

Hope!

the newsletter of southeastern children's home • special summer edition



Gabby (third from left) celebrates her graduation from Hillcrest High School with other Southeastern residents.

Graduation stories: Gabby and Matt

Two Southeastern residents set their sites on college, continued success

Southeastern Children's Home is pleased to announce that Gabby and Matt, two of our recent residents, have graduated from high school.

Gabby, a resident in our pre-independent living program, graduated from Hillcrest High School. She was able to enroll in a South Carolina computer-based education program which allowed her to take classes and submit assigned work utilizing the internet.

"Gabby overcame a number of obstacles during her childhood," SECH Director of Residential Services Vicki Stidham said. "She was able to keep her eyes on the education goals she established many years ago."

Gabby plans to attend Spartanburg Technical College.

"Gabby is a rarity in that she has an amazing ability to produce great work, independently," Stidham said. "Most of our children have a difficult time focusing on homework and challenging tasks. Often, children placed with us are used to giving up; but Gabby has the drive and the discipline to solve complex problems on her own."

Matt Hudson, a former resident with SECH, graduated from Byrnes High School in nearby Duncan. After his sophomore year of high school, Matt moved in with his grandmother, Emily Kemp.

"I'm so proud of his success," Mrs. Kemp said. "He's been through so much adversity. He's just been an amazing young man."

After leaving SECH, Matt began to play football for Byrnes High School. Matt has since won two state 4A-Division I state championships while playing for the Byrnes Rebels. Matt was the starting right guard for Rebels during their past championship season.

"Winning back-to-back state titles was a life changing experience," Matt said. "It kind of blows your mind when you're part of something so great. I'll never forget it."

Matt attributes his success to his former houseparents, Adam and Alissa Cooper.

"Southeastern Children's Home shaped and made

me the person I am today," Matt said. "Adam and Alissa taught me how to deal with certain situations. They taught me how to respect others and how to talk to adults. That helped me become a better person."

Matt continues to keep close ties with his former houseparents and the friends he made while at SECH.

"Adam, my house-dad, was and is a role model for me," Matt said. "We communicate pretty regularly. I still talk to him about problems if I have a problem. He's still there for me."

Matt's grandmother appreciates the impact that SECH had in Matt's life.

"The Children's Home was tremendous for Matt," Mrs. Kemp said. "It was the ideal family setting. He made so many friends there and at church. He still keeps in contact with many of the young men from the church."

Matt will attend Greenville Technical College this fall and play football for the Greenville Titans.



Right guard Matt Hudson of the Byrnes H.S. Rebels

Flat out good lesson

Teaching takes place outside classroom

At Southeastern Children's Home, houseparents take an active involvement in the development and maturation of each of the children.

Recently, the young ladies at the pre-independent living program at Lyman house learned that driving entails more responsibilities than just filling a car with gas and pressing a few pedals.

"We try to teach each our children responsibility in all aspects of life, including how to operate a vehicle, especially since two of our girls are in the process of getting their drivers' licenses," houseparent Janice Axsom said. "Most children just assume that their car will never have problems. They just assume someone will always help them. Clearly, that's a flawed way of thinking. All children need to expect the best, but prepare for the worst."

Keri, a 17-year old resident, found that changing a tire wasn't as hard as she originally thought.

"Initially, I didn't want to learn," Keri said. "I thought it was going to be hard and complicated, but it wasn't. You just have to follow some simple rules. I guess it's like a lot of things; it's easier once you've done it once."

In addition to learning about automotive maintenance, the residents also learned a life lesson about the importance of independence.

"I guess you never know when you're going to break down, or if someone ever needs help," Keri said. "It's important to know some basic things about changing a flat tire, because every driver should know how to do it. I realize that

"... I guess it's like a lot of things; it's easier once you've done it once ..."

Your gifts to us

March 13 - July 10, 2012

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Ms. Donna Cole
KIRK COLE
Ms. Donna Cole
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Ms. Elmira Swofford
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In Honor of Mother's Day

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Mr. & Mrs. Jim Farley
JO HANNAH FORD
Dr. & Mrs. Mike Billings

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Mr. & Mrs. Jim Farley
BRUCE HANNAFORD
Dr. & Mrs. Mike Billings

In Honor of birthday

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Mr. & Mrs. Travis Nodine
Tyler & Ryan Nodine
LINDA JOHNSON
Mr. & Mrs. Randy Johnson
COURTNEY LEATHERWOOD
Mr. & Mrs. Travis Nodine
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JACKIE LEATHERWOOD
Mr. & Mrs. Travis Nodine
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RYAN NODINE
Mr. & Mrs. Travis Nodine
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TYLER NODINE
Mr. Ryan Nodine
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RUSS SCHRADER
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ANGIE TESNER
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BROOKE TESNER
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In Honor of 1st birthday

BLAKE & HUNTER WILLIS
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Willis

In Honor of 87th birthday

J. C. FARLEY, SR.
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Farley

In Honor of 90th birthday

FRED JONES
Mr. & Mrs. William Wynn

In Honor of 55th Wedding Anniversary

WENDLE & SYLVIA NORTHAM
Mr. & Mrs. Chris Mitchell

In Honor of 60th Wedding Anniversary

HOWARD & GERRY AVERY
Mr. & Mrs. Herb Smith

eventually I'll need to do these things for myself. I don't want to be stranded on the side of a road, waiting for someone to help me."

The Lyman house's pre-independent living program is designed to educate and help our more mature young women transition into adulthood.

"Many of the children placed with us do not return to their original family members," Director of Residential Services Vicki Stidham said. "The goal of the Lyman house is to ensure that older female residents learn how to care for themselves. At the Lyman house, our girls receive focused care on taking that next step to independence."

Keri, and the other Lyman house residents, are constantly learning skills that will help them later in life. Keri attributes much of her success to her house-father's constant involvement.

"Tony, has taught us a lot of things," Keri said. "He even taught me how to put a belt on a lawnmower, wash a car, cook, mow the lawn, and use tools. He's always there, teaching us stuff that we'll use in later endeavors."

Even during summer vacation, the Lyman houseparents continue to teach valuable life skills.

Contact us!

Hope! is a publication of Southeastern Children's Home,
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Girl Scout, volunteers blaze a trail

1994 master plan envisioned fun, healthy alternative to staying indoors

The 1994 master plan of the Southeastern Children's Home campus included a walking trail. Almost two decades later, that plan has been realized with the help of 17-year-old Rachel Bryson of Greer, South Carolina.

The new walking trail was created by Rachel, in part, because of her desire to make a difference in her community. The project also helped Rachel earn the Girl Scout Gold Award, Girl Scouting's highest achievement.

"I have been a Girl Scout for 11 years and this was the final step in my journey with the Girl Scouts," Rachel said. "I consider it a blessing to be in the position to contribute this gift to Southeastern Children's Home."

"I wanted to work with Southeastern Children's Home because of their work with foster children. Having grown up in a home that has fostered children from newborns to 15 year olds for over 9 years, I have a real love for these children. I wanted to help make a difference for the young ladies and men who live there."

The trail was built with the generous help of Dennis Clinkscale, Roger Nutt, Michelle and Randy Bryson, Ashmore Brothers, Donnie Williams, Steve Johnson, Mr. Hite, Susan Ilnor of Edwards Jones, Terry Stephenson of

McDonalds, Stribbling Funeral Home, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Loescher, and over 18 other volunteers.

"We could not operate without the help of volunteers and partners," SECH Executive Director, Robert Kimberly, said. "People like Rachel and her family are why our organization exists. We are grateful to each of those who provided professional services to help make this dream a reality. I'm especially thankful for Rachel. This young woman has completed a tremendous task. She's spent countless hours fundraising and working on this project. Her selfless work is an inspiration to others."

Not only will SECH residents be able to use the trail, but SECH has also invited the residents of Duncan to utilize this new recreation area.

"We believe that a healthy child is the product of a healthy community," Kimberly said. "We understand that our children benefit when an entire community assists in our efforts to raise healthy, happy children. As such, it's a pleasure to open our campus to our neighbors."

The walking trail not only serves as a beautiful



From left, SECH Executive Director Robert Kimberly, Spartanburg County Councilman Roger Nutt, Girl Scout Rachel Bryson and Duncan Mayor John Hamby officially opened Southeastern's new walking trail.

portion of the SECH campus, but will also provide an additional activity for the children to enjoy.

"In our country, young people from underprivileged homes suffer from a high risk of obesity," Kimberly said. "Often, children come to us with poor eating habits and a lackluster attitude towards exercise. This new addition will provide a recreation area where our children can have a positive alternative to staying indoors."

summer 2012

where the heart is

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