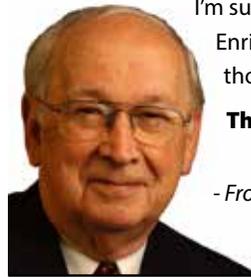


Our mission is to deliver educational and cultural programs to children, families, and communities, primarily in Southern Appalachia. We serve by sharing and spreading centuries-old traditions of song and story.

A Taste of Milk & Honey

Yes, I Guess You Could Say that our Children's Enrichment Program adds luxury to the otherwise rather sparse lives of many of the children we serve. This is not to say that we regard as of less value the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter, needs that occupy parents of the children. Of course not. We watch and listen and often stretch our funds to help address those needs. But the point is, we do not regard all luxuries as luxuries. A story, a song, a book, a toy, a funny hat, a silly game: these, too, are necessities, not luxuries. It is not the case that bread on the table is the only necessity; so is the candle, the violin, the colorful napkin, and the laughter of those who love the child. These, too, are essential because the children are human beings, created in God's image, with hearts, minds, feelings, and imagination.

Once Jesus and his friends were guests at a dinner party at which a woman anointed Jesus with an expensive ointment. Some of Jesus' friends objected, calling her act "wasteful." Jesus heard their complaining and responded sharply, "Leave her alone; she has done a beautiful thing for me."



I'm sure you already know, but let me again assure all of you who give to the Children's Enrichment Program: Not one penny of your gift is wasted. Every penny goes toward those things every child really needs.

Thank you for your generosity.

- From Dr. Fred Craddock, Milk & Honey, July 2009

From the Executive Director

HAPPY NEW YEAR! On July 31, 2022, The Craddock Center wrapped up another outstanding fiscal year. We had an exceptionally good year in so many ways. Some of the highlights of the year include:

- The Craddock Center and its Arts Specialists provided the Children's Enrichment Program to 1,140 pre-K and Head Start children in nine counties in three states. We provided these children: three brand new books during the year, handmade knitted hats & wooden toys, a pair of gloves, Santa visits, and 593 hours of Children's Enrichment Programming. And, thanks to our donors, we were able to go into the classrooms every week!
- We also donated 500 new books and 1,200 nearly new books to other non-profits and organizations and gave away 550 books to children at local festivals.
- We chartered a new Cub Scout Troop.
- Two new Alcoholics Anonymous groups began meeting weekly at The Craddock Center.
- We supported Mental Health initiatives and programs in Fannin and Gilmer counties.
- We added five New board members.
- The Living Room program provided furniture and household goods to 89 families and individuals.
- 151 volunteers logged 1,591 hours to support the work of The Craddock Center. 23 new volunteers joined us this past fiscal year.
- We provided 84 Craddock Cares, Welcome Newborn, and Kits for Kids bags to local first responders and other organizations and non-profits.

We ended the year in a strong financial position due to the generosity of our donors and record grant income. The Craddock Center added 99 new supporters to our donor rolls. Thank you!!

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



A DREAM COMES TRUE

MT. KILIMANJARO

What is it like to manifest a 20-year-old dream to summit the world's tallest freestanding mountain? I finally found out this June when I climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania with Beyond Adventures. COVID postponed this trip twice, but it was worth the wait!



My trip kicked off with nearly missing my flight and my luggage arriving 48 hours late! Thankfully, my bags arrived just before our early morning departure for Kilimanjaro National Park. These mishaps added to the adventure, reminding me to surrender control and trust that this unique experience would be just as it should be.

Our group of eight was met by four guides and twenty porters who were there to do everything they could to help us get up the mountain. Our lead guides have been climbing Kibo, the highest of Kili's three peaks, for over 20 years, with 250+treks to the summit. Their knowledge and experience put us at ease every day. Our porters did everything else – cooking, setting up tents, pumping water, and carrying equipment on their backs, shoulders, and heads always with smiles on their faces and genuine care for our well-being. At the end of each day's climb my porter, Ahimidewe, greeted me with a huge smile, fist bump, and "Good job, sister," before taking my pack and poles to my tent and leading me to a chair to rest.

The hike took us through the four climate zones of Kilimanjaro – rainforest, moorland, alpine desert, and glacier. We saw plants native to the mountain, clouds that covered everything below, glorious sunsets, and endless trails down into valleys and up along ridges as we hiked high and slept low. Before this trip, I had not been above 4,000 feet!

Our group bonded instantly and enjoyed encouraging conversations each day. We learned about the mountain and its beauty from our guides. We laughed so much... when our guide John Simon would tell us the day would be, "easy peasy squeeze lemon," when Drew, president of Beyond Adventures, tried to reassure us that the hike would be, "rolling hills," and when Belosi, our water porter whose incredible strength pumped water for us at every campsite, would ask to refill our water bottles because he'd, "like to close my office."





Each day on Kilimanjaro began with, “Knock, knock, tea,” from our cooks Alphons and Rahma, who brought hot tea and coffee to my tent, followed by a bowl of warm water for washing. We’d join in the mess tent for a delicious hot breakfast that began with porridge, prep for the climb, and praying with our team for the day ahead. We began our hikes in silence to reflect on the experience.

Augustine, one of my fellow climbers and regional director of Young Life in Uganda, has a laugh and smile to brighten anyone’s hardest day. He usually made it for about two minutes of silence before he wanted to talk to someone, but none of us ever seemed to mind.

On our second day I knew we would stop for lunch, but I was surprised to see the mess tent set up with table, chairs, and a hot meal prepared for us. After lunch we set back out on the trail, heading for a high altitude for acclimatization before descending into the valley for the night. In the meantime, our porters broke down lunch and raced past us yet again to get

to camp and set everything up for the evening. “Jambo!” they would call. “Asante sana (thank you so much)!” was our reply. We were encouraged each day when Gabriel, our lead guide, said at our final rest stop, “Okay guys, let’s go home!” We knew our campsite was close. We arrived to cheerful porters, a bustling campsite, and time to rest, read, journal, or gather in the mess tent for freshly popped popcorn, cocoa, and tea. Our days ended by sharing dinner together, reflecting on the day and receiving any details for tomorrow’s climb. Bedtime came early and the sounds of our porters finishing the day laughing and talking in Swahili helped us drift off to sleep.

We hiked for four days through beautiful terrain. We ate delicious meals including beef fajitas with homemade guacamole at 15,000 ft. We challenged our bodies to acclimate to altitude and slept on inclines in a tent. We celebrated the success of scaling an 800 ft. vertical rock wall, some more gracefully than others. Each day I grew more aware of the impending final push to the top.

We attempted a few hours rest at 16,000 feet before waking at 11:30 p.m. for a 12:30 a.m. departure. Winds whipped our tents that night, and we became anxious for what summit night would bring. We left under a full moon with headlamps lighting the way. Our guides and summit porters were an integral part of our successful climb to the top, carefully watching our every step. Around 17,000 ft I felt lightheaded, and I became worried I might not reach the summit. Another guide, Wilfred, helped me stand and picked up my pack. I assumed it was to shove my five layers on top into my shoulder straps, but instead he put his pack inside of mine and wore my pack for the remainder of the climb. I was overcome with emotion by this act of service, but Wilfred looked at me and smiled. He said, “No tears, Laura. Let’s go.” After five hours of hiking, we began to see the glimpse of a breathtaking sunrise over the horizon. At that same moment, “Here Comes the Sun,” by the Beatles came on the playlist I made for the summit. What timing! We continued all

the way to Uhuru (freedom, in Swahili) Peak at 19,354 ft. After congratulations and photos, we quickly began our descent to 13,000 ft. for a final night of camping.

Our last morning brought a celebration of gratitude for our team— singing, dancing, giving out tips and words of affirmation in both English and Swahili, and a prayer of thanksgiving for all the guides, porters, and their families. A long day of steep descent was filled with retelling stories from the climb, more laughter, and sore muscles.

We reached the gate at 6,000 ft to head back to Arusha. After final hugs goodbye, we boarded the bus to officially end the climb. While reaching the summit was a moment in time I will always remember, the greater gift was spending time with the amazing group that included not just those of us climbing, but the cloud of witnesses that loved and served every step of the way.

Laura Jensen is a member of the Board of Directors for The Craddock Center



Promoting Children's Literacy at Home

While teaching a child to read can feel daunting, there are actually a lot of really simple ways to encourage a positive relationship with reading. Here are some easy ways you can boost your child's literacy skills:

READ!

Reading to your child is the best way to help children develop literacy skills. Studies from around the world have found that children who are read to by their caregivers see numerous academic benefits. Kids who are read to have stronger early literacy skills, which makes learning to read easier. They also have a larger vocabulary. Simply reading books with your child every day will have a huge impact on their literacy skills.

Teach Children Rhymes & Songs

Nursery rhymes are not just cute songs children love to recite. They play a crucial role in language and literacy development. Rhymes help children develop an understanding of the patterns of language and understand the sounds and blends that are the building blocks of words. Teaching and practicing nursery rhymes will lay an important foundation for literacy.

Model Reading Behavior You Want to See

If you want to encourage literacy at home, make sure to model that behavior at home. Set aside time to turn off distractions like the television or your phone and sit down with a good book. This type of modeling will be powerful as children get older and are able to read independently. They'll see how they can incorporate reading into their daily lives even as other activities demand their attention.

Turn on the Captions

Reading doesn't just have to be with a book. We all watch online videos, television, and movies. Promote literacy by simply turning on the captions. It will help kids make a connection between the words they are hearing and the words they're reading on the screen. It's also a great way for them to identify any new vocabulary they hear. Next time they read that word in a text, they'll be more likely to correctly identify it.

Talk to Your Kids

Speaking to your children is a great way to increase their vocabulary. Many in education point to a "word gap," or a difference in vocabulary between children when they enter school. There are many causes for this gap, but one thing researchers have found is that children who get regular conversations with adults learn more words. Don't be afraid to use "big words" when talking to children. You can always explain their meaning, and the more often kids hear new words, the more likely they are to pick up on their meaning through context.

Practice Storytelling

A simple way to promote literacy at home is to encourage your child to tell you stories. This will help them gain a better understanding of the rhythm of narrative storytelling, which will benefit them as they grow and read more complex fiction. They can tell you real stories about their lives or make up stories and flex their imaginations.



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!

Happy & Hope...We Deliver



Calling All Knitters

The Craddock Center has a long-standing tradition of providing our 3- and 4-year-old children a handmade, knitted cap in November. This gift provides the children much-needed warmth during the winter. We have been able to do this because of the time and generosity of knitters and knitting groups from all over the country! THANK YOU!

As of the time of this publication, we have received 648 of the 1,200 knitted caps that we need for this November. You can mail your handmade knitted caps to The Craddock Center, 300 Cherry Log St., #69, Cherry Log, GA 30522. We can also pick them up within a reasonable distance from The Craddock Center. You can reach us at 706-632-1772.



Welcome to Our Newest Board Members

The Board of Directors of The Craddock Center welcomes its newest Board members, Bev Cook and Carol Hanson. If you have an interest in serving on the Board of The Craddock Center, please contact Kirk Cameron at kirk-craddock@tds.net.

Bev Cook



Bev has always been dedicated to education. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Evansville in 1973, a Master of Education in School Administration and Supervision from the University of Virginia in 1980, and an Education Specialist degree in 1985 from George Washington University. Bev went

on to teach elementary school for seven years before going into elementary administration for eight years. She worked as a mentor for first-year teachers in Jackson Public Schools in Mississippi and evaluated masters' level first-year teachers for Belhaven College. Bev also taught literacy workshops for volunteers. The last seven years of her education career involved School Evaluation and Improvement for JBHM Education Group and the Mississippi State Department of Education. Bev's current educational interest is educating parents of newborns to age three to be their child's first teacher. Bev recently moved to Mineral Bluff. She has two children, a daughter who teaches music in Xian, China, and a son in Seattle.

Carol Hanson



Carol is a native Georgian and is currently a resident of Snellville. She has extensive experience in the business world, including 11 years with Georgia Power Company in Atlanta, Georgia; 20 years with the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf in Clarkston, Georgia; and 12 years with U.S. Poultry & Egg Association in Tucker, Georgia. She retired from

full-time employment in 2013, vacating the position of Executive Assistant to the President of U.S. Poultry & Egg Association. Carol currently assists with administrative duties at New Hope Christian Church in Lawrenceville, Georgia. She also serves as Chair of the Board at New Hope. She has also had the privilege of working with underprivileged and special needs children on Roatan, an island off the coast of Honduras.

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



We Need Gloves for the Children!

On November 9th, we will give all of our 1,200 children a brand-new pair of gloves along with a handmade knitted cap and a new children's book.

The winters are harsh in the mountains of southern Appalachia and The Craddock Center wants to help provide warmth to our children. **YOU CAN HELP!**

We need 1,200 pairs of gloves. For as little as \$13.99 you can purchase a dozen pairs of gloves. Go to the following 'wish list' link <https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2EKBPJGEDZ6J?ref =w> share on Amazon to order gloves. You can also send a donation to 300 Cherry Log St, #69, Cherry Log, GA 30522 and make a note of 'gloves' in the lower left corner of the check.

Since making the initial appeal in the last issue of Milk & Honey, we have received 144 pairs of gloves and a donation of \$70 to purchase gloves... THANK YOU!

Let's help our children focus on learning and not on how to find ways to stay warm.

Thank you for your generosity!

DONATE NOW

You can support **The Craddock Center** NOW! Just hover over the code (below) with your phone camera and then select the "Craddock Center" prompt.

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 since January 1, 2021 (as of July 31, 2022).

\$30,000+

William B. Orkin Foundation, Inc.

\$20,000+

Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, Inc.

\$15,000+

The George Link Jr. Charitable Trust
Eugene and Karen Boring

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