

THE THORNWELL CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Nurturing God's Children



*“But you
do see!
Indeed, you
note trouble
and grief...
you have been
the helper of
the fatherless.”
Psalm 10:15*



*“Religion
that God
our Father
accepts as pure
and faultless
is this: to look
after orphans
and widows in
their distress...”
James 1:27*

CHILDREN AT RISK

Imagine five children living in a car with their emotionally disturbed parents. Where will the children find a refuge, a home, warm and clean beds, plenty to eat, and a faith that will give them hope? Will the local church reach out to help?

Each year more than three million children are reported abused in the United States. Every day three of those children die from such abuse.

More than 150,000 of those children live in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These same states find themselves as custodial care-givers to more than 35,000 children in their foster systems. Ill-equipped and poorly funded, state agencies will be the first to say the need is greater than their capacity to provide help. As the crisis continues to grow, government leaders are realizing that the states were never intended to “parent” children on a long-term basis.

In spite of this country’s unprecedented material affluence, families continue to break apart, with the children falling victim to their parents’ poor choices. Those children—trapped in homes where illegal drugs, physical abuse, and sexual abuse are the norm—are deprived of even the most basic sense of love, trust, and security. The overall effect of these broken homes, according to scholars at the National Research Council, is that at least one of every four adolescents in the U.S. is currently at serious risk of not achieving productive adulthood.

While death rates among U.S. young people (due to unintentional injuries, cancer, and heart disease) have dropped by about 53 percent since the 1950’s, suicide death rates among adolescents rose by more than 140 percent.

A recent study by Dartmouth Medical School stated: “In larger measure, what’s causing this crisis of American childhood is a lack of connectedness...close connections to other people, and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning.”

In recent decades, the U.S. social institutions that foster these two forms of connectedness have gotten significantly weaker. In addition, our bias toward individual pathology has created the notion that the needs of these “at-risk” children are largely a task for professionals. While psychotropic drugs and related psychotherapies and other treatments do help children individually, we as a society seem to be inattentive and, at times, even indifferent to some of the basic foundations of a child’s overall well-being. As a result, we are steadily losing ground in the battle for our nation’s children.

THE THORNWELL CONNECTION

Where is the church in this crisis? Many would say, “At Thornwell Home for Children!” Thornwell provides the community—the connectedness—for children in crisis when the family is unable to provide it.

For more than a century, Presbyterians in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida have pulled together to make Thornwell Home for Children one of the most outstanding ministries to children-at-risk in the U.S.

What began in 1875 in Clinton, SC, as a young Presbyterian minister's dream, is today a lasting legacy where children are valued, loved, and nurtured into their future.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Reflecting on Thornwell's rich past, we know that thousands of children have spent part, or even most, of their childhoods at Thornwell. They have lived as part of a family, and they have experienced "home" as a place of sanctuary, nurture, and growth.

Childhood is the foundation-laying time for a successful life—foundational values for one's faith, work ethic, education, and self-esteem. These values are not learned through impersonal societal standards, but are instilled through daily, intimate experiences and teaching in the family and church. Thanks to generations of faithful friends, Thornwell has been used by God to provide that foundation and to change many young lives.

Now we believe it is time for Thornwell to embrace a new chapter in its work with children.

THE CAMPAIGN TO NURTURE GOD'S CHILDREN

As Thornwell enters into the next century of its ministry to children, the Board of Trustees, dependent upon the grace of God, has determined to pursue a vision that includes three priorities:

- 1) Increase the permanent endowment to secure the future of Thornwell's ministry to children and families;
- 2) Establish community-based services through partnerships with local churches and other organizations to nurture children and families in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; and
- 3) Renovate and repair aging facilities to prepare them to meet childcare needs safely and securely for the present and future, and construct on-campus housing for Family Teachers.

A sufficient **Permanent Endowment** will assure Thornwell's ability to accomplish its core ministry to serve generations of God's children. Present endowment earnings and annual fundraising are inadequate to sustain services. The endowment must be strengthened to maintain Thornwell's privately funded ministry to abandoned, abused, and neglected children.

"I know I would have died if it were not for Thornwell. At the time in my life that I arrived at the doorsteps of Thornwell, my life was on a very dangerous course. It was the staff at Thornwell who put me back on the right path and helped show me what life could give me if I was only willing to work for it. I was at Thornwell for only two years, but I've never gone a day without thinking of my time there. Thornwell indeed gave me my life back."

*Karen Gibson
Attorney
Thornwell alumna*



NURTURING GOD'S CHILDREN



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"The words of Dr. Jacobs, founder of Thornwell Home for Children, remind us that Thornwell is all about 'gift,' Heaven's gift to children. It also teaches us that we need not be afraid to listen for God's guidance, to dream new dreams in the Spirit of God, and to trust God's goodness to bring them to life!"

*Edwin W. Albright
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of
Greater Atlanta*

The **Community-based Services** plan will enable Thornwell to reach out beyond its campus throughout South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to provide a broad spectrum of resources and support to nurture children and preserve families through locally based services.

The community-based programs will utilize the depth of knowledge and experience of Thornwell's staff to assist families when and where they need help. Thornwell will work closely with area churches to train and equip congregations and agencies in the identification, care, and support of children and families at risk.

These programs will offer an array of services:

- 1) Educate and mentor families with young children,
- 2) Provide intensive in-home counseling and support,
- 3) Train foster care and therapeutic foster care families,
- 4) Continue excellent residential care, and
- 5) Provide adoption services.

The **Renovation and Construction Program** will upgrade historic cottages to provide updated, safe, and functional housing for Thornwell's children. New construction of housing for off-duty Family Teachers will address the need to recruit and retain dedicated staff.

Thornwell's Nurturing God's Children Campaign will offer **Recognition Opportunities** for major gifts to endow programs, Family Teacher positions, and for major building and renovation donations. The following is a sampling of Recognition Opportunities.

Thornwell Campus Ministry Endowment

- Residential cottages (13)
- Family Teachers, four per cottage
- Christian Nurture Program
- Children and Family Ministries
- Therapeutic counseling services
- Medical and dental services

Community-based Services Endowment

- Establish an endowment to seed locally based services in partnership with churches and other organizations in the three-state region.

Capital Improvements

- Renovate 13 cottages to improve safety and living conditions.
- Build new off-duty housing for Family Teachers (naming opportunity).

Just imagine, with your contribution and support, Thornwell will continue to be a place of hope and healing—where tragic stories of hurt and brokenness are re-written, where futures are restored, and most of all where childhood is reclaimed.

*Thank you for nurturing
God's children and families
through Thornwell.*

MISSION STATEMENT

As a ministry of
the Presbyterian
Church (USA),
Thornwell is a
joyful Christian
community
offering hope
and wholeness
to children
and families.