

Thornwell life

BUILDING TOMORROW'S FAMILIES | 2026 VOL 1



**THANK YOU FOR
MAKING THE HOLIDAY
SEASON MAGICAL!**

*Real Stories of Family, Healing, and Hope—
Made Possible by **YOUR Love**.*



Thornwell

BUILDING TOMORROW'S FAMILIES

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Dear Friend of Thornwell,

Recently, we experienced a bit of a cold snap here in Clinton, SC. As I observed both caregivers and children bundled up and carrying on with life on our busy campus during those frigid days, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. I am thankful that each child has warm clothing to wear. I am grateful that each child has a loving community of caregivers who support, protect, and nurture them along their journey toward healing and hope. What might be their state if not for Thornwell? What might their hardship be if not for you? Yes, I am grateful!

As we enter a new year, I want to personally thank you for the powerful role you have played in the lives of the children, families, and individuals we serve. In 2025, your generosity made an extraordinary impact. Children were welcomed into safe, loving homes where siblings could remain together. Families facing crisis found strength, tools, and encouragement through trauma-informed support. Caregivers and staff were equipped to walk faithfully alongside those entrusted to us. Every life touched in 2025 carries your fingerprints of compassion.

Your support is more than a gift—it is advocacy in action. You stand up for children who need protection, families who need guidance, and individuals who need to know they are not alone. Through your giving, you ensure that Thornwell can respond with excellence, integrity, and love—meeting needs today while building brighter futures.

As we look ahead to 2026, the need remains great, and so does the opportunity to make a lasting difference. I invite you to continue being actively engaged in Thornwell's work—through prayer, partnership, and faithful generosity. Together, we can strengthen families, keep children safe, and expand hope for generations to come.

Thank you for believing in the power of community and for being a steadfast champion for those we serve. Through our collective impact, we are transforming lives! Together, we are effectively advancing Thornwell's God-given mission to provide safe, nurturing environments where we educate, equip, and support children and families to thrive.

Happy New Year!

With gratitude,

Rev. Myron W. Wilkins

Myron
President, Thornwell



A Home Big Enough for Both



Emma and Lily walked through the door of their Thornwell foster home cold, exhausted, and terrified. At just 11 years old, Emma is not just Lily's big sister; she has been her protector, best friend, and steady caregiver. While their mother struggled through crisis and unstable housing, Emma did everything she could to keep Lily warm and fed.

As Emma dragged a trash bag holding all of their belongings across the threshold, she longed for the warm meal she'd been promised. She also carried a quiet fear—would she and Lily be allowed to stay together? She had never seen a house so large and hoped it meant there was room for both of them.

Fortunately, because of YOUR generous support of Thornwell, Emma and Lily are safe - AND together! They were welcomed into a warm, loving foster home, immediately given their first hot meal in days, and soon had new clothes, shoes, and duffle bags to replace the trash bags they arrived with.

Nationally, an estimated 53–80% of children in foster care are separated from one or more siblings due to a lack of homes able or willing to keep them together. **Thornwell is committed to changing that, and because YOU stepped in, we DID for Emma and Lily. That's the power of your impact!**

YOU KEPT SISTERS TOGETHER IN FOSTER CARE!

Your support helped Thornwell's Foster Care team ensure that children like Emma and Lily have what they need—and that foster parents have the support to persevere. Ken Haywald, the family's Foster Care Family Specialist, overflowed with gratitude for your generosity.

“The impact of keeping siblings together is immeasurable,” Ken shares. ***“When siblings have each other, they face challenges together and celebrate good times together.”***

Today, Emma and Lily are thriving. They delight in warm, home-cooked meals and being part of a large family. Emma recently wrote her foster mom a note: “I wanted to tell you how grateful I am for all that you do for me... Thank you for the food you make.”

Foster mom Alyssa Bailey says, ***“We were scared at first, but fostering is the best thing we’ve ever done. The girls love being together.”***

Thank you for believing in the power of family. Because of **YOU**, siblings like Emma and Lily don't have to face life alone.



Dear Mrs. Bailey,

I wanted to tell you how grateful I am for all that you do for me. Your food is good, for example your spaghetti and salisbury steak thank you for the food you make. You make some good food beside the beans.

Sincerely,

Emma

From Grief to Grace



Julie never imagined her life would change in a single moment. After a tragic car crash, her daughter, Megan, was gone. Megan had been driving with her children, Wyatt and Chloe. Wyatt survived, but with severe internal injuries that would affect him for life. Chloe, too, carried scars—both visible injuries and invisible wounds that deepened with time.

Suddenly, Julie was not only grieving her daughter—she was raising her grandchildren. Trauma and anxiety followed Wyatt and Chloe, especially around the holidays. Julie searched for ways to comfort them and help them navigate their grief and lingering fear. Nights were often restless, filled with nightmares and tears, and Megan's absence felt heaviest when the world felt festive, but their hearts felt empty.

"All of a sudden, it hits them, and they miss their mama," Julie shares.

During this challenging season, Ken Haywald, Director of Thornwell's Strengthening Families program, reached out. Ken had known Megan and her children from participating in a previous Strengthening Families cycle in 2020. When he learned of Megan's passing, he was heartbroken—but he also knew Thornwell could once again walk alongside this family. **YOUR generous support ensured this family didn't have to face grief alone.**

Ken invited Julie, Wyatt, and Chloe to join the next Strengthening Families cycle. Julie said yes, hopeful they could heal together. "I felt like we could learn the same things and create a stronger bond," she says.

From the first session, Julie knew this was no ordinary class. Thornwell staff created a trauma-informed space where families could safely share, learn, and heal. Week by week, Wyatt and Chloe began to open up. Through guided activities, they learned practical tools to manage anxiety and PTSD—deep breathing, grounding exercises, and healthy ways to express complex emotions.

YOU HELPED A GRIEVING FAMILY FIND HOPE!



Julie learned new parenting approaches while caring for her own grief, and the family found comfort in knowing they were not alone. Though the holidays remain difficult, the tools they gained have helped them face moments that once felt unbearable.

Because of YOUR support of Thornwell's Strengthening Families program, Julie and her grandchildren found connection, understanding, and hope when they needed it most. Loss remains part of their story—but with compassion, community, and support, this family is learning to move forward—together.****





THANK YOU for strengthening the lives of children, families, and staff at Thornwell this holiday season—and for sustaining our 150-year mission of hope. Because of you, hope thrives here.



Consider the many meaningful reasons to include Thornwell in your will!

Leaving a gift to Thornwell in your will offers countless opportunities to make a lasting impact!

Reasons to consider an estate plan: a lasting legacy, lessen the tax burden on family, and possibly estate tax savings.



Tax ID 57-0314418

Thank you for considering a legacy gift from your estate! As little as 2% of your estate can make a positive, lifelong impact on children and families in need. Scan the QR CODE above to request your free estate planning guide.

Did you know that when you give a gift in your will, you could:

- **Avoid capital gains on the sale of your home or investments?**
- **Build your income for retirement?**
- **Create an inheritance for your children and help children Thornwell serves?**
- **Have a tax-efficient way to sell your business?**
- **Receive high fixed payments for life and even some tax-free income?**

Making a gift to Thornwell in your will could help you achieve your goals! To learn more about the benefits of making an estate gift, contact Elizabeth Milhous or visit **Thornwell.giftlegacy.com** today!

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