but only if there is something at stake, only if there is a clear issue. For example, the children of the poor: who will see to it that they have Head Start, a Heart start, a Health start? I know that not everyone agrees that this is an issue. For some reason it is not even a trouble. I take care of my own children, so why should I feel any responsibility for someone else's children? Now I have trouble with that. No, I have issues with that view. Don't you?



If you do, will you please say so? One full sentence will suffice, attached, of course, to your check. Thanks.

- Written by Dr. Fred Craddock, January 2011

## Thank You Anonymous!



During the year we receive many monetary donations, books, and hats from many anonymous donors. **Thank you for your generous gifts!**

We wish we knew who you are so that we could thank you. Please know that your anonymous gifts are valued and appreciated, and they help us bring joy to the many children that we serve. Thank you!

## From the Executive Director

The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (Georgia Partnership) recommended that state policymakers, education leaders, and the business sector unite around a North Star goal: ensuring that 65% of Georgians aged 25 to 64 have earned a post-secondary credential by 2033.

# 20.6% of the children served by The Craddock Center are at or below the poverty level.

### Did you know:

- Every year 40% of children walk into kindergarten 1 to 3 years behind.
- Most students who start behind stay behind, year after year.
- Students who start kindergarten below grade level form the largest cohort of dropouts, and they have less than a 2% chance of attending post-secondary education.
- From birth to age 5, a child learns at a speed unmatched the rest of their life.

A strong foundation built during the early years is critical for students to successfully transition into kindergarten and be proficient readers by the end of third grade. For children and youth, the most important academic milestone is reading at a proficient level by the end of the third grade. Children who are not proficient readers at this juncture are four times less likely to graduate from high school than their peers who are proficient readers.

Gaps in reading proficiency are present long before children enter kindergarten. Since nonacademic factors like low parental education, community poverty (20.6% of the children served by The Craddock Center are at or below the poverty level), and lack of access to health care widen these gaps, a statewide strategy should also ensure greater access to early education, public health, and social services that foster an environment conducive to child development.

The Craddock Center is leading the way in this area. Because of your support, The Craddock Center has been able to develop and provide programs to pre-k and Head Start children in nine counties in southern Appalachia for over 21 years. Our programs create learning experiences that build school readiness, imagination, emerging literacy skills, and creativity. We are doing our part to ensure these children are ready for Kindergarten, which becomes the foundation for these children to achieve their full potential in all areas of their lives.

## What's new with Pack 440

Pack 440 hosted a Mountain District NOVA event, 'Cubs Can Code', at The Craddock Center on 1/21/23.

We live in a time of great opportunity. The spirit of innovation can help us overcome challenges and ensure a prosperous and secure future. To seize this opportunity, we must position ourselves at the cutting edge of scientific discovery and technological innovation.

Did you ever wonder how computers know what to do?

This event was designed to help our Cub Scouts explore how people instruct computers and how they affect our everyday lives.





# Annual Christmas Luncheon – THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF!

On December 19, 2022, The Craddock Center celebrated its volunteers and staff at our annual Christmas Luncheon. We could not do what we do without our dedicated volunteers who: serve on the Board, prepare the books for the children, knit caps, create the newsletter and graphics, pack and prepare for deliveries, make deliveries, and make and repair wooden toys. The Craddock Center is blessed with a talented, skilled, and passionate staff. Our Arts Specialists are in sixty-one classrooms every week providing 25 minutes of programming. We are also grateful for our administrative staff who provide invaluable support to the Executive Director. We enjoyed a delicious buffet, and our Arts Specialists treated our guests to some fun entertainment during the luncheon. **Do you have an interest in serving on the Board? Volunteering?** Please contact Kirk Cameron at [kirk-craddock@tds.net](mailto:kirk-craddock@tds.net).



# National Take Your Child to the Library Day



February 4th was the official 'Take Your Child to the Library Day' in 2023 but you can celebrate this day any and every day!

Do you remember that feeling of a cozy welcome when you went to the library as a child? The excitement of finding some new adventure around the next stack of books?

The feeling of success when you finally understood the Dewey Decimal System? Or was it the smell of the print on the pages of the books that kept you coming back? These memories are something that not many children are being introduced to since almost everything is on the internet.

Taking your child to the library is the perfect opportunity to make sure your child can close their eyes and conjure these memories as well.

Just follow the directions in the title and take your child to the library! Pack up and take the whole family to explore what your local library has to offer. Many libraries are up to speed with technology and have both digital and hard-copy offerings. You may find movies and music offerings as well.

You can find books for the youngest in your family in the children's section which no matter what city or town you are in is sure to have the same beloved authors from your youth. Fill up on Dr. Seuss, Clifford, Mother Goose and much more! If there is something you don't find just ask your librarian and they may be able to get it. Young adults usually have a section to themselves to bridge that transition from children's storybooks to the longer chapter books. Newer classics like Harry Potter and Twilight will be found here.

**Check out your library!** You may find reading groups, storytellers, book sales or other fun events to take part in. Give your children the same cozy memories that you were given and celebrate Take Your Child to The Library Day **every day!**

Look for **The Craddock Center** in the April, 2023 issue of Blue Ridge Living Magazine.

Happy & Hope...We Deliver



# Reasons to be excited...

## Welcome Our New Board President



### **Robin Massaro**

*Below is a letter from Robin to the supporters of The Craddock Center recapping the last year and looking ahead to the new one.*

### **Reasons to be excited...**

Have you got a reason to be excited? I know I do. This is an exciting time of year; it is an exciting time to be in our world and it is an exciting time to be a part of The Craddock Center. Today, I am most excited for the opportunities I have been given to be a part of a team that supports children and families in Southern Appalachia and in this time in our world specifically. We are closing out the year 2022 and the past couple of years have been particularly hard on people across the globe. When I look back and count my blessings, I am acutely aware of those that were not as fortunate to come through the pandemic unscathed. Children worldwide were taken out of the classrooms one to two months early and in many cases didn't return to the classroom in the fall but instead started virtual learning. Can you imagine trying to teach a class of twenty-two young children through an electronic meeting platform? These children missed out on a lot; they didn't come through the pandemic unscathed. They suffered from a lack of social interaction, significant learning loss and countless other things that have not yet been identified.

During this time, The Craddock Center had to come up with new ways to provide our programming, books, Christmas gifts and Summer Send Off gifts to the children we serve in a way that would not increase the risk of illness to the children or to The Craddock Center artists, volunteers, and staff. We had to be critical in our thinking and approach. One thing we could not do was disappear; it wasn't an option. We wanted, needed the children we serve to bounce back and overcome the obstacles they were facing. We wanted them to be resilient. We all know that it is usually a little easier for kids to bounce back; unfortunately, they can't do it alone. The Craddock Center was a steadfast partner to these children and families. We continued to provide all that we would have during a normal year, just in different ways. Programming was done through zoom and books and gifts were delivered to a drop off point at the schools without the normal fanfare of being a part of the process. We were overcoming obstacles, too.

But here we are, getting ready to embark on a new year and a new beginning. For me this new beginning is especially exciting. I am coming in as the President of the Board of The Craddock Center. I am following an incredible president, Beth Roberts. She has guided us through this pandemic, and I intend to continue her mission. I can see the opportunities in front of me. Like all non-profit organizations, we are having to get creative with how we reduce costs and fundraise. Like I mentioned earlier, this is a tough time for people around the world. We are all getting back on our feet. We are a determined group of people and I have confidence that we will continue to strengthen as an organization. We will continue to be the consistency in the lives of the children we serve and be the bridge that helps them come back stronger.

*Robin Massaro*

President-Elect



## Songs & Stories 2023

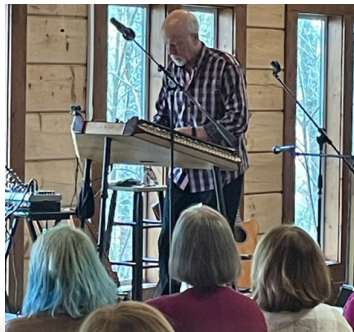
Songs & Stories returned to the Craddock Center on February 4, 2023, to a record, standing room only crowd!

We were especially excited and honored that John McCutcheon, a world-traveled musician and folksinger, returned as the performer for this event. He thrilled our guests with beautiful folk music.

And Natalie Jones, one of our artists, provided lively and humorous storytelling. She shared examples of both her story work with children at our preschools and her personal stories crafted for grown-up audiences.

As always, admission was free, and our guests responded with very generous donations. The money raised will go towards the purchase of new books for the little ones we serve.

Songs & Stories was started by Dr. Fred Craddock over twenty years ago. He wanted something in the winter that people could enjoy. An event that brings people together to have a fun winter afternoon, highlighting the old Appalachian traditions of storytelling and folk music, is a perfect fit with Dr. Craddock's goal.



# Beth Roberts



## *With Gratitude and Thanks to **Beth Roberts!***

*On November 19, 2022, The Board of The Craddock Center honored and thanked Beth Roberts for her many years of service. Beth has decided to end her time on the Board but she will remain a volunteer and supporter of The Craddock Center. Below is her letter to the supporters of The Craddock Center recapping 2020-2021.*

Dear Friends of The Craddock Center,

You may remember the old song "That's What Friends are For." It was a collaboration between several well-known pop singers. These lines from the song remind me of the faithful friends of The Craddock Center:

*Keep smiling, keep shining,  
Knowing you can always count on me for sure  
That's what friends are for  
For good times and bad times  
I'll be on your side forevermore  
That's what friends are for.*

The past year of fear, uncertainty, and loss has reminded all of us what matters most in life, and friends are certainly near the top of the list. Many non-profits have really struggled, even as need grew during these tough times, but The Craddock Center has remained strong, thanks to our generous and committed friends.

Throughout the year, The Craddock Center continued, in old and new ways, to deliver "happy and hope." We suspended our Children's Enrichment Program for the year out of safety concerns for our artists and the children in schools. But through the energetic and creative leadership of our Executive Director, Kirk Cameron, we developed new programs to meet the needs of the community.

And we are very excited that the Children's Enrichment Program is up and running for the 2021-22 school year, with our artists meeting with the classes in person. We have a spectacular roster of artists!

More than ever, this past year has been a demonstration of "For good times and bad times, I'll be on your side forever more, that's what friends are for." On behalf, of the children and families we serve we thank you for all that you do for the Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Roberts".

Board President



## *Our ToyMaker Angels!*

On Wednesday, December 14, 2022, volunteers from The Craddock Center delivered 1,130 hand-made wooden toys to the children in the pre-K and Head Start programs we support. We can do this because of the generosity of St. Luke's United Methodist Church Woodshop from Houston, TX, and the ToyMakers of East Lake in Palm Harbor, FL. These two organizations have been supporting the children of The Craddock Center for many years. We also thank Gordon Hellman and Gary Padgett for making toys for the children. Many of the teachers in the classrooms we support tell us the gifts of toys and books from The Craddock Center are the only gifts these children receive.

Thanks to our volunteer elves from Due West United Methodist Church: Alyssa and Zach Stire, John Ellis, and Katy Simmons for packing the toys. And thanks to our delivery elves: Beth Roberts, Joe Cantwell, Milly Hastings & Steve Stevens, and Carolyn Lakes & Larry Brannan for taking the toys to the schools.

## *The ToyMakers of East Lake*

The ToyMakers of East Lake have given away 150,000 hand-made wooden toys since 2009. They are an outreach mission of East Lake United Methodist Church and are a 100% volunteer non-profit organization to make smiles one toy at a time. They produce and donate brightly painted, hand-made wooden toys to 51 agencies for sick and needy children in stressful environments.

In addition to making toys, they also source, repair, and recycle bicycles back into their community to needy children, returning veterans, and homeless working adults.

## *The Woodshop of St. Luke's United Methodist Church*

The Woodshop of St. Luke's has been making wooden toys for over 20 years and they give away four to five thousand toys each year. The Craddock Center was one of the first recipients of their toys. Their main goal is fellowship and giving to others.

## *We Need Your Help!*

As a non-profit, everything we do is a result of monetary donations or donations of goods from our wonderful supporters. We need Golden Classic books and lots of supplies for our Summer Send Off program in May 2023.

Each of our 1,130 children will receive a bag of goodies as their pre-K and Head Start programs end 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.

Please use the Amazon Wish List below to help us secure what we need for our 1,130 children.

**You can also send donations or books directly to The Craddock Center at 300 Cherry Log St., #69, Cherry Log, GA 30522.**

**Thank you in advance for your generosity!**

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/33CGISEAZLV36?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/33CGISEAZLV36?ref_=wl_share)



# Friends of The Craddock Center

The Craddock Center cannot do what we do for the children and families of Southern Appalachia without the financial support of our donors. **Thank you and recognition to those individuals, organizations, and foundations for their generosity in supporting The Craddock Center from April 1, 2022 through February 3, 2023.**

## **\$15,000+** William B. Orkin Foundation, Inc.

### **\$10,000+**

Warren and Augusta Hume  
Foundation  
Eugene and Karen Boring

Gary and Nancy Fayard  
Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, Inc.  
Helen M. Lewis

### **\$5,000+**

Elizabeth Roberts King Endowment  
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Reba C. Gibson  
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Peachtree Corners Christian Church  
Paige V. Peugh  
Piedmont Charitable Foundation, Inc.

### **\$4,000+**

Friendship  
Christian Church

### **\$3,000+**

John and Dee Craddock  
Susan Elliott-Bryan  
Faith, Hope, and Charity  
Recycle Store, Inc.

Nora Roberts Foundation  
The Hammill Family  
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### **\$2,000+**

Big Canoe Chapel Women's Fellowship  
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### **\$1,000+**

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JT Digital Media, LLC  
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United Community Banks  
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### **\$500+**

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Kirk Cameron and Michael Kilpatrick

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Ginger Walker

### **Up to \$500**

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Tommy and Cathy Archibald  
AA Thursday Nights  
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Rebecca and Daniel Doster  
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