

The Craddock Center

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



YEARS ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

FY 21 Annual Report
August 2020 - July 2021

Table of Contents

The Craddock Center Board of Directors and Staff	2
From the Executive Director	3
From the President	4
From Our Founder	5
Celebrating our 20th Anniversary – Past, Present and Future	6
Overview.....	7
Programs.....	9
Thanks to our Volunteers	13
Friends of The Craddock Center	14
Annual Report - Appendix 1	15

The Craddock Center Board of Directors and Staff

FOUNDER

Dr. Fred B. Craddock

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Beth Roberts, *President*

Sue Hriljac, *Vice President, Programs*

Dr. Diane Bales, *Secretary*

John Craddock, *Treasurer*

Lynn Doss

Bruce Harken

Milly Hastings

Mark Hellman

Marcia Lehman

Joe Cantwell

Robin Massaro

Nettie Craddock – *Emeritus*

Bill Crawl – *Emeritus President*

STAFF

Kirk Cameron, *Executive Director*

Anne Williamson, *Office Manager*

Teri Slemons, *CPA/Financial Administrator*



From the Executive Director

Like other non-profits, The Craddock Center was impacted by the pandemic. Fortunately, we never closed but we could not work face-to-face with the children we support. However, we remained in contact with the children through our delivery of books three times since November 2020, the knitted hats, the wooden toys, and the Santa visits. And, because of the continued support of our donors, WE NEVER CLOSED!

I am proud to point out that the leadership of The Craddock Center has been good stewards of the time afforded us during this pandemic. During this time, we: created a new program for the children, Summer Send Off 2021 to promote summer learning; developed an updated strategic plan to provide guidance and focus for the next three years; built collaborative relationships with other non-profits in our area; focused on the marketing of The Craddock Center through our updated website and newsletter, use of social media, the gift of our new sign along highway 515; and developed a short-term and long-term maintenance plan for the buildings and grounds of The Craddock Center. All of these things will build a solid foundation for our future.

As we emerge from the pandemic, what does the future look like?

Unlike many small to medium non-profits who are now emerging from the pandemic, our future is clear! And this is because of those items noted above. During this next year and the years to come we will focus on the following. We will:

- Return to the classrooms and to our children the first week of October 2021.
- Identify ways to reach the 3- and 4-year-olds in the nine counties that we serve that are not in preschool, pre-K and Head Start programs.
- Create programs to support the “Family Enrichment” part of our mission.
- Be good stewards of the buildings and grounds of The Craddock Center and complete the maintenance plan that has been developed.
- Increase the size of the donor base of The Craddock Center and attract younger donors to protect our future financial sustainability.
- Continue efforts to increase the awareness of The Craddock Center in our surrounding areas by the use of social media, radio, TV and the newspapers.

These goals are realistic, they are attainable!

I look forward to reporting on our progress in next year’s Annual Report.

Kirk Cameron
Executive Director



From the President

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 on Zoom until it is safe to be in classrooms 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,

Beth Roberts
Board President



From Our Founder

During this last fiscal year, The Craddock Center began celebrating its 20th Anniversary of serving the children, families, and communities of Southern Appalachia. It is appropriate to have a word from our founder, Dr. Fred Craddock in this Annual Report.

The following is from Dr. Craddock's book, *Milk & Honey*, and was written in November 2004.

It hurts, but I understand when someone turns down our request for financial support with the response, "We give to the poor but to programs that meet their *real* needs." Meaning, of course, food and clothing, especially at Christmas.

Blessing on those programs; who could deny food and clothing to a child? The Craddock Center has a small emergency fund and not a week goes by without at least one claim on that purse. But that is not our primary mission. **We 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.** We do this through songs, art, and stories. Studies show that participating in such programs increases a child's success in school and in life in the community.

The records of some charities indicate that they give to children just as they gave to their parents and to their grandparents. Generation after generation the story continues the same.

Our goal is to break the cycle, to change the story. There are 13 million children living in depressing poverty in this country. But we get up each morning believing our small effort is making and will continue to make a difference. And every dollar we receive is an investment in that difference, and, on behalf of the children, we thank you.



YEARS ANNIVERSARY





YEARS ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating our 20th Anniversary – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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.

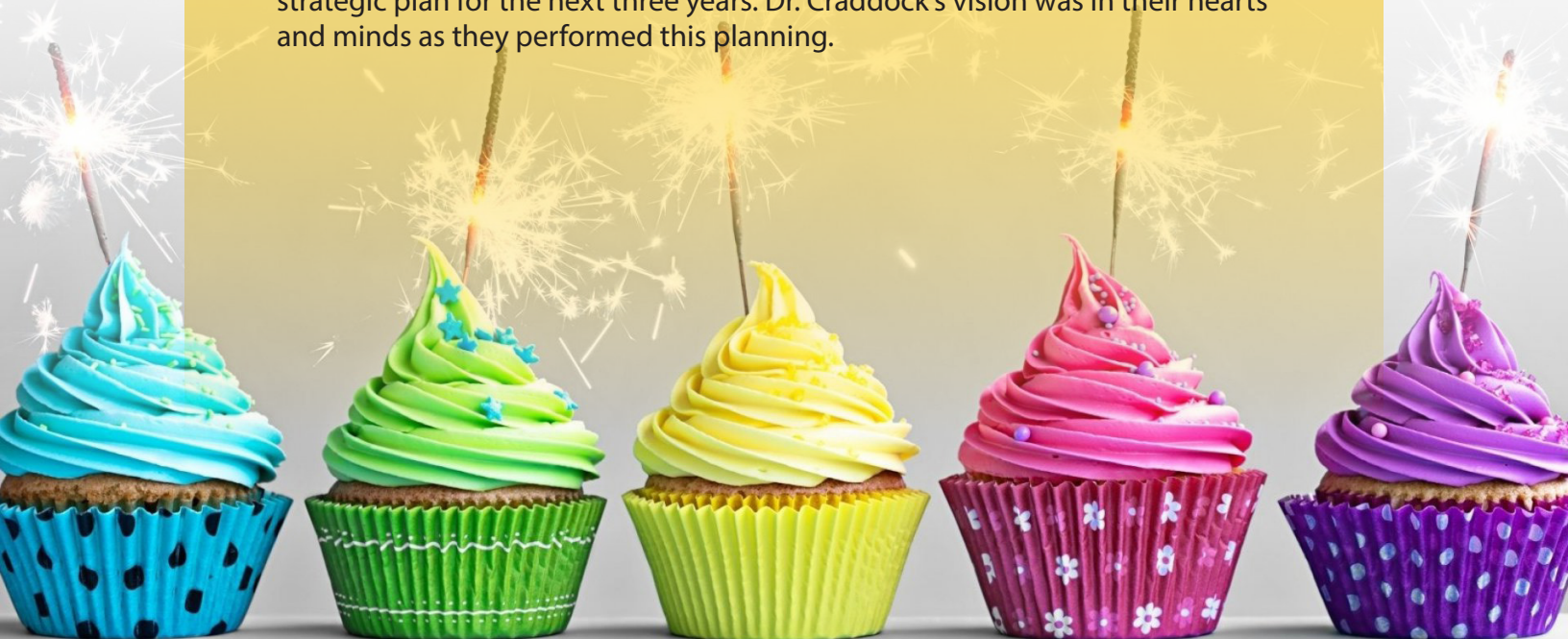
So, what should we do going forward?

The Craddock Center will 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 has completed work on the strategic plan for the next three years. Dr. Craddock's vision was in their hearts and minds as they performed this planning.



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 the rest of their life.

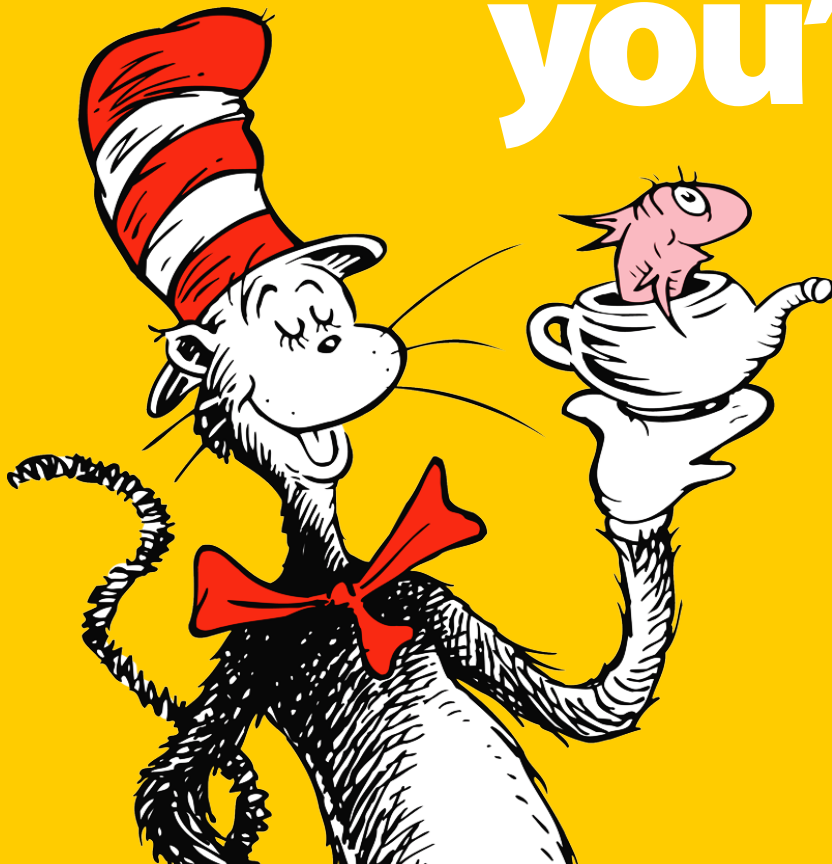
This is what The Craddock Center is trying to address, and prevent, through our Pre-K and Head Start programs. Our founders often spoke on the importance of providing these very young ones with enriching activities to encourage creativity and experiences with the arts. As a result, The Craddock Center's 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.



**“The more that
you read, the
more things you
will know. The
more you learn,
the more places
you’ll go.”**

— Dr. Seuss



Programs

CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The Children's Enrichment Program (CEP) is considered the signature program of The Craddock Center. In 2020 - 2021, the pandemic prevented our providing the in-person programming that we normally provide our children. In spite of the pandemic, these children still received gifts of love from The Craddock Center.

In November 2020, our volunteers delivered nearly 1,200 brand-new children's books and handmade knitted caps that were donated to The Craddock Center.

Using Zoom technology, the annual tradition of December visits by Santa and Mrs. Claus was a huge success. Our volunteers also delivered handmade wooden toys and candy canes to children.

The Craddock Center continued its celebration of Read Across America Day and the birthday of Dr. Seuss by providing all of our children with a brand-new Dr. Seuss book.

In spite of the pandemic, The Craddock Center created a new CEP program for our children. In May 2021 we launched *Summer Send Off*. The goal of this program is to promote reading and creative activities during the summer to close the learning gap before entering Kindergarten. Each child received a "Goodie Bag" (image to right) with a brand-new book, a cartoon book log to promote reading, stickers, and arts and crafts supplies to make hand puppets.

Our Children's Enrichment Program is delivered free of charge to schools in our Southern Appalachian area. Priority is given to schools with the highest percentage of children on free or reduced lunches. Storytellers also bring to life engaging, language-rich stories, often with Appalachian themes, for Head Start and preschool children. Our CEP artists use props, voices, sign language, puppet stages, and movement to share their talents and create learning experiences that build school readiness, imagination, emerging literacy skills, and creativity.





THE STORY EXPRESS

The Story Express program provides hundreds of new children's books to our classrooms three times during the school year. Each time The Story Express visits a school, our CEP Artists and volunteers bring in hundreds of books for the children to choose one of their own!

In addition to classrooms, The Story Express™ program visits community events and Camp Craddock sites 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.

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.

CAMP CRADDOCK

During 2021, The Craddock Center was again faced with making a difficult decision to suspend Camp Craddock for the Summer of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Camp Craddock is a **mobile** summer camp experience. A host of volunteers, primarily made up of youth groups and organizations, come to Cherry Log from all over the country bringing stories, songs, books, crafts, and games to children at different sites in Gilmer, Fannin, and Pickens Counties as well as Murphy, North Carolina. Camp Craddock provides eager volunteers with hands-on experiences and on-site training on how to deliver "Happy and Hope" to children in their neighborhood, apartment complexes, and community locations. The Craddock Center looks forward to resuming Camp Craddock during the summer of 2022.





KNITTED HATS AND WOODEN TOYS

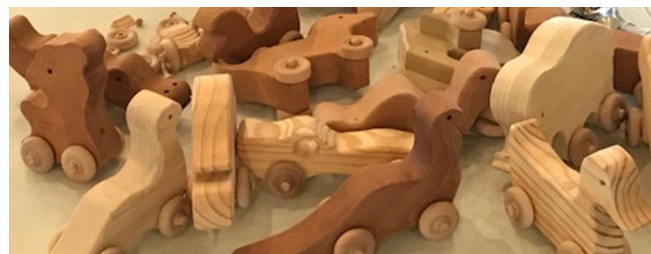
Winters in the mountains can be cold, and many of the children we serve do not have adequate clothing for the cold, winter months. A warm knitted hat helps tremendously in preventing loss of critical body heat in the very young. During the wintertime visits from our CEP artists and volunteers, the children we serve receive these cozy knit hats. 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 hats: **Ann Grant from Atlanta, Marcia Congdon from Cherry Log, the Prayer Shawl Ministry from the Lutheran Church By the Lake in McCormick, SC, and the Fiber Art Group of the Blue Ridge Mountain Arts Association.**

We are also most appreciative of our generous and talented “elves” from Texas and Florida who send cases of hand-carved, wooden toys each year as gifts to children in the Children’s Enrichment Program. In many of our schools and during the yearly Foster Families Christmas Parties, these toys and hats & gloves are delivered by our own Santa and Mrs. Claus during November and December.

Thanks to the following for making these wonderful toys: **Toy Makers of East Lake in Palm, Harbor, FL, St. Luke’s United Methodist Church Houston, TX and Gary Padgett in Woodstock, GA**, who send cases of hand-carved, wooden toys each year as gifts to children.

In the box from St. Luke’s we found the following message: “These wooden toys were lovingly made by the St. Luke’s Methodist Church Woodshop. The wood was once nothing but scraps. These scraps become toys for children. In the same way, in the hands of Jesus the Master Carpenter, we too are changed into something of worth and beauty.”



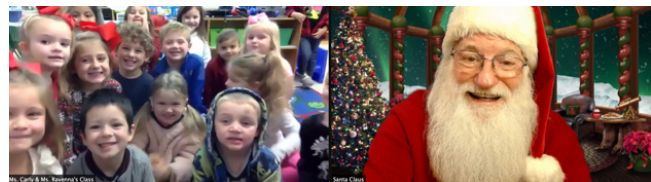
VISITS FROM SANTA

During a normal year, our Santa Claus, Santa Jack, and Mrs. Claus visit the classrooms of the 1200+ children we serve. He sings with the kids, listens to their Christmas wishes (in English and Spanish) and hand out the handmade wooden toys that are donated to The Craddock Center. This was not a normal year!

But, Santa is very clever and technology savvy. This year he used Zoom to reach out to most of our children. He wasn’t there in person, but he could still talk to them, sing Christmas songs, hear their wishes and remind them that LOVE is the most important thing of all and reminds them to give their parents a big hug. Volunteers delivered the handmade wooden toys to the schools to be given to the children.

Santa also did four drive bys in his Red Sleigh Pickup Truck. These children could talk to Santa from a distance and sing some Christmas songs. They also received the wooden toys.

Thanks to Santa and Mrs. Claus (Jack and Trisha Senterfitt) for volunteering year after year to bring holiday joy and love to these wonderful children!



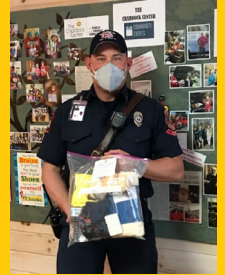
CRADDOCK CARES

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.

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
- Tooth brush and tooth paste
- Hand towel
- Hat and gloves (winter months)



WELCOME NEWBORN KITS



In spite of the pandemic, The Craddock Center continued to develop new programs to serve our community. In June 2021 we teamed up with Dr. Benjamin Harris, OB/GYN of Union General Women's Health, to reach the newborns of families in need in three of the counties (Fannin, Union, and Cherokee) we serve.

On behalf of The Craddock Center, Dr. Harris and his associates 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 rattle and a small wooden toy.

The goal is to promote learning skills 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 and videos of our artists. 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. Dr. Harris said they will encourage the families to reach out to us.

KITS FOR KIDS

In July 2021 The Craddock Center began working with the Fannin County DFCS to provide kits for children that are in transition. The kits are for ages: 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. The kits contain a: blanket, socks, toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, shampoo, a book (and toy for the youngest group), and non-perishable snacks.

Family Services often finds themselves working with kids of all ages in a crisis situation where a transition from an abusive environment to a safe environment is occurring. These kits are designed to provide the children in transition those necessities that are immediately needed as the transition begins.



“One person caring about another represents life’s greatest value.”

— Jim Rohn

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 2019-2020 year and grew more 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 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 and Family Room are open every day for donations and open to families to select their items two days a week.



Thanks to our Volunteers

This past year was full of challenges for The Craddock Center and the communities we serve. But, here 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 reached out to the last 20 years and particularly the last year during this pandemic. 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.



“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For indeed, that’s all who ever have.”

— Margaret Mead

Friends of The Craddock Center

It is the friends of The Craddock Center who have made our work possible the last 20 years as we live and experience the vision of Fred and Nettie Craddock to *"enrich the lives of children and families in Southern Appalachia."*

Thank you and recognition to those individuals, organizations, and foundations for your generosity since January 1, 2021.



"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you."

— John Bunyan

\$15,000+

The George Link Jr. Charitable Trust
William B. Orkin Foundation, Inc.

\$10,000+

Marshall Burke
Kirk Cameron and Michael Kilpatrick
Mrs. Nettie Craddock

\$5,000+

Joseph Cantwell
Ethel and Clayton Hock
Scott Hudgens Family Foundation, Inc.
Elizabeth Roberts King Endowment

\$3,000+

North Georgia Community Foundation
CLR Holding Corporation
Faith, Hope and Charity

Eugene and Karen Boring
Christian Church Foundation

\$2,000+

Ray E. Larson
Richard and Sally Sears Belcher Gift Fund
Milly Hastings and Steve Stevens

Ameriprise Financial -
Michelle and Steve Flynn
Robert and Jeannie Haralson

Larry King
Linda Kliros
Church of the Good Samaritan

\$1,000+

Susan and Mike Hriljac
Diane Bales
Amicalola EMC Trust

Gilmer County Family Connection
Trisha and Jack Senterfitt
Russ Atchley

Mark and Judith Musick
Tri-State EMC Foundation
Beth Roberts

\$500+

Gayle Curtin
Loahna Brenner
Lynn Doss
August Fifth Foundation, Inc.
Community Foundation
for Northeast Georgia

William and Patty Crowl
Ellijay Lions Club Charities
Sarah and Floyd Feeley Fund
Ronald and Bette Jensen
Earline Crooke
Jen and Ryon McCabe

Gordon Hellman
South State Bank of Blue Ridge, Georgia
Network for Good
Barry and Cathy Vincent
John and JoAnn Orr
Cheryl Jordon

Up to \$500

Frank Bratcher
Lynette Brown
Bruce Harken
Douglas and Donna Jones
Log Cabin Community Church
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
Clarence and Gwendolyn Seeliger
Rebecca and Daniel Doster
Jacqueline Hix
Camille Boyd
Robert and Ida-Anne Clarke
Linda and John Montgomery
Nancy M. Payne
Jay Smith
Leslie and Susan Spencer
Ruth L. Webb
Willis and Leona DuVall
Mark Hellman

Susan Rawls
James R. and Betty Willis
Cherry Log Disciples Women
Destini and Matthew Shope
Tommy and Cathy Archibald
Linda and Maxie Brown
Rebecca J. Bunton
James and Vicki Collins
Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge
James Riggans
Betty Lamb
Andy and Sherry Meeks
Layne Earl and Linda Smith
Thomas Rayburn
Louise H. Reaves
Cathy Saunders
Barbara Thompson
John H. and Frances Tipton

Johnny W. Wray
Richard and Peggy Ziglar
Thomas and Jane Keene
Albert Toth
Tom and Beverly Ottinger
Ken Brenneman
Bill and Sherry Echelberger
Jim McLean
Richard J. Coombs
Abigail Storey
Beth Bowser
Ellen Bulterman
Sandra De Rose
Amy Grosklags
Charles S. Krick
Lori and Ron McCane
Joanne Verburg
Darwin and Leslie Brook

Marguerite and Charles Burch
Chris Hall
Angela DeLorme, P.C.
Frances E. Shumake
Gerald Goeller
Rachel Callihan-Cowart
Mary P. Beussee
Thomas Weatherly
Jesse Alsobrook
Carol and Tom Grace
Deanna Turco
Susan and Vincent Marino
Lois and Eugene Watson
Scott and Ann Smith
Candace Youngberg
Stephanie and John Hodgkin
Thomas Johnson

ANNUAL REPORT - APPENDIX 1

CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT PROGRAM DATA

States, Districts, Schools, Programs, and Numbers Served

FY 2020-2021

State and School District	School and Program	Number of Children Served	Number of Classrooms
Tennessee			
Polk County	Copper Basin ES (preschool)	20	1
		TN Total = 20	TN Total = 1
North Carolina			
Cherokee County	Andrews HS (Head Start)	20	2
	Andrews ES (preschool)	18	1
	Martins Cr (preschool)	13	1
	Murphy HS (Head Start)	51	3
	Murphy ES (preschool)	34	2
	Peachtree ES (preschool)	14	1
	Ranger ES (preschool)	17	2
		NC Total = 167	NC Total = 12
Georgia			
Dawson County	Dawson HS (Head Start)	42	4
Gilmer County	Gilmer HS (Head Start)	65	4
	Gilmer Primary (preschool)	66	3
	Ellijay ES (preschool)	66	3
	NGCA (preschool)	37	2
Fannin County	Blue Ridge ES (preschool)	22	1
	Fannin HS (Head Start)	90	7
	East Fannin ES (preschool)	22	1
	Milestones PS (preschool)	23	2
	West Fannin ES (preschool)	22	1
Lumpkin County	Lumpkin HS (Head Start)	115	7
Pickens County	Pickens HS (Head Start)	97	6
Towns County	Towns HS & PS (Head Start & preschool)	55	3
Union County	Union ES (preschool)	112	6
	Union HS (Head Start)	28	2
		GA Total = 862	GA Total = 52
Southern Appalachian Total		Total = 1,049	Total = 65

The Craddock Center

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