

Thornwell life

BUILDING TOMORROW'S FAMILIES | 2025 VOL 4



Celebrating 150 Years
of Hope and Healing



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Dear Friend,

As Thornwell begins its sesquicentennial celebration, I am reminded of the humble yet profound beginnings of this great ministry.

150 years ago, a young preacher and his wife had a vision to help provide a haven for orphaned children whose families had been disrupted by the scourge of the American Civil War. Through the humble actions of The Reverend William Plumer Jacobs and his wife, Mary, and the many individuals and churches that supported them, Thornwell was born as a Home of Peace for children in need of a safe and nurturing place to call home.

As a Christian ministry, Thornwell's mission is to provide safe and nurturing environments where we educate, equip, and support children and families to thrive. Thornwell is a ministry with many points of entry. Everyone that Thornwell serves has been drawn through its granite pillars by their need for a safe harbor, help, and hope. And as it was with those first orphans who were received through the gates of the Home of Peace in 1875 by Rev. Jacobs and Mary, Thornwell's legacy of compassion and care continues today, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Thornwell is the longest serving faith-based children and family ministry of our kind in South Carolina and one of the oldest in the Southeast. Through the dedicated leadership of our trustees and staff, along with the unwavering support of supporters like you, Thornwell has remained at the forefront of innovation in response to the unique, ever-changing needs of the children and families we serve, throughout South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia.

As you read this edition of Thornwell Life, I invite you to join me in celebrating the significant impact Thornwell has achieved on behalf of children and families over the past 150 years. And as we collectively celebrate Thornwell's remarkable past, let us also look to Thornwell's future with great anticipation and hope, trusting in God that the future will be both bright and enduring.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

For children and families,



Rev. Myron W. Wilkins

Rev. Myron Wilkins
President and CEO of Thornwell



Tools, Traditions, and Time | The Gift of Stronger Families

When Keisha first saw Thornwell's Strengthening Families Program on Facebook, "something about the words *strengthening families* felt like an invitation."

"I think the Holy Spirit just spoke and said, 'You can do it,'" she recalls.

Her family was in a season of change. She was preparing her oldest daughter for college, and life at home felt like crossing a bridge between what they had been and what they were becoming. Keisha felt the program came at the perfect time, offering guidance, hope, and intentional family time. Although, convincing her teenage daughters, ages 14 and 17, to attend weekly sessions wasn't easy.

"It was a struggle in the beginning," she admits. "But we got in the car every Tuesday, and we showed up."

What they discovered was more than a class; it was a community of families, all working toward the same goal: becoming stronger together. Each week, Keisha and her girls learned tools to communicate better, set goals, and bond intentionally. Family meetings, conversation jars, and even using positive language became part of their rhythm.

"It really forces you to take the time to be a family," Keisha said. "In the busyness of life, that's rare. But it made us better to sit together for those three hours each week."

Thanks to YOU, Keisha and her daughters discovered the joy of slowing down, sitting together, and building new traditions.

Her daughters especially grew through the teen sessions, where honest conversations about challenges like vaping, peer pressure, social media, and decision-making gave them confidence.

"They had real talk with people their age, and they learned how to make better decisions,"



YOU SUPPORTED A MOTHER'S COURAGE AND A FAMILY'S TRANSFORMATION

Keisha shares. *“That made a difference.”*

Because you care to give, her family found hope in honest conversations and strength in new routines. By the end of the 11 weeks, Keisha knew this was more than a program; it was life-changing.

“I’ve already told other families about it,” she says. *“This is a gift to Laurens, a gift to Clinton, a gift from Thornwell. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”*

Your support empowers families like hers to create loving homes, break cycles, and build trust for the future. Together, you are laying the foundation for healthy, hopeful families today, and endless possibilities tomorrow.



THANK YOU!



Jacobs' Vision to Jacobs Scholar | Hannah's Story



When Hannah first moved onto Thornwell's campus last spring, she was skeptical about nearly everything – especially the promises made to support her holistic growth. She admits she didn't trust people or promises because of her past experiences. Still, Hannah had big dreams – attend college, become an FBI agent (or a sports agent), and do it all with zero debt.

These are dreams that may seem impossible when you consider that most young people aging out of foster care lack the stability and support they need to make planning for further education a viable option. **However, because YOU believe that no child should feel forgotten, especially as they embark into adulthood, Hannah's dreams of college are about to come true!**

Hannah and students like her in Thornwell's Transitional Living program have the stability of a home-base, support, and access to resources that will help them thrive. Thankfully, Hannah slowly opened up to her Teaching Parents, and to others like Geneik Brewster, Thornwell's Academic Support Coordinator. Spending time together discussing academics and preparing for the future, Geneik developed a special bond with Hannah.

"When she first arrived, she was understandably reserved, unsure of what this new chapter might bring," said Geneik. *"Since then, I have seen her embrace every opportunity with courage and perseverance."*

Today, Hannah has been accepted into the Jacobs Scholar Program at Presbyterian College, a four-year full scholarship named after Thornwell and the college's founder, Dr. William Plumer Jacobs, supporting students with experience in the foster system. This incredible achievement speaks volumes about her hard work, resilience, and the bright future that lies ahead of her.

YOU HELPED A FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT EARN A FULL-RIDE SCHOLARSHIP!



Your generous gifts make this support possible! You are paving the way for Hannah's bright future!

This fall, Hannah moved into her Residence Hall at PC and began her college experience, but Thornwell remains her support system, and, luckily, it's right across the street.

"My dream for Hannah is that she continues to believe in her own strength, knowing that she can achieve anything she sets her mind to. I hope she carries with her the confidence that she is supported, valued, and destined for great things," says Geneik.

The next chapter, transitioning to college and career, may not be easy, but Hannah knows she is not alone. **YOU are a part of Hannah's story that is still being written!**

Finding Family through Faith and Love | Chance's Story

For 150 years, Thornwell has faithfully answered the call to serve children, providing a much-needed safe haven for children like Chance.

Chance spent most of his childhood at Thornwell, arriving at the age of four and living on campus for extended periods until the age of 21. Today, Chance is thriving as a husband, father, and professional in the field of child and family services. He credits who he is today and his passion for helping others to growing up at Thornwell.



For Chance, Thornwell provided consistent love, — love that was deeply felt — all because people like YOU care enough to give.

Chance reflects on his time at Thornwell and remembers the people who cared for him, who went above and beyond to show him that he was valued and that he mattered.

“They were consistent. That was important... I was made to feel that I was important,” explained Chance.

One of the most meaningful relationships he developed at Thornwell was with Norman Dover and his family. Today, Norman is Thornwell's Vice President for Educational Services, and he remains an important part of Chance's life.

YOU HELPED CHILDREN FIND LOVE AND HOPE!

“[Norman] is really good at letting things happen naturally. He just started including me [in his family.] Before I knew it, he was introducing me as his son. His sons were my brothers. Norman is my dad. And that’s just how it’s been,” said Chance.

Now, as an adult, Chance cherishes his relationships with his biological family – his mom, dad, and siblings – and his special relationship with the Dovers. He has learned that you can have both biological family and found family – both are important.

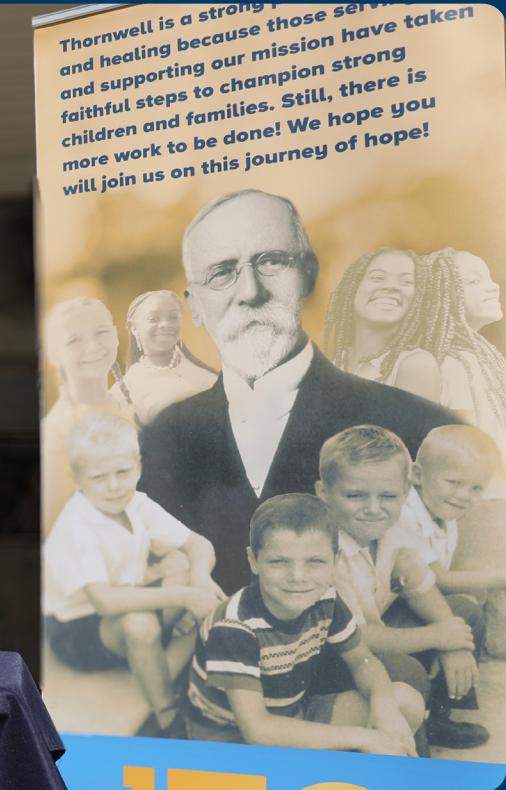
Because you care, kids like Chance don’t have to wonder if they are loved or if they belong. They are embraced at Thornwell! You help them find lasting hope and healing.

“If you give Thornwell a chance, you can become a part of something bigger than yourself,” says Chance. *“Thornwell is adapting and reaching more people...assisting more families in the community and changing lives that way. I think it’s amazing what Thornwell has done, and it sets them apart. I’m excited to see what the next 150 years look like.”*

Because of your love, Thornwell is a strong pillar of the community. Still, there is more work to be done! There are children and families that still desperately need hope and healing. We are grateful to have your continued support. **Together, we will transform lives for generations to come.**



A Catalyst for Tomorrow, Starting Today



For 150 years, Thornwell faithfully answered the call to serve children and families. But we haven't done it alone! Thankfully, through every season of growth, the community and friends like you have supported Thornwell, allowing us to walk alongside children and families as a partner in hope.

What began as a dream in the heart of a young minister in 1875 has blossomed into a network of support that spans communities in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Today, Thornwell is the longest-serving children's and family ministry in South Carolina and one of the oldest in the Southeastern U.S., standing as a strong pillar of hope. This is a legacy we can believe in, and it's one YOU are a part of — for children, for families, and for healing!

October 1, 2025, marked the official kick-off of our 150th celebration with a Founder's Day party, followed by our Documentary Premiere, Reception, and Celebration Concert on October 3rd – and the celebration and advocacy opportunities are only just beginning!

We invite you to celebrate our legacy and your impact with us all year long!

YOU HELPED KICK OFF THORNWELL'S NEXT 150 YEARS!



Our 150th Anniversary Celebration on October 3rd, 2025, was made possible by the generous support of these fine sponsors.

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This Christmas, Share the Love of Jesus Through a Gift That Transforms Lives!

As we celebrate the birth of Christ — the ultimate gift of love — we invite you to consider a year-end gift to Thornwell that reflects His generosity and compassion. Your support helps children and families experience healing, hope, and a future rooted in love!

There are several smart and impactful ways to give before December 31st:

IRA Charitable Rollover (Qualified Charitable Distribution - QCD)

Tax Benefits: If you're 70½ or older, you can donate up to \$108,000 directly from your IRA without counting it as taxable income.

Requirements: Must be a direct transfer from your IRA custodian to Thornwell. Gifts count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)

Tax Benefits: Recommend a grant from your DAF to Thornwell and potentially reduce your taxable income for the year.

Requirements: Must be completed by December 31 to count for the current tax year. Check with your fund manager for processing deadlines.

Stock or Securities

Tax Benefits: Avoid capital gains tax on appreciated assets and receive a charitable deduction for the full fair market value.

Requirements: Transfer must be completed before year-end. Contact your broker early to ensure timely processing.

Why do Thornwell Donors Enjoy Tax-Wise Ways to Give?

"I prefer gifting through a donor-advised fund for tax savings. My DAF allows me to contribute appreciated stock, while avoiding capital gains tax — and it's convenient!" — Fritz Kreimer, Thornwell Trustee and Donor

Your gift — no matter the form — will help vulnerable children and families! This season, let your generosity reflect His love!



Want more info?

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