



Murphy-Harpst

# Celebrating 100 Years at Murphy-Harpst

## Looking Ahead to the Next 100

### 2023-2024 Impact Report

Fall 2024 Newsletter



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the Night

### Success Stories

Dillon's Journey: A  
Success in Transitional  
Living to Expand

### Support

Heroes for Hope



**Murphy-Harpst**  
LIFE AND HOPE FOR CHILDREN

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## Our Mission

Provide a safe and nurturing environment where severely abused and neglected children and teenagers can thrive and heal, toward a goal of re-engaging with society and leading productive lives.

Campus  
(main office)  
740 Fletcher Street  
Cedartown, GA 30125

Questions about this newsletter? Contact the Advancement Team: [advancement@murphyharpst.org](mailto:advancement@murphyharpst.org)

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 770.748.1500

*Murphy-Harpst is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer*

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## A Letter from Scott

Friends of Murphy-Harpst,

As we close our Centennial year, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the love, support, and generosity that have carried us through this remarkable journey. Murphy-Harpst Children's Centers was founded by women of faith with the belief that every child deserves hope, healing, and an environment to thrive. One hundred years since, our mission and faith remain strong and resolute, as we engage the current foster care crisis and bring innovative solutions to meet the needs of so many hurting young people in Georgia. We could not have reached this milestone nor provided hope for thousands of children at Murphy-Harpst without the dedication of talented staff and the generous support of individuals and churches across the generations. Because of you, we begin this next century of care with renewed hope and vision for the vulnerable children and youth we serve.

As summer turned to autumn, longtime supporters and many new friends gathered in Atlanta for our Century Celebration, a wonderful culmination for this historic year. Among the guests were past residents, sharing powerful stories of resilience and transformation, shaped by their time at Murphy-Harpst. Some of these stories are highlighted for you in this Fall report.

One of the most meaningful parts of the evening was the incredible art auction, featuring beautiful pieces created by our talented residents, many of whom were also in attendance. Our dedicated volunteer Artist-in-Residence, Christi Conner Tate, through passion and commitment, nurtured the creativity and confidence of these young artists. The auction was made even more special because of the generous contributions from some of Georgia's most well-known artists.

The life-changing work at Murphy-Harpst is made possible because of friends like you. As we step into our next century of care, we do so with hope and excitement, knowing that together we will continue to provide safe and nurturing environments where children can heal, grow, and realize their fullest potential.

Thank you for standing up for the children we serve and for your commitment to the future of Murphy-Harpst!

All my best,

Michael Scott Merritt, President and CEO



## Volunteer Spotlight Christi Connor Tate

Christi Conner Tate, cornerstone of our Centennial art project, generously volunteering her time and talent to nurture creativity and character in our youth. Her dedication has empowered our students to express themselves and grow through art.

# Century Celebration

September 19, 2024 · Atlanta, Georgia



Arlene "Pat" Matthew, Christian Matthew, and Agnetta DeLancy-Clarke.

**Christian and Arlene**, also known as Pat, attended the Century Celebration, marking a special milestone in their shared journey. Arlene, now Christian's mother, recalls their story with fondness, saying, "I met Christian when he was 6 years old, during his time as a foster child at Murphy-Harpst, where I was his case manager."



FULL STORY



Liliana Carioscia and Lisa Rayam

**Former Resident Liliana** joined us at our Century Celebration to share her experience with Murphy-Harpst. Her journey began in foster care, where she faced numerous challenges and instability. Arriving at Murphy-Harpst, she discovered a supportive environment that reignited her passion for learning and healthcare.



FULL STORY



**Brittany** attended the century celebration where her inspiring journey was shared. Arriving at Murphy Harpst at 14, she learned to trust and heal with the help of caring staff and transformative experiences, including equine therapy. Today, she's a proud mother and wife, forever grateful for the love she received.



FULL STORY

## Celebrating Together



Board members, Kevin Graney and Linda Young



Rev. Scott Hearn, Sandy Hearn, Rev. Richard Chewning, Susan Chewning, Rev. Jeff Coleman



North West District UMC guests



State officials and spouses



Karen Gibson, Director of Residential Services (retired), Scott Merritt, President and CEO



WABE 90.1 FM's Lisa Rayam, Celebration Emcee

## Sponsors

The Prescott Miller Foundation



Bruce & Heather Elder

ALSTON & BIRD

Erica & David Cummings



Scott & Shannon Campbell



Thank you to our additional sponsors who remain anonymous.

MURPHY-HARPST  
100  
CHILDREN'S CENTERS

Celebrating A Century of  
Hope & Care

# Thank You



## Evening Highlights

The Century Celebration featured a live auction that successfully raised funds for off-campus recreational activities, room decor and luggage for our residents, equine and animal-assisted therapy, and the art therapy program at Murphy-Harpst. Our auctioneer for the evening was Lynn Dempsey, Georgia Real Estate Commissioner, who thrilled and entertained everyone in the process. A moving interview led by our host for the evening, Lisa Rayam, showcased former resident Liliana Carioscia, highlighting the profound impact Murphy-Harpst has on the lives of the children it serves. The celebration also included a commendation from Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, presented by Candice Broce, Georgia Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, alongside State Representatives Trey Kelley and Katie Dempsey, emphasizing the vital role Murphy-Harpst plays in our state. Former resident Brittany Rodriguez shared her powerful story of resilience and hope, through a video prepared for the evening, serving as a testament to the transformative power of Murphy-Harpst's work. Additionally, the evening was enriched by the artwork of our talented student residents, which showcased their creativity and offered a glimpse into their world.



"Pathway to Healing" by Julia Hodges

## Art Auction

The evening culminated in a successful silent auction, featuring a captivating mix of artwork produced by our talented youth and contributions from professional artists including our volunteer artist-in-residence, Christi Conner Tate, who has generously invested her time and talent to foster creativity, character, and beauty in the lives of our young residents. We also had the support of several Atlanta artists who offered their inspirational pieces, including a special commissioned landscape by Julia Hodges titled "Path of Healing," which beautifully captures the familiar walk to the equine center. Each piece created by our student residents were showcased in honor of our 100th celebration. With a minimum bid of \$25 for all student art, the first \$50 of each sale went directly to the artist's individual campus account, while any proceeds beyond that supported the art program and art therapy at Murphy-Harpst. We are thrilled to celebrate the gifts of these young people and encourage their continued growth.





## IN MEMORY

J. Donald Mitchell  
 Ed Moldenke  
 Ena Moore  
 Cussie Sinclair Foster Moore  
 Joyce E. Morris  
 William Carl Morris  
 Patty Mozley  
 Wanna Philpot  
 Joan M. Porter  
 Harold F. Richards  
 Chester and Ruth Richardson  
 Pat (Mattie Lou) Rodriguez  
 Pat (Mattie Lou) Rodriguez  
 Pat (Mattie Lou) Rodriguez  
 Pat (Mattie Lou) Rodriguez  
 Cora Ann Rogers

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 Laura Jean Richards  
 Ruth Richardson Estate  
 David Ortiz  
 Elizabeth Ortiz  
 David and Odalis Ortiz, II  
 Sandra B. Williams  
 Patty Rogers

## IN MEMORY

Thomas Rudd  
 Brenda Shadrix  
 Richard Sickeler  
 John Victor "Vic" Spencer  
 Beth Stanford  
 Joseph Stark  
 Vance Voinche  
 Ken and Skee Waid  
 Beth C. Watson  
 Robert C. Weir  
 Lee and Sue Ann Wiedeke  
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 Myron and Joy Cantrell  
 Karen WeirB135  
 Michael and Cathleen  
 Maloney  
 Fred and Kim Moon

# Dillon

## A TLP Success Story

Before Dillon came to Murphy-Harpst, he was one of the dozens of vulnerable children across the state of Georgia who spent time at a hotel because of a lack of available foster beds. While he was at the hotel, he asked employees if he could help out to stay busy. Dillon finally received a placement at Murphy-Harpst's main campus in Cedartown and then became part of our Transitional Living Program (TLP). He just began his studies at Columbus State University, and while he's there, he'll be working at the hotel where he was once placed!

We couldn't be prouder of Dillon and all that he's accomplished, and we wish him the best of luck in his studies at CSU!



Scan to read more about Dillon's story



# Tax Credit Creates Opportunity

As a Georgia taxpayer, you can redirect your state taxes to Murphy-Harpst to help prevent poverty and homelessness for youth transitioning out of the foster care system. With an annual cap of \$20 million, donations received through the program will support our Transitional Living Program, which provides guidance and support for these young adults. When you participate, you receive a **100% tax credit to your state income tax bill** for your contribution.

In Georgia, nearly 700 youth exit foster care and are left to fend for themselves each year. Leaving foster care without support carries lifelong consequences. However, thanks to the Fostering Success Tax Credit, also known as the Qualified Foster Child Donation Credit, your tax dollars can now bring new hope for youth transitioning from foster care. And our TLP program can help more young adults establish a new life for themselves.



Scan to learn how you can participate in this program.

# Your 2023-2024 Impact



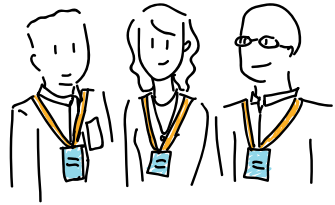
**50**

counties served



**368**

average length of stay



**14**

clinicians on staff



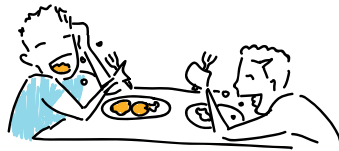
**308**

group therapy sessions



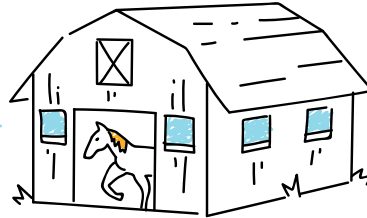
**11**

youth employed



**68,303**

meals served



**36**

Equine Therapy groups



**8**

GED/high school graduates



**19**

families served



**15**

sibling groups



**67**

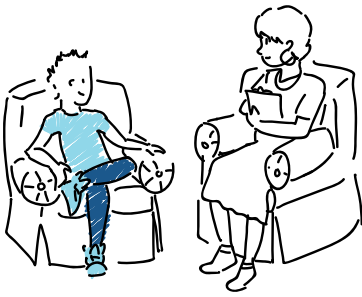
children served through foster care



**36**

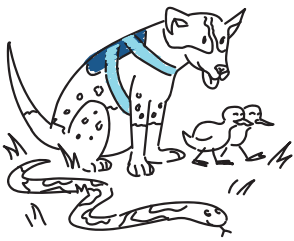
adoptions and reunifications





**2,740**

individual therapy sessions



**18**

animals assisting in therapy



**204**

children served



**1,950,965**

raised in fiscal year 2023-2024ww



## Linda and Stanley's Foster Journey

Linda and Stanley Walker became foster parents for Murphy-Harpst Children's Centers Specialized Foster Care Program beginning in 2016. The couple was extremely active during pre-service training and expressed a deep love for children who have been exposed to traumatic backgrounds and situations. The couple was determined to make a difference in the lives of each child placed in their home and care. They were committed to helping kids return back home to their parents and/or families—well-rounded and more stable than ever before. The couple soon realized that GOD had a different plan, as children placed in their homes at times were not able to return home and would later become available for adoption. With the deep love and bond they developed for each child, Linda and Stanley committed to adopting every child in their home that was not able to return to their family of origin.

As the years went on, the Walkers began accepting large sibling groups into their home in an attempt to ensure siblings remained together while in care. The family has adopted a total of 10 children derived from 3 sets of sibling groups and 1 individual child. In addition, they are in the process of adopting an 8-year-old foster child whom their adult daughter is fostering. This child refers to them as her grandparents. Unfortunately, she was not able to return back home to her birth family and the Walkers stood up, stating, "We will adopt her; she is our granddaughter." The Walkers have purchased a 4600 square-foot home and a large van to comfortably accommodate their family. The children are all loved, doing well in school, and involved in extracurricular activities. Linda and Stanley Walker, we salute you for making a difference in the lives of Georgia's most vulnerable children!

# Church Partners and Sponsors List

## Top 10 Giving Churches by Amount

Dunwoody United Methodist Church  
Peachtree Road United Methodist Church  
Roswell United Methodist Church  
Northside United Methodist Church  
Trinity On The Hill (Augusta) Global Methodist Church

Tucker First United Methodist Church  
Fayetteville First United Methodist Church  
Due West Methodist Church  
Alpharetta Methodist Church  
Rome First United Methodist Church

## Top 10 Churches by Per Member Giving

Whitesburg United Methodist Church  
Hiram First United Methodist Church  
Dunwoody United Methodist Church  
North Decatur United Methodist Church  
Atlanta First United Methodist Church

Fairburn United Methodist Church  
Tucker First United Methodist Church  
Rome First United Methodist Church  
Tallulah Falls United Methodist Church  
Rico United Methodist Church

## Top Giving Companies

Oglethorpe Power Corporation  
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Hannah Foundation, Inc.

# Heroes for Hope

Heroes for Hope are individual donors who contribute \$1,000 or more in a fiscal year to Murphy-Harpst. Our Heroes for Hope provide a large percentage of all dollars raised each year and help make big dreams come true at Murphy-Harpst.

## Founder's Circle: \$20,000+

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Barney and Sarah Wright · Linda Young

Visit [murphyharpst.org/heroes](http://murphyharpst.org/heroes) or call 828.387.0752 to learn more.



**Murphy-Harpst**  
LIFE AND HOPE FOR CHILDREN

Murphy-Harpst Children's Centers  
740 Fletcher Street  
Cedartown, GA 30125

*Welcome to*  
**MURPHY-HARPST**  
**THE NEXT**  
**100**

**Help us spread the word**

## Spread the Word

As we step into a new century of care, we are filled with excitement for the future. We deeply appreciate your support, as you are a vital part of this journey. Murphy-Harpst depends on the dedication of our friends, partners, and volunteers to help spread the word about the transformative work we are doing across Georgia. We are always eager to engage more supporters in our mission—whether through hosting a dinner, sponsoring a 5K, organizing a group of volunteers for our campus, or simply sharing our content on social media. Together, we can make a greater impact. Thank you for helping us amplify our mission!



Use the QR code to find out more ways you can stand in the gap for Georgia's most vulnerable children.

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