FY 23 Annual Report August 2022 - July 2023 Planning for the Future

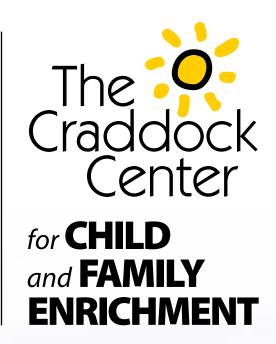


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The Craddock Center Board of Directors and Staff

FOUNDER

Dr. Fred B. Craddock

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2024

From the Executive Director

HAPPY NEW YEAR! On July 31, 2023, The Craddock Center wrapped up another fiscal year. We had an exceptionally good year in so many ways.

Two main areas of focus for this past fiscal year were related to Planning for our Future. Planning for the financial stability and sustainability of The Craddock Center and planning for our newest program, 'Smart Babies'.

In terms of **financial planning**, in July 2023 we launched the Legacy Program of The Craddock Center - We Serve by Sharing. **"We Serve by Sharing"** is from The Craddock Center Mission Statement. **We serve the children and share our time, skills, talents, and money** to sustain the work and plan for and build for the future of The Craddock Center. The Craddock Center has been serving the children and families in our communities for 23 years. We don't know what our communities will look like 25 years from now, but we have no doubt that what we do for the children will continue to be needed. We asked our donors to consider a planned gift to support and sustain the work of The Craddock Center.

In terms of **program planning**, for the last sixteen months, a group of three former educators (one is a Board Member and the other are volunteers) and I have been planning the rollout of 'Smart Babies'. Our research showed that the parent was the child's first teacher. But we also found that some parents do not have the knowledge or tools to fully help develop their child's mind. Since learning in the first five years is at a speed unmatched by any other time in life, the knowledge and tools must be provided to these parents. The Craddock Center hopes to do exactly that. More information about 'Smart Babies' is provided in the Programs section of this Annual Report.

Some of the highlights of the year include:

- The Craddock Center and its six Arts Specialists provided the Children's Enrichment Program to 1,144 pre-K and Head Start children in nine counties in three states. We provided these children: three brand new books during the year (3,432 books), handmade knitted hats & wooden toys, a pair of gloves, and 915 hours of Children's Enrichment Programming. And, thanks to our donors, we were able to go into the classrooms every week!
- We also donated 1,505 new books, and 2,740 nearly new books to other non-profits and organizations and gave away 550 books to children at local festivals.
- Continued to support Mental Health initiatives and programs in Fannin and Gilmer counties.
- Added three New board members.
- Provided 15 heating/cooling grants totaling \$3,613.
- The Living Room program provided furniture and household goods to 101 families and individuals in Fannin and Gilmer Counties.
- 230 volunteer events logged for 1,405 hours to support the work of The Craddock Center. 31 new volunteers joined us this past fiscal year.
- Provided 76 Craddock Cares bags to local first responders and other organizations and non-profits.

We once again ended the year in a strong financial position due to the generosity of our donors and grant income. The Craddock Center added 117 new supporters to our donor rolls. Thank you!!

So, once again, HAPPY NEW YEAR! The Craddock Center is looking forward to next year serving the children and families of southern Appalachia!

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Kirk Cameron Executive Director

From the President

As another year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on my first year as President of the Board of The Craddock Center. I was excited. I was excited to get started to see what wonderful things we would accomplish as we worked toward meeting our goals and fulfilling our mission. However, I am not one to spend too much time in the past. While reflection is necessary, planning is even more important. That is what I find myself thinking about now. And as we continue to plan, it occurs to me The Craddock Center has some of the most amazing staff, volunteers, and Board members.

We are planning for how we can reach more children and families in the southern Appalachian region that could benefit from our programs. With the desire to ensure our kids have a fighting chance to succeed, we set out to figure out ways to reach these families sooner.

The engagement of more families in our area is a high priority for The Craddock Center. Research tells us children, in the age range that benefit most from our programming, often start kindergarten with such a varied readiness level that it makes advancing those kids at the same rate extremely difficult. There are statistics that tell us if kids start kindergarten behind, many will not make it through high school. That is where we want to start.

We are going to reach families much earlier. In some cases, we will start conversations prior to the child being born. We want to give parents the tools and skills they need to be their child's very first teacher. The amount of research, planning and preparation that is taking place is awe inspiring.

I encourage you to read our newsletters, reach out for a visit to The Craddock Center, get involved and share what we are doing. Our best tomorrows rely on the generation being developed today. Let's build something great.

Robin Massaro

Robin Massaro Board President

Overview

The mission of The Craddock Center is to deliver educational and cultural programs to young children, families, and individual communities in Southern Appalachia. The area we serve consists of nine (9) counties including Dawson, Gilmer, Fannin, Lumpkin, Pickens, Towns, and Union Counties in Georgia, Polk County in eastern Tennessee, and Cherokee County in western North Carolina (*see Appendix 1*). Our role in promoting the mission of The Craddock Center is best described through active,

hands-on outreach to the very young in preschool and Head Start programs. We share songs, dance, puppetry, movement, and stories.

DID YOU KNOW:

- Every year 40% of children go 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 high school education.
- From birth to age 5, a child learns at a speed unmatched for the rest of their life.

This is what The Craddock Center is trying to address, and prevent, through our Pre-K and Head Start programs. Our founders often spoke on the importance of providing these very young ones with enriching activities to encourage creativity and experiences with the arts. As a result, The Craddock Center's emphasis becomes the foundation for these children to achieve their full potential in all areas of their lives.

Additionally, we serve many children living in poverty who lack self-worth and often live in significant isolation. We focus our attention on developing school readiness, building self-esteem, and fostering creativity through music, movement, puppetry, and storytelling. Our program is literally an outreach where our artists and volunteers go on-site to deliver messages of hope and happiness through joy-filled experiences. Our mission of *"Happy & Hope. We Deliver"* is a mission in action that comes alive each day through the work of The Craddock Center.

"We are about the business of enriching lives, of lifting selfesteem, of instilling a sense of self-worth, of effecting socialization so that each child can play and study and grow as an equal to other children."

– Dr. Fred Craddock



"Thank you guys for all you do for our students!"

- Holly Cook, Elementary Pre-K

"Our children love The Craddock Center! We truly appreciate you continuing to partner with us for these kiddos."

- Stacey Trammell, Head Start Director

"Thank you and your program for all you do for the kids. They enjoy it."

- Tasha Williamson, Elementary Pre-K

"Thank you so much for the books and bookmarks. The kiddos love them!"

- Christina Canada-Clark, Head Start Director

"Thanks for all you do for us. We love you guys and all the books and stuff you give to our kids. Thanks from Hilltop Head Start!"

"Thank you for all you do!" - Mary Beth Moss, Head Start Director

"Thank you for thinking of our children!"

- Brian Hoyt, Elementary Pre-K

"Thank you so much! We are so excited about the books!"

- Katrina Kingsley, Elementary Pre-K

"Our Pre-K children sure loved receiving their books and bookmarks! Thank you for you do for our program!" - Holly Cook, Elementary Pre-K

"Thank you so much! My son is in pre-K and was so excited to show me HIS new book, Green Eggs and Ham."

- Candace Brian Poole, Parent



Programs

CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The **Children's Enrichment Program** is considered the signature program of The Craddock Center. Our program is delivered free of charge to pre-schools and Head Start programs in our southern Appalachian area. Priority is given to schools with the highest percentage of children on free or reduced lunches. We have specially designed our programs, based on research for optimal learning, to best prepare these children for Kindergarten. The Craddock Center's programming becomes the foundation for these children to achieve their full potential in all areas of their lives.



We can do this because of our wonderful team of six Arts Specialists who have a combined 150 years of experience in early childhood education, music education, and storytelling. The primary role of the Arts Specialists is to love children and to engage and enrich them through music, storytelling, and movement. They are the key to the success of the Children's Enrichment Program. Using songs and stories, the Arts Specialists conduct 30-minute programs with preschoolers according to a defined weekly schedule. They use music, instruments, props, movement, puppets, storytelling, and routines to encourage children to sing, move, dance, and play. They help build vocabulary and self-esteem and promote motor and rhythmic skills. They serve as cheerful "ambassadors" of The Craddock Center at all the schools we serve. Our Arts Specialists served 1,144 pre-K and Head Start students in 61 classrooms in 20 schools in three states! **Sincere and heartfelt thanks to Natalie Jones, Liese Connell, Jane Cunningham, Claudia Bradford, Sheila Clayton, and Kathy Thompson!**

BOOKS TO CHILDREN

The Craddock Center provides thousands of new children's books to our "little ones" three times during the school year. *That's 3,432 new books last year!*

In mid-November, each child receives a new book to enjoy during their Thanksgiving break.

On March 2nd, The Craddock Center celebrated Read Across America Day and Dr. Seuss' Birthday. On this day volunteers from The Craddock Center delivered brand new Dr. Seuss books to the children we serve. Read Across America Day is a day to celebrate the joys of reading. It also brings awareness to the importance of reading in education for our children. The founders of this day decided to have it on Dr. Seuss' birthday. Dr. Seuss is one of the greatest authors of children's books. Most kids have grown up reading his many entertaining books. The Craddock Center is making sure our kids can share in the joy of his books like many of us have over the years.



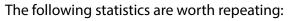
In May, we had Summer Send Off. Summer reading is critical for our children to retain knowledge and skills learned in Pre-K and Head Start. Additionally, children who don't read are at risk of falling behind their classmates. This program provides our children an opportunity to continue learning. Each child receives a "goodie bag" with a Golden Classic book, a book reading log, stickers, and arts & crafts supplies to create hand puppets. We are excited to announce that beginning with Summer Send Off 2024, each child will receive two books!

In addition to classrooms, The Craddock Center visits community events and gives out books to all school-age children. These books are primarily donated to The Center through the generosity of our nationwide network of supporters. We donated 1,505 new books and 2,740 nearly new books to other non-profits and organizations in our community.

Literacy research shows a correlation between the number of age-appropriate books that a child has at home and the number of years of school that child will complete.

Further, the skills children develop when they handle books are critical to the development of literacy. Simple knowledge, such as how to turn pages, the orientation and direction of print, and relationship between pictures and story, is difficult to learn unless children have experienced holding books.

OUR NEWEST PROGRAM! SMART BABIES!



- 40% of children walk into kindergarten already one to three years behind.
- 71% of children who start kindergarten behind are still behind in the 5th grade.
- Students who start Kindergarten below grade level form the largest cohort of dropouts, usually by the 10th grade, and they have less than a 2% chance of attending post high school education.

We at The Craddock Center were shocked by these statistics. We knew we could not ignore this.

The research performed by The Craddock Center showed that the parent was the child's first teacher. But we also found that some parents do not have the knowledge or tools to fully help develop their child's mind. Since learning in the first five years is at a speed unmatched by any other time in life, the knowledge and tools must be provided to these parents. The Craddock Center hopes to do exactly that.

Over a year of research and planning has led to the development of parenting workshops through a program that will be called **'Smart Babies'**.

Smart Babies has a curriculum! We have chosen Ready for Kindergarten as the curriculum for our program. In February 2023, two representatives from The Children's Reading Foundation came to The Craddock Center and presented a mock workshop for three board members and our Executive Director. They explained the program, shared materials, and answered our many questions. Those in attendance unanimously decided this program would meet and exceed our needs in developing workshops for parents of children, ages 0-3, to become the best first teacher for their babies.

The Guiding Principles of this program are:

- Honor parents as their child's most influential and most loved teacher.
- Foster effective early-learning experiences for children birth to age 5.
- Instill children with a joy and zest for learning that lasts a lifetime.
- Build relationships between parent, child, family, school, and community.

Each year, parents will attend at least three workshops designed to teach them effective, age-specific, methods to help their baby's mind develop. The parents will be provided with appropriate tools, toys, books, and given suggestions on using these tools with their children. Reading with their children will be encouraged. Many targets, such as language and literacy, math and reasoning, and social and emotional learning will be covered in the program.

The first Smart Babies workshops will be provided in November 2023.

DID YOU KNOW?*

40% 40% of children walk

into kindergarten already one to three years behind.

71%

71% of children who start kindergarten behind are still behind in the 5th grade.

2%

Students who start Kindergarten below grade level have less than a 2% chance of attending post high school education.



KNITTED HATS AND WOODEN TOYS

Winters in the mountains can be cold, and many of the children we serve do not have adequate clothing for the cold, winter months. A warm knitted hat, and a pair of gloves helps tremendously in preventing loss of critical body heat in the very young. In mid-November our volunteers provided the children we serve with cozy knitted hats and a pair of gloves. **That's 1,144 knitted hats and pairs of gloves!**

What would we do without these talented supporters who knit these wonderfully colorful hats with lots of love and care? Thanks to the following for donating over 1600 knitted hats: Ann Grant from Atlanta, the Fiber Art Group of the Blue Ridge Mountain Arts Association, the Encouragement Project, and Peachtree Christian Church, and Marcia Congdon, Janet Elder, Cindy Minick, and Lynn Starr.

We are also most appreciative of our generous and talented "elves" from Texas, Florida, and Georgia who send cases of hand-carved, wooden toys. These wooden toys are given to children in the Children's Enrichment Program in mid-December. *That's 1,144, beautiful, made with love, wooden toys for our children!*

Thanks to the following for making these wonderful toys: *Toy Makers of East Lake in Palm, Harbor, Florida, St. Luke's United Methodist Church Houston, Texas and Gary Padgett and Gordon Hellman in Woodstock, Georgia.*











"A person's a person no matter how small"



HING

CRADDOCK CARES

Craddock Cares is an outreach program sponsored by The Craddock Center. Craddock Cares was formed to support children, women, and the elderly who find themselves in emergency situations, displacements, and other significant crisis events.

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, and a Hat and gloves (winter months).

We gave away 76 kits to local first responders and other organizations this fiscal year.

WELCOME NEWBORN KITS

On behalf of The Craddock Center, local agencies in our community provide the mothers a 'Welcome Newborn' kit. Each kit contains: Congratulations letter from The Craddock Center with our contact information, an article titled '50 Simple Ways to Make Your Baby Smarter, a new children's book, blanket, baby socks, baby wipes, Sesame Street rattler and a small wooden toy.

The goal is to promote learning skills beginning at age '0' and for the parents to help prepare the children for pre-K and kindergarten. Hopefully, the recipient of the kit will contact The Craddock Center so that we can send them books. We will keep track of those that contact us so that we can encourage their enrollment into pre-K as they approach 3 years old.

THE LIVING ROOM

The Living Room is a furniture and household goods outreach program stocked wholly from donations from our surrounding community. This outreach of The Craddock Center grew significantly during the pandemic.

Used and occasionally new furniture and household items are shared with families who are in crisis, recovering from fire, eviction, mold infestation, or family violence. We often see young families with small children visiting The Living Room in search of very simple items such as a table, a chair, or a set of dishes. We have a partnership with Family Connections in Gilmer and Fannin Counties. This has enabled us to offer support to organizations such as the Women's Crisis Center. We saw many similar organizations in our community increase referrals of families in need to The Living Room. The Living Room is open every day for donations and open to families to select their items two days a week.

The Craddock Center provided furniture and household goods to 101 families and individuals this last year.

"One Person caring about another represents life's greatest value." - Jim Rohn

CUB SCOUTS

The Craddock Center charters a Cub Scout Troop, Pack 440. The Scouting's focus on children and family aligns perfectly with the mission of The Craddock Center. The Craddock Center works with Scouting leadership to promote and grow the new Pack 440 and host events like Carnival Day, NOVA experiences, and the annual Pinewood Derby. Pack 440 is considered a "Family Troop" consisting of both boys and girls. Our Pack grew from the original four members to nine members in its first year.





Songs & Stories

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

Natalie Jones, one of The Craddock Center's Arts Specialist, provided lively and humorous storytelling and John McCutcheon, a world-traveled musician and songwriter, returned to thrill the guests with beautiful folk music.

The concert was free to those who attended but they responded with generous donations that were used to purchase books for the children we serve.

Songs & Stories was started by Dr. Fred Craddock twenty years ago. He wanted something in the winter that people could enjoy. An event that brought people together to have a fun winter afternoon highlighting the old Appalachian traditions of storytelling and folk music.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

At The Craddock Center, we want to reflect on the bright spots and find reasons to celebrate. And there were many! And there were many because of our wonderful, hard-working volunteers. Without our volunteers, we could not have enriched the lives of the children and families we have served the last 22 years. We go back to part of our mission statement..."We serve by Sharing." Our volunteers exemplified this! The Craddock Center is grateful for all of those who share their time, talents, and gifts with those we serve. Our volunteers logged 1,405 hours to support the work of The Craddock Center and 31 new volunteers joined us this past year.

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." – Jane Goodall







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 since August 1, 2022 through July 31, 2023.



Pledging Foundation Steven and Annette McBraver St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church Jim McLean

Thursday Night AA Anne Haltiwanger Jeffrey Welch Tommy and Cathy Archibald **Alight Solutions** Willis and Leona DuVall Wayne Everbach Donna Lee Fowlie Vivian Guthrie Log Cabin Community Church Jack Nolen Jerald and Aundre Rookstool William Donovan Paul H. Anderson Due West United Methodist Church William and Connie Inglish Amy McChesney Carol Moulder Gloria Rippy Judy Weiland Albert Toth Mary Beussee Maureen and Daniel Hicks Kenneth Irby Celine Melton Ted and Cindy Minick Louise Reaves Linda Sutton **Eugene and Lois Watson** Johnny Wray Craddock Center Board Carol Hanson Jane Simpson James and Betty Willis

The Zoo Groovy Art Patrick and Debra Hrdy Leslie and Susan Spencer Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge

Michael McWilliams **Dorothy Houk** John Ahern Barbara Beard Blue Jeans Pizza & Pasta **Beth Bowser** Linda and Maxie Brown Joe Cantwell Ellen Carpenter Ida-Anne Clarke Jeffrey Croonquist Darryl and Marilyn Devnich William and Winship Durrett Florida and Doug Ellis Caroleta Garrett Allen and Sharon Garrison Ellen Giles Bill and Sharon Golden Group of Rachel Janet Harding Christopher Hefferen Lisa Helbing MIllias Don Helms Elizabeth Howard Marjorie Hurst Marla Johnson Teresa Jones Jane Keene Norma Kilpatrick Elizabeth Majoros **Carol Martel** Joanne McNally Hedy Morrison Arlyn and Susan Moulder

Karen and Joseph Page **Beth Powers** Anne Prince Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Reeves James and Caroline Riggans Karen and Jennifer Rogers Sandy Springs Christian Church Lynette Savage Ben and Claire Shelley Warren Stevens Sherry Walden Betty Whitman Byron and Judy Wyndham Rhonda and David Haight Kelley Galambos Carrie Davis **Robin Massaro** Will and Peggy Sanders Alpha Delta Kappa – Alpha Nu Chapter **Michelle Babcock Bradlev Baker** Jerrice and Dennis Barrett Lynn Barrett **David Akers** Nordstrom Victor and Barbara Cavanaugh **Richard Coombs** Mary Joe Dellinger Sandra DeRose Lisa Dick **Eve Earnest Meribah Elliott**

Up to \$500

Wilton Moulder

Maryo Ewell Gary Schneeberg **Robert Gleadall** Amy Grosklags Joe Hagen Edward and Helen Hatch Milton and Janis Hill Knox Jensen Nancy Lawton-Shirley Mary Marage Lori and Ron McCane Andy and Sherry Meeks Linda and John Montgomery Mr. and Mrs. E. Fay Pearce, Jr. Kathleen Russell Sharon Stokes Mary Turner Mary Vento John and Martha Wallace Deanne Wanzek Gail Minnich Watson John and Ann Watson Linda Glaser Jane Carwell Tracy Goodbar **Betty Brown** Frank and Penny Chirpich Lynda Echelberger Tracy Hargesheimer Raymond LaBean **Richard and Peggy Ziglar** Alpha Delta Kappa – Alpha Lambda Kathleen Barrett Margaret Blackmon

Gordon Hellman

Nancy Sargent McGrath

James Shelton

Pat and Joe Webb **Colleen Boissonneault** Carrie Cirrito Barbara Clark Robert and Emily Cowdrick Mrs. Moncure Crowder Charles and Nancy Cunningham Jacqueline Ganser

Lynn Higginbotham Nancy Jakobsen Joseph Maddison Lori Marquez John Morrison Kathryn Nevin Janet Noblin David and Ruth Stahl Mary Thaxton Tisbest Philanthropy Barbara Wirth Patti Zimmerman Frances Shumake Mary Joan Culberston Suzanne Hogland Keith Dunphy Arthur Wickman **Charles Krick** Steven Pruett Martha and Richard Kessler Joy and Cleveland Kiser Laura Jensen Layne & Linda Smith and Kristen Vincent **Diane Parker**

Jackson EMC Foundation John McMullan

ANNUAL REPORT - APPENDIX 1

CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT PROGRAM DATA

States, Districts, Schools, Programs, and Numbers Served

FY 2023

State and School District	School and Program	Number of Children Served	Number of Classrooms
Tennessee			
Polk County	Copper Basin ES (preschool)	28	2
		TN Total = 28	TN Total = 2
North Carolina			
Cherokee County	Andrews HS (Head Start)	20	1
	Andrews ES (preschool)	18	1
	Martins Cr (preschool)	18	1
	Murphy HS (Head Start)	56	3
	Murphy ES (preschool)	36	2
	Ranger ES (preschool)	18	1
		NC Total = 166	NC Total = 9
Georgia			
Dawson County	Dawson HS (Head Start)	62	3
Gilmer County	Gilmer HS (Head Start)	79	5
	Gilmer ES (preschool)	132	6
Fannin County	Blue Ridge ES (preschool)	22	1
	Fannin HS (Head Start)	120	6
	East Fannin ES (preschool)	22	1
	Milestones PS (preschool)	29	1
	West Fannin ES (preschool)	22	1
Lumpkin County	Lumpkin HS (Head Start)	125	7
Pickens County	Pickens HS (Head Start)	100	6
Towns County	Towns HS & PS (Head Start & preschool)	58	3
Union Courty	Union ES (preschool)	130	7
Union County	Union HS (Head Start)	51	2
		GA Total = 950	GA Total = 50
Southern Appalachian Total		Total = 1,144	Total = 61

"Unless someone like **YOU cares a** wholeawful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's not."

— Dr. Seuss



for **CHILD** and **FAMILY ENRICHMENT**