

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.



P.O. Box 69
186 Fred Craddock Drive
Cherry Log, GA 30522
706-632-1772
thecraddockcenter2001@gmail.com
craddockcenter.org

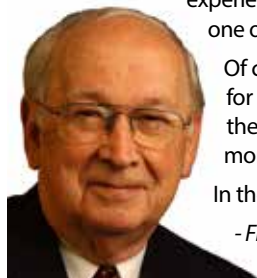
MILK & HONEY NEWSLETTER

A Taste of Milk & Honey

No charge. Some of the friends of The Craddock Center have advised that funds for our programs, always in need of funds, could be raised by charging admission to events we offer the public. It is thoughtful and reasonable advice, and you can be sure it has laid a claim on my mind more than once. When persons with large incomes, large homes, and long vacations show up, I say to myself, "They are able to pay, they are accustomed to paying, they probably expect to pay, so why not charge?" In fact, I continue the conversation with myself, "Some of these more prosperous friends may be embarrassed to enter without paying. Why embarrass them? Take their money."

Let me address first the obvious. There is no desire to embarrass anyone, neither those who can pay nor those who cannot. I am also aware that in our culture that which is offered free is by many assumed to be of inferior quality. If it is free, it must not be worth charging for. Nothing could be further from the truth. The lectures, the music, the seminars we offer the community are first rate. And the music, the stories, the books we give to the pre-K and Head Start children are the best available. No worn-out, second-hand, hand-me-down gifts that would only say to the children, "You are not worth the best."

Having said that, let me remind you, the vision of The Craddock Center is the eventual creation of a community that is one community. We are not naive: there are haves and have-nots, advantaged and disadvantaged, and the differences show in our residences, lifestyles, and, regrettably, also in our churches. But is it not great now and then to gather for music or seminar or lecture where those differences are not honored? No one enters by the "pay" gate and no enters by the "poor" gate; all enter the "free" gate. And when we sit together, we have a brief but very important experience of the kingdom of God. I hope it is not irreverent to say that this arrangement reminds one of grace. Grace comes to all without distinction.



Of course, some send gifts that pay the bills for all of us, and we are endlessly grateful. But if for a day or for an evening, those who give and those who receive share an event for which there is no charge, perhaps someone with courage and imagination will think of other and more lasting ways to remove distinctions among us. Would you like that?

In the meantime, ***Come on in and make yourself at home: there is no charge.***

- From Dr. Fred Craddock, Milk & Honey, January 2006

From the Executive Director

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS — AND LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT 25

As we close the chapter on our year-long 25th anniversary celebration, we do so with grateful hearts, incredible memories, and renewed excitement for the future.

Over the past year, we have reflected on where we began, celebrated the people who made this journey possible, and honored the milestones that shaped us along the way. Twenty-five years ago, what started as a vision of Fred and Nettie Craddock and a leap of faith has grown into something far greater than we could have imagined. Through challenges, victories, growth, and change, one thing has remained constant — the people who have supported, encouraged, and believed in us.

This anniversary year reminded us that our story is not only about the past. It is about the relationships built, the lives touched, and the foundation laid for what comes next.

As we look ahead to the next 25 years, we do so with optimism and purpose.

The world around us continues to evolve, and so will we. We are committed to embracing new opportunities, expanding our impact, and continuing to serve with the same passion and dedication that brought us this far. While methods and technologies may change, our mission and values will remain firmly rooted in who we are.

The next chapter will be about growth, innovation, and community. It will be about investing in the next generation, strengthening the connections that matter most, and continuing to build something meaningful that lasts far beyond ourselves.

Most importantly, the future will continue to be shaped by the people who walk alongside us — our supporters, partners, customers, friends, and families. You are part of this story, and we are deeply thankful for every role you have played over the last quarter century.

Anniversaries are more than celebrations of time passed. They are reminders of what is possible when people come together with vision, perseverance, and heart.

As we turn the page from this milestone year, we do so filled with gratitude for the journey behind us and anticipation for the road ahead.

**THE FIRST 25 YEARS
BUILT THE FOUNDATION.**

THE NEXT 25 BEGIN NOW.

DEDICATION OF THE Dr. Fred Craddock and Mrs. Nettie Craddock CONFERENCE CENTER

On April 30, 2026, the birthday of Dr. Fred Craddock, we gathered to dedicate the Dr. Fred Craddock and Mrs. Nettie Craddock Conference Center.

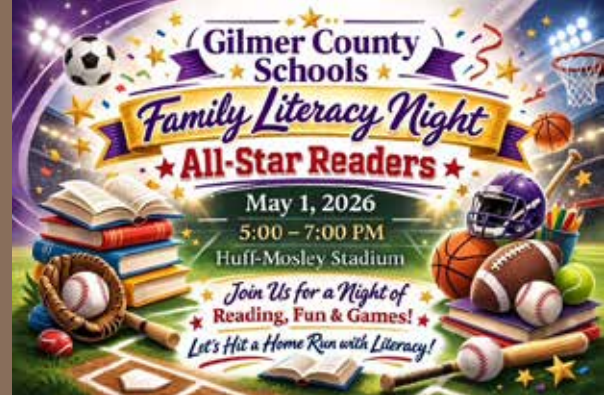
The Craddock Center is a living embodiment of Fred and Nettie Craddock's principles: faithful small acts, attentive listening, honoring real-life stories, and trusting ordinary people to create extraordinary change. Just as Dr. Craddock transformed hearts through storytelling and grace, the Center transforms communities through education, support, and love.

"Today, we gather with gratitude and joy to dedicate this space, a space that will foster learning, fellowship, and service for years to come. This space stands as a testament to the vision, commitment, and generosity of Dr. Fred Craddock and Mrs. Nettie Craddock and all who made it possible.

We dedicate this space in honor of Dr. Fred Craddock and Mrs. Nettie Craddock, whose lives and work continue to inspire us to teach, serve, and lead with humility and compassion. May all who enter here find encouragement, guidance, and the spirit of community.

With hearts full of hope and gratitude, we declare this center officially open for its purpose: to educate, to nurture, and to serve. May it always be a place where knowledge and service meet, and where every effort benefits our community."

Dedications are more than ceremonies. They are moments when we pause to recognize the journey that brought us here, the journey started by Fred and Nettie, the many hands and hearts that made this possible, and the purpose that will guide what happens within these walls in the years to come.



Gilmer County Family Literacy Night

On May 1, 2026, The Craddock Center once again participated in the Gilmer County Family Literacy Night. During the event, The Craddock Center gave away over 200 books to children of all ages. We also had a spinning game for the children to play and win prizes.

The event, hosted by the Gilmer County School System, drew over 800 children and parents. 43 local organizations and businesses participated in the event to promote literacy and provide a fun evening of games and activities for the local children.

Special thanks to Sheila Clayton, one of our Arts Specialists, for volunteering at the event. Her wonderful costume brought joy to the children!





Start Your Engines It Really Happened!

The Craddock Center was excited to join many other non-profits and businesses in the Blue Ridge area for the 2026 Blue Ridge Soap Box Derby on May 2nd.

Our beautiful car was built by Brian Higgins and the Dr. Seuss graphics for the car were designed by Michael Kilpatrick.

Jacob Carwell was our 7 – 12 driver and Miles Slemons our 13+ driver. Miles placed fourth in his division.

The Blue Ridge Soap Box Derby held its inaugural race in April 2019. It was created to give our local community, especially our youth, an exciting activity that can be done as a family. The Derby teaches the next generation all of the aspects of the "STEAM" program: science, technology, engineering, art, and math.



Please Consider a Commemorative Donation

As The Craddock Center brings its year-long 25th Anniversary Celebration to a close, we give thanks for all that has been accomplished through the generosity, dedication, and support of our community, our Board, our staff, and volunteers. While we celebrate the past 25 years, we also look forward with hope and excitement to the future. We invite you to mark this milestone with a commemorative gift in honor of our anniversary. Your donation will help ensure that our mission continues to grow and serve future generations for years to come. Together, we can build on the legacy of the past and invest in the promise of the next 25 years.

MAKE A 25TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE DONATION



For 25 years, The Craddock Center has walked alongside children and families in southern Appalachia—bringing books, educational support, and encouragement to those who need it most. Children have opened books, discovered new possibilities, and felt the steady support of this community. That legacy belongs to you.

Because of faithful friends like you, thousands of young lives have been strengthened and inspired. As we celebrate this remarkable milestone, we invite you to make a special 25th

Anniversary gift. Your commemorative contribution will honor the past, sustain today's programs, and help us reach even more children in the years ahead. Together, we can ensure the next 25 years are even more impactful than the first.

Please use the QR code below or go to <https://www.craddockcenter.org/> and select the 'DONATE' button in the upper right of the home page.

You can also mail a donation to: PO BOX 69, Cherry Log, GA 30522

Thank you for your generosity and for celebrating our 25th Anniversary with us!



"We [The Craddock Center] are about the business of enriching lives, of lifting self-esteem, 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

A Night 25 Years in the Making

This past year marked an extraordinary milestone for The Craddock Center – our 25th Anniversary! For a quarter of a century, we have been dedicated to enriching the lives of children and families in southern Appalachia. We were excited to celebrate this journey with our community during our 25th Anniversary Gala. On June 13, 2026 at The Craddock Center, 75 friends, supporters, and community leaders gathered to commemorate our achievements and help ensure our continued impact for years to come.

The evening included live music by Denise Moore, an assortment of chef-crafted elevated hors d'oeuvres, complemented by an exquisite collection of petite desserts prepared by two-starred Michelin chef, Justin White, and a hugely successful silent auction that offered something for everyone. As a final indulgence of the evening, each guest received a thoughtfully curated gala gift bag as a small token of our gratitude and designed to extend the evening's celebration.

The 25th Anniversary Gala served as a fitting and memorable culmination of a remarkable year-long celebration. Throughout the past year, we have reflected on our history, celebrated our accomplishments, honored the individuals and organizations that have supported our mission, and expressed gratitude for the community that has made our success possible. The Gala brought those themes together in a special evening of fellowship, reflection, and celebration.

While the anniversary year may be coming to a close, the spirit of celebration continues as we carry forward the lessons, relationships, and momentum gained throughout this milestone year. The Gala was more than the conclusion of a year-long celebration—it was the beginning of our next chapter. With gratitude for the past and confidence in the future, we look forward to continuing our mission and building on the foundation established over the last quarter century.





Summer Send Off 2026

On May 13th, The Craddock Center celebrated 'Summer Send Off 2026'. Each of our 1,178 children received a bag of goodies as their pre-K and Head Start programs ended for the Summer. Each child received two brand-new books, including a 'Golden Classic' book, a book reading log to record the books they read during the Summer, stickers, a bookmark to color, and arts & crafts supplies needed to make a couple of hand puppets.

The goal of this program to provide our children an opportunity to continue learning even as their formal learning programs suspend for the Summer. Pre-k literacy gains can be easily lost over the summer, especially by emerging readers who are still building foundational literacy skills. The Summer reading achievement gap between pre-K and kindergarten can be closed by a child reading 4-5 books during the Summer.

Thanks to the many donors who responded to our 'Amazon wish list' and provided the books and supplies needed for the goodie bags! Thanks to the volunteers: Meredith Yacavone, Lynn Higginbotham, Elder Huffman, Elder Maughn, and Elder Augustine for packing the bags!

Also, thanks to the following volunteers for delivering the bags to the children: Beth Roberts, Carolyn Lakes, and Joe Cantwell!





SMART BABIES!



The Smart Babies program conducted 39 workshops at a total of six locations during this last school year. All of us involved with the program would like to say a big thank you to the following agencies/school systems that have hosted our workshops. The directors/designated personnel to work with us on getting the program approved, provided an appropriate space at their location, and offer technical help. They also are greatly involved in publicizing the program to their constituents and community, recruitment of parents to take the workshops, and reminding parents to come to workshops. It is no small commitment on their part! We appreciate their cooperation and hard work in helping to provide these workshops. Thank you!

Fannin County Schools
Her Hope Pregnancy Center

Georgia Mountains Health
Gilmer County Schools

Safe Choices Pregnancy Center
Union County Schools

Our workshop facilitators (teachers) also deserve a big thank you. They spend approximately two hours studying for each workshop. They also must pick up and return the appropriate materials for each workshop from the Craddock Center. And, of course, they teach the workshops! All of our facilitators are volunteers.





A lead facilitator is assigned to each school/agency. It is the responsibility of the lead facilitator to work with personnel on location, scheduling and technology. They also attend events at the school such as "Back to School" nights where they set up a table to provide information and register parents for the Smart Babies program. They assign facilitators to levels and organize the workshops. At the schools, more than one level is offered at the same time so that requires a lot of materials, organization and communication! All of the lead facilitators have worked so hard this year and have done a tremendous job. Thank you!

Cathy Cavagnaro*

Sally Dowling*

Chris Martinez*

Maria Greenwall

Susan Klevansky

Bev Cook*

Maureen Hicks*

Patti O'Dell*

Kathleen Holt

Debbie Peterson

**Lead Facilitators*

We also want to thank Kirk Cameron, the Executive Director of The Craddock Center. His support has been unwavering and he does so much behind the scene! We also can't leave out Heidi Kennedy, the Office Manager, who has always met our secretarial needs with a smile. Thank you, also, Michael Kilpatrick, for all of the fabulous graphics you have done for Smart Babies.

Bev Cook, Smart Babies Coordinator



Another Huge Thank You!

There is something that cannot be denied. Smart Babies would not be a reality if not for Bev Cook!

When I began as Executive Director of The Craddock Center in November of 2020, I knew we needed to do something to help parents learn how to teach their children. But after doing some research, I realized we needed more help to make it a reality.

Then, like a miracle, Bev Cook was "sent" to The Craddock Center. We soon discovered that we shared a passion for helping parents learn how to become their child's best first teacher. Bev and I have often chuckled about the many times of being at events with our friends and then finding ourselves alone while "brainstorming" how we could make something like Smart Babies happen.

Bev started as a volunteer, then became a Board Member, and eventually became the Coordinator of Smart Babies. The Smart Babies program we have today would not be in place if not for Bev's passion, perseverance, and tenacity. All of those wonderful thank yous shared by Bev would not be possible without her!

Bev, thank you for being a godsend to The Craddock Center! Thank you for building a program that is making a huge difference for so many parents in our community! And thank you for the futures you are impacting for the children that are now being taught by their parents!

Kirk Cameron, Executive Director

Recruiting Board Members

Are you looking for a rewarding experience?

A new opportunity to give back to your community?

Do you have a passion for children and literacy?

The Craddock Center is looking for motivated individuals to serve on its Board of Directors.

Most of us reach a point in our lives where we need a new challenge. What better way to introduce a new challenge than to inspire change by serving on a nonprofit Board such as with The Craddock Center. As a Board Member, you will witness first-hand the impact of our programs for the children and families in our community while offering advice, oversight, and support.

Nonprofits such as The Craddock Center lead by fulfilling our mission and working to make an impact on the children and families of southern Appalachia. We are looking for members of our community who want to lead with us and bring your skills and expertise to make a difference in our community!

If you have an interest in serving on the Board of The Craddock Center, please contact Kirk Cameron at kirk.craddock@gmail.com.

DONATE NOW

You can support

The Craddock Center

1. Open camera
2. Scan code
3. Give now

**Thank You for
your generosity!**



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 January 1, 2025, through June 19, 2026.**

\$50,000+

Thornwell Family Foundation

\$30,000+

The Warren and Augusta Hume Foundation

\$15,000+

William B. Orkin Foundation, Inc.
Jim and Carla Self

\$10,000+

The George Link Jr.
Charitable Trust
Gary and Nancy Fayard

Nettie Craddock
Linda Kliros

\$9,000+

Heidi and Todd Ferraro
Friendship Christian Church
Elizabeth Roberts King Endowment

\$8,000+

Elijay Lions Club

\$6,000+

Earline Croke

\$5,000+

Hammill Family Foundation
Ray Larson
Faith, Hope, and Charity
Dr. Russ Atchley
Dr. George and Mrs. Susan Piros

\$4,000+

Jerry and Faye Hardiman

\$3,000+

Clipper Petroleum Foundation
Big Canoe Chapel
Women's Fellowship
August Fifth Foundation, Inc.

\$2,000+

Blue Ridge Kiwanis Club, Inc.
Piedmont Charitable Foundation Inc.
Faith Presbyterian Church
Milly Hastings & Steve Stevens
Due West UMC

Jane Simpson
Max and Sandy White
Sally C. Anderson
Hartwell & Susan Dew
Janice Glascock

Marcia Lehman
Mark & Lisa Snoddy
Amicalola EMC Trust
Diane Bales and James Gibson
New Hope Christian Church

Kirk Cameron & Michael Kilpatrick
Barbara and Bill Johnson
Karen Boring

\$1,000+

Susan Elliott-Bryan
Sarah Allred
August Fifth Foundation, Inc.
Michael and Amelia Ellison
William E. and Patty Crowl
Ronald & Bette Jensen
Robin Hering

Patti O'Dell
Michele Gravelle
Marvin and Eileen McRoberts
America's RV Warranty Corp
Sue and Mike Hriljac
Richard and Cathy Cavagnaro
Bev Cook

Sherry and Bill Echelberger
First Christian Church of Decatur
First United Methodist Church - Elijay
Gerald and Joan Lord
Steven & Annette McBrayer
Dr. Rolf Meinhold
Jerald & Aundre Rookstool

Jack and Trisha Senterfitt
Daniel M. and Maureen M. Hicks
Jerry and Judy Rochelle
AA Thursday nights
Greer and Todd Plunkett

\$500+

Christian Women's Fellowship
Groovy Zoo
W. Arlyn & Susan Moulder
Vivian H. Guthrie
Tommy and Cathy Archibald

Linda and John Montgomery
Clarence F. and Gwendolyn G. Seeliger
Lydia Weathersby
AA Tuesday nights
Jeffrey Ray

Paul H. Anderson
Community Foundation for Northeast GA
Joseph Cantwell
Gordon Hellman
Ethel Hock

Larry King
Carol G. McGinnis
Nancy Sargent McGrath

Up to \$499

First United Methodist Church Blairsville
Southstate Bank
Anne M. Haltiwanger
Julie Weisberg
Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge
Log Cabin Community Church
Mountain Light Unitarian Universalist Church
Travis Bealmear
Bascomb UMC United Women in Faith
Ken Cissna
Steven Dennison
Ted and Cindy Minick
Jack Nolen
Sandy Springs Christian Church
Emily O. Smith
Albert Toth
Phyllis & Joseph Adams
Wayne Everbach
Robert and Nancy Leitch
Debby Westcott
Dairy Queen Grill & Chill
District 15 B
Blue Cabin rentals
Kenneth W. Irby
Kathy and Art Judy

Gerald Kersey
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Martin
Michael G. McWilliams
Eugene Watson and Lois Rogers-Watson
Judy Weiland
Sandy Wilbanks
Johnny W. Wray
Carol Hanson
Blake Jaurigue
David Akers
Michael Sullivan
James R. and Betty Willis
The Craddock Center Board
Mark Stallings
Gary Batchelor
Robert & Jeannie Haralson
Donna Helgesonden
Angela Morton
Alan Schulman
Louanne Watkins
R. Michael and Andrea S. Bales
Nordstrom
Chestnut Ridge Christian Church
Disciple Women
Darryl D. and Marilyn J. Devnich
Milton S. and Janis Hill

Amber Johnson
Marla Johnson
Mary Elisabeth Jones
Jane F. Keene
Robert Lauth
Luther and Martha Lewis
Lumpkin, Lillie Mae
Marage, Mary
Murrey IV, Edward
Rees III, Howard D. and Julie A. Weisberg
Robert B Smith III M.D.
Rosenberg, Karen
Strickland, Kenneth & Frances
North Lane Technologies
Roberts, Wesley
Webb, Joseph C & Patricia
Anna-Soission, Kimberly
Ida-Anne Clarke
Coombs, Richard J.
Greenwall, Kurt
Higginbotham, Lynn
Krick, Charles S.
Meeks, Andy & Sherry
Morrison, Hedy
Olipant, Michael
Roberts, Beth

Payne, Diane
Mansfield, Whitacre T. and Jean Ann
Thrivent Financial DAF
Ploetz, Ann
Shelton, James
Cowdrick, Robert & Emily
Ann Hixon
Frances E. Shumake
Frieda Brands
George Taylor
Christoph Tallerico
Manuela Uhl
Brian and Sheila Clayton
Beverly and Tom Ottinger
Bonnie and Franklin Bowman
Beverly Cook
Becky Walls
Heidi and James Kennedy
Bill Bellows
Charles and Sheila Shaw
Carolyn Lakes
Kathy Williams
Fay and Ann Pearce
Ross and Judith Pfingsten
Byron and Judy Wyndham
Karlene Ferguson

Meghan Vesel
Donald Dunning
Paula King
Sara Porter
James Holt
Louisa Brown
William and Connie Inglish
Glenn and Brenda McQuown
Barbara Clark
Lynda Echelberger
Jeanie and Tim May
Laura Lafitte
Emily Smith
Rev. and Mrs. Richard Ziglar
Lisa and Tim Doherty
Overall Pest Solutions
Collette's Cleaning Crews
Carol Moulder
Gilmer County Family Connection
Sheilah Harrison
United Community
Larry and Linda Spalding
Kelly Galambos
The Ridge Luxury Rentals
Liese and Phillip Connell