



TENNESSEE ACTION COUNCIL

Project Life for Tennessee and Helping Hands

Fall 2024

Voices for the Unspoken: A Helping Hands Dinner Event

On September 19, 2024 Tennessee Action Council (TAC)'s Helping Hands Ministry held the third annual dinner event, Voices of the Unspoken, to benefit children entering foster care in Tennessee. Board President Jacqueline McDonald opened the evening's events by defining the challenge and potential for improving foster care.

Currently there are more than 9,000 children in foster care in the state of Tennessee. The state is ranked #1 in the nation for children being moved repeatedly from home to home within the system. Growing up in foster care and enduring the instability of multiple moves, adapting to new living situations, losing, and making new friendships and perhaps changing schools can have long lasting effects on the mental health and well-being of a vulnerable child. National statistics show that the foster care system impacts children well into adulthood: More than 50% of homeless population came through the foster care system; 75% of incarcerated individuals in the prison system have been in foster care; 60% of females rescued from sex trafficking were previously in foster care. These shocking statistics tell us that

we must do better!

There is hope in the many organizations who are stepping up to address specific needs for those in foster care. Some are aimed at direct support through DCS workers, such as CarePortal, which allows a social worker to communicate specific needs for foster and at-risk children to participating churches and other community-based organizations, to provide rapid and effective response. Helping Hands is pleased to provide a piece of the puzzle by supplying a new duffle bag to at risk children going into foster care which promotes a sense of self-worth and dignity during a vulnerable time in their life.

The usual scenario would be for a social worker to arrive at the child's current home with a 50-gallon black trash bag, to place the child's belongings in for transport to the foster



home. Can you imagine someone placing all you value in a garbage bag? Your clothes, pj's, toothbrush, favorite games and stuffies treated like insignificant trash. This still goes on in most states throughout the nation. TAC's Helping Hands ministry was formed to meet the specific need of providing a new, personalized duffle bag to each child entering foster care in the



Continued on Page 2

...Helping Hands Dinner, cont. from cover page

state of Tennessee. The organization started by supplying bags to 9 counties in middle Tennessee and two years ago stepped out in faith to purchase 5,000 bags at a cost of \$50,000. **That was enough to eradicate the use of garbage bags across our state for one year.** Supporters of this worthy cause have given generously to make this a reality.

This year's dinner was held at Old Natchez Trace Country Club, with an excellent



menu that featured salmon and beef medallions perfectly prepared along with whipped potatoes and green beans.

Dessert was a choice of delicious cheesecake or molten lava cake. Pastor Josh Huisman of New Hope Community Church led the opening prayer. The centerpieces, provided by Reinhold Holtkamp of Optimara were a mix of beautiful greenery and African violets that dinner attendees were able to take home at the end of the evening for a donation.

Following dinner, Brent and Anna Morgan, founders of Bridge Family Ministries in Murfreesboro, TN spoke to the group about their experience with being foster-to-adopt parents and now supporting others who foster in the Murfreesboro area. They currently serve over 75 families!



Dinner participants were treated to an intimate concert performance by Centricity recording artist, Unspoken. This group has received over 350 million on-demand streams, 80 mil-

lion YouTube views, released two #1 songs and 11 Top 15 hits. They aren't done! A new album just dropped that is sure to be hits as well. The teens in the crowd were singing along to every song! Many thanks to Chad Mattson (lead vocals), Jon Lowery (bass), Ariel Munoz (percussion), Zach Smith (guitar), and Matthew Callaway (keys) for sharing your music and your testimony.



All efforts by TAC/ Helping Hands are performed by volunteers. There are no paid staff. We appreciate all those who give generously of their time and talents to support this organization. Volunteer opportunities are always available for those who want to participate in this most worthy work. At this writing, over \$39,000 has been raised to cover the cost of bags for 2025. Approximately \$50,000 is needed to cover the cost of bags each year. If you have donated to this cause, we thank you for your compassion and generosity. If you have not yet donated, please consider a donation to continue our work. A duffle bag doesn't seem like much, but self-worth and dignity are priceless!

[TAC/ Helping Hands thanks our dinner event sponsors:](#)

Presenting Sponsors

- ◆ Elaine Lovelace
- ◆ May and David Bennett (*in memory of Brian and Crystal*)
- ◆ Elaine Lovelace (*in memory of Vern Lovelace*)



Continued on Page 3

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Table Sponsor

- ◆ Tom Thompson

Table Centerpieces

- ◆ Reinhold Holtkamp

Foster Family Resources

- ◆ Megan and Lamp Pathammavong
- ◆ Anna and Brent Morgan
- ◆ Karyn and Marcus Perry

Table Hosts

- ◆ May and David Bennett
- ◆ Gavin Booser
- ◆ Valeria and Joann Brassfield
- ◆ Josh Huisman
- ◆ Jenner and John Love
- ◆ Jacqueline and Sean MacDonald
- ◆ Tom Thompson
- ◆ Dana Sullivan
- ◆ Tim Welte



New Affiliation with Ascent Pregnancy Center

Tennessee Action Council's Project Life is thrilled to announce our affiliation with Ascent Pregnancy Center, a faith-based non-profit organization located in Saranac Lake, NY. Ascent and TAC have been working on this affiliation since the fall of 2023. As is typical, there were a few challenges along the way including difficulties acquiring insurance in the state of NY and a cracked windshield (replacement is not a simple task on a 35 ft RV!) but our God is bigger than all of these issues!

After months of preparation, Ascent board member, Sean Hilpl, arrived in Brentwood to pick up a mobile unit on August 19th. In the parking lot of New Hope Community Church, Pastor Josh Huisman led the NHCC Young at Heart Senior Group as they lay hands on the unit and prayed for travel mercies and God's guidance for the mobile ministry being established by Ascent. Jennifer Hunt, the center director, joined the prayer and send-off from her location in NY via FaceTime!



The mobile unit arrived safe and sound in Saranac Lake on August 21st. Here are Jennifer's remarks about the arrival: "At 2:40pm on Wednesday the 21st, I waited at the meeting place just coming into Saranac

Lake, NY on Route 3 for the mobile unit to arrive. I cannot express the feeling I got when I saw it come over the hill with the word "HOPE" on the front. It was like a long-awaited dream from a far-off land had arrived and I had this immediate feeling of joy and excitement that I hadn't felt up until that point.



We cannot see the end from the beginning and there is no way of knowing what we will experience through our time with this mobile unit, but I am praying that the Lord will do exceedingly abundantly more than we can imagine in Malone and Plattsburgh (and wherever else He leads.)

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

(Ephesians 3:20-21)

As I listen to the following song, the tears are flowing with love and gratitude for our Savior. Please take the time to listen and join me in thanking Him for His faithfulness, for His care for the ministry, for His guidance and protection, for His provision, and most of all- just that we have the honor of serving Him.

[Brandon Lake - Thank You \(Official Audio\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

Thank you again, Tennessee Action Council, for partnering with us. I can't wait to share with you the stories of women's lives changed and babies lives saved. Together, for "such a time as this". —Jennifer Hunt

As Ascent implements their mobile services, we will provide newsletter updates to keep you apprised of their progress! Please pray for the staff and volunteers at Ascent as they embark on this journey!



86% of women who receive an ultrasound choose life.

Will you help?

Project Life for Tennessee is helping women and saving lives. If you wish to donate, there are a number of ways you can do so. We are a Tennessee 501(C)3 non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible. Visit our website by clicking [HERE](#) to learn more.

