

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.

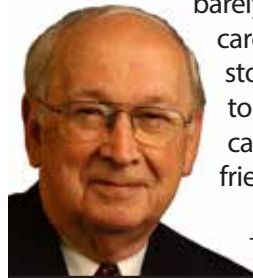
A Taste of Milk & Honey

MY VISION...My vision for The Craddock Center is clear and firm: that we keep our pledge, in some way, every day, to enrich lives through service.

This means that all who work in and through The Center, paid and volunteer, infuse every act and word with the grace of God. This is achieved not by an abundance of religious talk but by being gracious as God is. To be gracious is to welcome all without distinction. Some have and some do not; we make no distinction. Some give and some receive; we make no distinction. Some have been here for generations, and some arrived yesterday; we make no distinction. Some are young and some are old; we make no distinction. And every one of us has been, is, or will be a minority person, so who would presume to make distinctions?

To build such a community is difficult but not impossible. It takes time and effort to build trust so that those who have known only isolation or rejection will accept hospitality. Some are so needy that they have not realized what or how much they have to give to others. A few come running but many must be sought, and none are to be forgotten.

The program of The Center is determined by need. In some cases, it may begin with food, clothing, or housing, but that is only the beginning. There is no commandment, "Thou shalt barely get by." Every life needs enrichment and that means classes in health care, job training, family economics, child-rearing. It means music, art, and storytelling. It means getting together to listen to each other's stories and to enjoy one another. It means to include the confined, by visits, cards, calls, and gifts. It is to say, "This is a good place to live, to raise a family, build friendships, to grow old, and to die." This is my vision, and to it I give my life.



- From Dr. Fred Craddock, Milk & Honey, February 2004

From the Executive Director

I want to share three stories with you. These stories will show the long-lasting impact of the work of The Craddock Center on those we touch.

- A parent reached out to The Craddock Center earlier this year about having her daughter's Sweet Sixteen party at our event space. As we were touring the space, she saw a picture of three pre-K girls with their new knitted caps from The Craddock Center. She said, "Oh my! The girl on the right is my daughter." This is the same daughter for whom she is planning the party. She also mentioned, "Two of my children have experienced the wonderful programming of The Craddock Center."
- In March, I had a doctor's appointment and while waiting for the doctor, her medical assistant noted that I was still employed and asked where. I told her The Craddock Center. She said, "Really! My son still has the wooden toy he received from you 14 years ago when he was in kindergarten. It's on his bookcase with his trophies. Thank you for what you do for our children!"
- In April, I was waiting for an appointment and a young man walked by. I recognized him from somewhere. He came back to me and said, "Aren't you from The Craddock Center?" I replied, "Yes." I then remembered he was a volunteer from Mineral Springs. He said, "I want to come back and help." His mother was nearby and told me that he was so proud of the certificate he received for volunteering. She said, "It is under his pillow. That is where he keeps things that are special to him."

It is moments like these that reinforce why I love my job and feel so proud of the work of The Craddock Center!

SMART BABIES

RECEIVES \$100,000 GRANT



The Craddock Center is excited to announce that Smart Babies, our newest program, received a grant of \$100,000 in late April 2024. This grant will fully fund the program through 2028.

The foundation awarding the grant wishes to remain anonymous. The foundation said they are excited to partner with The Craddock Center and they believe in our mission and wanted to help grow and sustain Smart Babies through 2028.



Smart Babies is designed to help parents of children, ages 0-3, to be their child's best first teacher. The program is provided by The Craddock Center and is free of charge to participants. The Smart Babies program is using the Ready for Kindergarten curriculum which emphasizes targets in the three following areas: Language and Literacy, Math and Reasoning, and Social and Emotional Learning. We are initially concentrating on workshops for parents with children in the following age groups: 0-1 years, 1-2 years, and 2-3 years.

Parents attend three free workshops for each age group. During each workshop, parents learn about targets in the three areas mentioned above and are given methods and tools (toys and books) to focus on these targets at home. There are many opportunities for sharing and practicing during the workshop. Snacks or lunch are provided after each workshop to promote further discussion and bonding among the parents.

Since 11/16/23, The Craddock Center has conducted ten workshops with twenty-four attendees.





The Craddock Center Sponsors an **EAGLE SCOUT**



Lennon Stover, a Boy Scout in a troop that often works with The Craddock Center Cub Scout Pack, approached The Craddock Center and Kirk Cameron to request we sponsor his Eagle Scout project and provide mentorship. Lennon's project was to write a children's book about the Boy Scout laws. This seemed like a perfect fit with the mission of The Craddock Center and we gladly signed on.

Lennon completed his book, "The Laws of Life," in early 2024 and he was awarded his Eagle Badge on April 22, 2024. Lennon's book is a collection of short stories written with the education and inspiration of young boys and girls in mind. He wrote it in the hopes of demonstrating twelve moral codes for children across the world. Lennon hopes his readers will grow up with these points in mind and live by them every day of their lives. He wants this collection to carry on the spirit of Scouting through generations.



The Eagle Scout Award is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Scouts program of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Since its inception in 1911, only a small percentage of Scouts have earned this prestigious rank. The Eagle Scout Award symbolizes a significant level of accomplishment, leadership, service, and personal development.

Many Eagle Scouts continue to live by the principles learned in Scouting throughout their lives. The skills and values instilled often lead to successful careers and roles as community leaders. The Eagle Scout Award is not just a recognition of past achievements but also a commitment to future service and leadership.

DONATE NOW

You can support
The Craddock Center

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**Thank You for
your generosity!**



The Craddock Center HITS THE LINKS

On a beautiful Saturday morning, May 11th, The Craddock Center hosted its first Mini Golf Tournament at the Cohutta Cove Mini Golf & Gem Mining in Blue Ridge, Georgia. It was a fun family and community event!

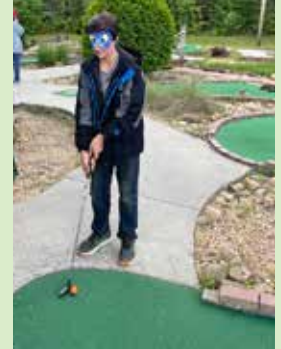
The tournament was a huge success. The laughter from those attending, children and adults, was heard all over the course. We set up wacky golf holes such as "Tutus on Two" and wearing a blindfold while playing a hole. It was great to see families having so much fun together. We gave away some incredible door prizes and presented awards for best scores and the most holes in one. In addition to the mini golf, our guests could enjoy free face painting and a balloon artist.

AND THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL SPONSORS FOR SUPPORTING OUR EVENT:

AFC Home Warranty, Kevin Panter Insurance, Anne Williamson - Coldwell Banker High Country, Georgia Senior Medicare Patrol, New Hope Christian Church- Lawrenceville, GA, Clay to Custom, America's RV Warranty, Blue Jeans Pizza & Pasta, Ace Hardware Blue Ridge, the Encouragement Project, Blue Ridge Adventure Wear, Cherry Log Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Executive Chef Justin White, Southern Comfort Cabin Rentals, Overall Pest Solutions, Becky Callihan, President of Kiwanis Club of Blue Ridge, Sue & Mike Hriljac, Patti O'Dell, Sherry & Bill Echelberger, Robin Massaro, Kirk Cameron & Michael Kilpatrick.

We also must thank our 27 volunteers who made sure our guests were welcomed and ensured a smooth event!

Also thank you to our Fundraising Committee members, Heidi Ferraro and Janice Glascock, for their months of planning to make sure the event was a success!



The
Craddock
Center



MINI
GOLF
TOURNAMENT

We are looking forward to
our Second Annual Mini Golf
Tournament on May 17, 2025.



START YOUR ENGINES... *Well, Almost*

The Craddock Center was excited to join the ranks of many other non-profits and businesses in the Blue Ridge area for the 2024 Blue Ridge Soap Box Derby.

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

Luke Mason was our driver for the age 13+ category and Miles Slemons was our driver for the age 7-12 category.

The Derby was originally scheduled for May 4th but had to be postponed due to the weather. It was re-scheduled for May 18th but also cancelled because of the weather. We are looking forward to revving up our engines and bringing our race team back in May 2025.

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. In 2023, the Derby had seventy drivers and over fifty cars.



Gilmer Schools Family Literacy Night
SAVE THE DATE!



Gilmer County FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT

On April 26, 2024, 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 and Claudia Bradford, two of our Arts Specialists, for volunteering at the event. Their wonderful costumes brought joy to the children!



The teachers sent us the following feedback for Summer Send Off 2024

“We appreciate everything that you and your team do for our children! They really enjoyed getting the books.”

- Stacey Trammell, Director of Lumpkin County Head Start

“Thank you for everything.”

- Brian Hoyt, Teacher, Murphy Pre-K

“Thank you guys so much for what you do for our kids.”

- Sharon Palmer, Director, Andrews Head Start

“We greatly appreciate your kindness and support for our students!”

- Tonya Kellogg, Director of Pickens County Head Start

“Thank you so much for the summer packets. The children loved them!”

- Holly Cook, Union County Elementary School Pre-K

“Thank you so much. The kiddos enjoyed.”

- Shirley Hooper, Murphy Head Start

Summer Send Off 2024

On May 15th, The Craddock Center celebrated ‘**Summer Send Off 2024**’. This is the fourth year for one of our newest programs. 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, 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 easily be 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.

Part of the funding for this program is made possible by a grant from the Jackson EMC Foundation. Thanks also to the many donors who responded to our ‘Amazon wish list’ and provided the books and supplies needed for the bags!

Thanks to the volunteers from the Gilmer High School College and Career Academy and Lynne Tholen for packing the bags!

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







We ♥ Our Volunteers

Celebrating Our Volunteers!

National Volunteer Week is celebrated annually during the third week of April and this year it was observed from April 21 to 27. This week-long celebration placed a spotlight on our volunteers and their invaluable seeds of kindness that are bettering our community. This celebration, which was established in 1974, provides the perfect opportunity to say thank you. It also challenges us to do better and look for ways to be active participants to positively impact our local communities.

The power to transform lives and our community is visible at every turn, and the National Volunteer Week raises awareness about the need to beef up volunteer efforts and preaches the gratifying sense of fulfillment derived through acts of volunteerism.

Volunteers are needed at The Craddock Center in the following areas:

- **Office Work** (Books, mailings, etc.)
- **Packing and Delivering** (Helping with the packing and delivering of books, hats, wooden toys to the children)
- **The Living Room** (Organizing the furniture and household goods)
- **Craddock Cares** (making kits to be provided to first responders and other non-profits)
- **Building and Lawn Maintenance** (Cleaning gutters, mowing grass, pruning trees and bushes, upkeep of driveway and buildings)
- **Special Events** (Cooking, cleaning, passing out information, decorating, etc.)
- **Hats and Wooden Toys** (Make hand-knitted hats and wooden toys)

Since August 1, 2023, we have had 320 volunteer encounters, totaling 2,808 hours. 64 volunteers served at The Craddock Center for the first time.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO ENRICH OUR COMMUNITY!!



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 August 1, 2023, through June 14, 2024.**

\$100,000+

ANONYMOUS FOUNDATION

\$20,000+

The Warren & Augusta Hume Foundation
Eugene and Karen Boring

\$15,000+

William B. Orkin Foundation, Inc.

\$10,000+

Gary and Nancy Fayard

\$9,000+

James and Carla Self

\$6,000+

Earline Crooke

\$5,000+

Elizabeth Roberts King Endowment
The Scott Hudgens Family Foundation
Piedmont Charitable Foundation
Mrs. Nettie Craddock

\$4,000+

Todd and Heidi Ferraro
Christian Church Foundation

\$3,000+

Susan Elliott-Bryan
Dr. Russ Atchley
New Hope Christian Church
Ellijay Lions Club

Faith, Hope, and Charity
Sarah Allred
Jerry and Faye Hardiman

\$2,000+

Sally C. Anderson
United Community Banks
Linda Kliros
North Georgia Community Foundation
John and Frances Tipton

Marcia Lehman
Milly Hastings and Steve Stevens
Ray Larson
AFC Home Club

\$1,000+

Robin Massaro
Due West UMC
Sue and Mike Hriljac
Gilmer County Family Connection
Clipper Petroleum Foundation
August Fifth Foundation, Inc.
Network for Good

Diane W. Bales
Ronald and Bette Jensen
Ann White Morton
Church of the Good Samaritan
Richard and Cathy Cavagnaro
Betty Scott Noble
Cherokee County Foundation

Patti O'Dell
Blue Ridge Kiwanis
Big Canoe Women's Fellowship
Bill and Patty Crowl
National Christian Foundation
Susan and Hartwell Dew
Gerald and Joan Lord

Marvin and Eileen McRoberts
Fannin County Family Connection
Jack and Trisha Senterfitt
Amicalola EMC Trust
John and Dee Craddock

\$500+

Gordon Hellman
Steven and Annette McBrayer
Alight Solutions
Beth Roberts
Kirk Cameron and Michael Kilpatrick
Christian Women's Fellowship
AA Thursday Nights
Judith Clairmont and Timothy Vanduser
Ken Cissna

Southern Comfort Cabin Rentals
Loahna Brenner
David Jones
Dianne Watson
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Musick
America's RV Warranty
Nancy Sargent McGrath
Carol McGinnis
Clay to Custom Construction

Ann H. Cook
Advisewell, Inc.
Clay and Ethel Hock
Rebecca and Daniel Doster
First Christian Church Decatur
Vivian Guthrie
Jerald and Aundre Rookstool
Overall Pest Solutions
William Prather

Larry King
Clarence and Gwendolyn Seeliger
Women of Grace at
Blue Ridge Methodist Church
Rebecca Bunton
John Hastings
Cathy and Thomas Archibald
Byron and Judy Wyndham
Emily Smith

Up to \$500

Ted and Cindy Minick
Jewish Congregation of Blue Ridge
Sherry and Bill Echelberger
Lutheran Church by the Lake Women
Anne Williamson
James Shelton
Log Cabin Community Church
Jeffre Ray
Wayne Everbach
Jack Nolen
Steven Dennison
Michael Jones
Linda Sutton
Elizabeth Howard
William and Connie English
Georgia Mountain Health Services
Daniel and Maureen Hicks
Blue Jeans Pizza & Pasta
June Krise
Paul H. Anderson
Arlyn and Susan Moulder
Tom and Beverly Ottinger
David Akers
Albert Toth

Cynthia Easterling
Johnny Wray
Celine Melton
Kenneth Irby
Layne Smith
Ace Hardware Blue Ridge
Kevin Panter Insurance
Nordstrom
Eugene and Lois Watson
Betty Lamb
Judy Weiland
Linda and John Montgomery
Jeanie and Tim May
Ben and Claire Shelley
Sandy Springs Christian Church
Michael and Amelia Ellison
Bill and Sharon Golden
Robert Gleadall
Beth Jones
Wendell and Jennifer Fox
Becky Callihan
James and Betty Willis
Carol Moulder
Richard Coombs

Carol Hanson
District 15B
Michael McWilliams
Richard and Patricia Kassal
Marla Johnson
Alan Kolodkin
Russell Pittman
Christopher Caltrider
Jay Smith
Jane Simpson
Cherry Log Christian
Church Disciples Women
Stacy Carr
Lillie Mae Lumpkin
Darryl and Marilyn Devnich
Lisa Weir
Judith Long
Chris Martinez
Bascomb UMC United Women in Faith
Milton and Janis Hill
Jeremy King
Melba Gandy
Louise Reaves
Darlene Bundrick

Catherine Spruill
Debbie Peterson
Karen Lee Howarth
Group of Rachel
Bonnie and Franklin Bowman
Edward and Helen Hatch
Blue Ridge Community Theater
Carol Martel
Verint, Inc.
Allen and Sharon Garrison
Cassie and Lennon Stover
Calvin and Fran Hopper
Karen Dorgan
J. Walton Senterfitt
Vera Roberts
Sarah Lightner
Joanne McNally
Kathleen Matthews
Karen Bowyer
Tracy Goodbar
Richard and Linda Goddard
Janice Glascock
Rick Flint
Michael and Andrea Bales

James and Betty Jo Holt
Mary Nelle Cook
Deanna Turco
Luther and Martha Lewis
Whitacre and Jean Ann Mansfield
Betsy Becker
Terry Fields
Robert and Emily Cowdrick
Carolyn Scott
Jackie Lumpkin
Carolyn Lakes
Michael Oliphant
Ann Brayley
Frances Shumake
Alvin and Chris Taylor
Francine Huff
Laura Litman
Jacqueline and John Congleton
Kyle and Debra Ermoian
Thomas and Jane Keene
Andy Meeks
Anonymous