

Our mission is to deliver educational and cultural programs to children, families, and communities, primarily in Southern Appalachia. We serve by sharing and spreading centuries-old traditions of song and story.



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OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2024 MILK & HONEY NEWSLETTER

From the Executive Director HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YOU! Wishing you a safe holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

For a nonprofit such as The Craddock Center, staying relevant is essential to our long-term impact, sustainability, and our ability to fulfill our mission. To remain effective, The Craddock Center must stay aligned with current needs and trends in the areas we serve. If we become outdated, we may fail to address the most pressing challenges or lose our ability to create meaningful change in our community.

By staying relevant, The Craddock Center and its Board demonstrate that we understand the evolving landscape in our community and can provide innovative and effective solutions. One way we remained relevant was to address the need to help parents become their child's first best teacher. On November 16, 2023, we celebrated the beginning of one of our newest and very innovative programs, Smart Babies. And in April 2024, The Craddock Center received a grant for \$100,000 to support Smart Babies through 2028. We are grateful that a benefactor saw the value and need of Smart Babies and wanted to support the program for the next four years.

A nonprofit that is relevant and respected is more likely to attract valuable partners who see the organization as a critical player in addressing current issues. The respect for The Craddock Center was evident on January 26, 2024, when we were awarded the 2023 Nonprofit of the Year by the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce. This was definitely a time of celebration and gratitude by the staff, Board, and volunteers of The Craddock Center.

Volunteers often want to contribute their time and energy to causes that feel meaningful and impactful. A relevant nonprofit is more likely to attract and retain committed volunteers who feel they are contributing to something important and timely. In FY24, we had 364 volunteer encounters (an increase of 58% from the previous fiscal year) and our volunteers logged 2,952 hours (an increase of 110% from the previous fiscal year). We also had 68 new volunteers.

Remaining relevant is about continually evaluating our mission, strategies, and programs to ensure they are impactful, resonant with supporters, and responsive to the communities we serve. This is very important to our Board. In FY24 we completed the three-year strategic plan that began in 2022, and we now have a new plan that will take us into 2027. Remaining relevant means being flexible and able to adapt to new conditions, emerging issues, and changes in community needs. Our new plan reflects that.

We are able to accomplish all of this, and remain relevant in our community, because of the support of our donors. Your gifts make everything noted above possible. Everything we do is done at "no charge" to the recipient: the books, hats, and gloves for the children, the Children's Enrichment Program, Craddock Cares, and Smart Babies workshops. Thank you for making the work of The Craddock Center possible!

A Taste of Milk & Honey

My only problem with Santa Claus was that dadgum, good for nothing, plague take it (you can tell by my language I am still upset) list. Yes, the list. Granted, Santa knows when you've been sleeping, and he knows when you're awake, but his list is dead wrong. I don't care if he's checked it twice, he still does not know who's naughty and who's nice. I could have done a better job making the list. Let me be specific.

I had a playmate who shot a red bird with a BB gun. What did he get for Christmas? A brand-new blue and white American Flyer bicycle. A neighbor boy never worked one day in the garden – not one day. What did he get? A real, live pony, dark brown with white stocking feet, that he named Stockings. Down the road lived a boy who played marbles for keeps, which everyone knows is the beginning of gambling. In spite of this criminal activity, he got a whole box of licorice that he didn't share with anyone. And his younger brother, barely old enough to talk, said the four-letter word for "the bad place." Santa rewarded his cussing with a bright red wagon with rubber-tired wheels. And did I mention his sister? Like all girls, she got away with everything, and in return she received a big doll whose eyes closed, and which wet its pants.

And me? I'll tell you about me. I was faithful in Sunday School for two weeks before Christmas. I took my turn gathering eggs, feeding the hogs, and churning milk. I swept the porch before company arrived, and as Momma will tell you, I usually washed my hands before supper. I could go on. And what did it get me? An apple, an orange, some raisins still on the stem, a few walnuts, a stick of peppermint, a box of sparklers, and a little truck about six inches long that you had to push across the floor. That's it; you do the math. I don't care if he checked it twice or two hundred times, Santa's list was seriously flawed.



Or the whole system was. Naughty kids get nothing; nice kids get loads of good stuff – that's not the way life is. For instance, I know some beautiful children whose only sin is that they were born into poverty. And what will they get for Christmas? That's up to you.

- From Dr. Fred Craddock

Family, Caregiver, and Aging Wellness Community Event

On October 5, 2024, The Craddock Center, along with Senior Medicare Patrol, sponsored and hosted the Family, Caregiver, and Aging Wellness Community Event. The event was designed to provide our community with information about healthcare, mental health, aging, and wellness. Information about Medicare, family finance, and legal assistance was also provided. Free screenings for HIV & HEP C, glucose, BMI, and blood pressure were available to the attendees. Faith, Hope, and Charity sponsored a free lunch.

The Craddock Center thanks the following organizations for their participation: Piedmont Healthcare, Alzheimer's Association, Highland Rivers Behavioral Health, Georgia Mountain Health, North Georgia Community Action, United Community Bank, Fannin County Family Connection, Mutual of Omaha, Parkinson's Foundation, Latin American Association, Institute for Health Aging – University of North Georgia, Georgia Highlands Medical Services and Georgia Legal Services.





NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR

The Craddock Center is Honored in the Apple Festival Parade

On October 12, 2024, The Craddock Center was honored in the Georgia Apple Festival Parade. The Gilmer Chamber of Commerce reached out with the following special invitation:

"Congratulations on being our 2023 Non-Profit of the Year. The Apple Festival Parade Committee is thrilled to extend a special invitation to you to participate in the 2024 Georgia Apple Festival Parade on October 12th at 10 AM. This year, our theme is "Core Memories Are Made in Ellijay." We are excited to recognize your active involvement and outstanding contributions to our community. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed, and we believe that honoring you in our parade is a meaningful way to express our gratitude. The Chamber Team, Board of Directors, and our



community would greatly appreciate your presence. We hope you will accept our invitation and join us for this memorable celebration. Please confirm by August 31st if you will be able to attend. Thank you for your ongoing support, and we look forward to celebrating with you at the Georgia Apple Festival Parade!"

It was a fun morning marching through the streets of Ellijay bringing awareness to the work of The Craddock Center!

Thanks to Sheila Clayton, Claudia Bradford, Marcia Lehman, Annabelle Hon, Bev Cook, Michael Briggs, Chris Martinez, Janice Glascock, Maureen Hicks, Sally Dowling, Lucy Tull, Jonah Tull, Michael Kilpatrick, and Sue Hriljac for being a part of our wacky group!













Response to Hurricane Helene The Craddock Center Gives Back

A professor from Young Harris College, located in north Georgia, reached out to The **Craddock Center Monday** afternoon, October 7th. She said they needed children's books for five counties in western North Carolina that were hit hard by hurricane Helene. These counties had opened temporary childcare centers for thousands of children who were unable to attend school, and they had no books for the children. By the next morning, The Craddock Center responded with 517 brand-new children's books and 486 gently used books.



Emilyn Slemons Receives Fulbright Honor

Emilyn Slemons, a north Georgia native, former Children's Enrichment Program Arts Specialist, and student in the Honors Program at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega, participated in a Fulbright UK Summer Institute program at Aberystwyth University in Wales last summer. This is one of the most prestigious and selective summer scholarship



programs operating worldwide. The three-week program focused on identity and nationhood through the lens of Wales. Her studies addressed political, social, and economic changes in Wales. The Summer Institutes form part of the US-UK Fulbright Commission's work to promote leadership, learning, and empathy between nations through educational exchange.

Slemons said, "As the Fall semester at UNG progresses, I fondly reminisce on the time I spent in Wales this summer. Whether it was studying a little bit of Welsh, exploring castles, or speaking with locals, I learned so much from the vibrant community of Aberystwyth."

"For one of our excursions, the Fulbright Cohort visited the National Botanic Gardens of Wales. In the Gardens, there was a hiking trail based on one of my favorite books: The Gruffalo. As I walked the trail, I remembered how excited I was to share this book with my CEP classes. I also felt so connected to my childhood, and this showed me how impactful books we read at a young age can be, even as an adult, even in another country."

"Given the similarities between Wales and Appalachia, this program supported my work as a social activist in north Georgia by enabling me to learn how systems function in Wales and how I can apply this knowledge to challenges we face in the United States, particularly in Appalachia. I grew so much as a person, and I am exceptionally grateful for this opportunity."

Emilyn has been a volunteer for The Craddock Center since she was in elementary school. She also served as an Arts Specialist in 2021 bringing Children's Enrichment Programming into the classrooms via Zoom during the pandemic. Emilyn is also the founder of the nonprofit, Women Together Period.



Musical J Programming

FOR OUR SENIORS

Kirk Cameron, the Executive Director of The Craddock Center, recalls a conversation he had with his mother-in-law about her visit to the local Senior Center. She stated, "There wasn't any program today, we just sat around." He immediately thought The Craddock Center could help. Kirk reached out to Directors of local senior programs and communities and they were eager for help.

This past summer, The Craddock Center began providing free music and song programming for Seniors in our community. Two of our Arts Specialists, Claudia Bradford and Liese Connell, visit the Fannin County Senior Center, Blue Ridge Assisted Living, The Oaks, and Manor Lake. They provide the 30-45 minute music and song programs once a month at each of these locations.

Providing joy to the seniors in our community definitely falls into our mission of "Family Enrichment".









WE RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING THANK YOU NOTE FROM MANOR LAKE:

"Claudia, Thank you so much for coming and engaging with our residents. Music is universal and we are so blessed to have you. You have no idea how happy you are making our residents but I'm sure their smiles show you a small bit."

THANK YOU! Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Without you, we could not enrich the lives of the children and families we have reached out to the last 23 years. I keep going back to part of our mission statement..."We serve by Sharing." Our donors exemplify this! Sincere thanks to the donors who responded on Giving Tuesday. Your generosity ensures the work of The Craddock Center is sustained and the children and families we serve continue to reap the benefits of our programs.



Our Toymaker Angels

BRING JOY AND HAPPINESS

On Wednesday, December 11, 2024, volunteers from The Craddock Center delivered 1,178 hand-made wooden toys to the children in the pre-K and Head Start programs we support. We can do this because of the generosity of St. Luke's **United Methodist Church** Woodshop from Houston, TX and the ToyMakers of East Lake in Palm Harbor, FL. These two organizations have been supporting the children of The Craddock Center for many years. We also thank the Woodworkers Guild of Georgia, Gordon Hellman and Gary Padgett for making toys for the children. Many of the teachers in the classrooms we support tell us the gifts of toys and books from The Craddock Center are the only gifts these children receive.

Thanks to our volunteer elves Elder Smurthwaite, Elder Hogan, and Elder Cherry for packing the toys. And thanks to our delivery elves: Beth Roberts, Joe Cantwell, Cathy and Richard Cavagnaro, and Carolyn Lakes for taking the toys to the schools.

Our Toymaker Angels Continued

The ToyMakers of East Lake

The ToyMakers of East Lake have given away over 150,000 hand-made wooden toys since 2009. They are an outreach mission of East Lake United Methodist Church and are a 100% volunteer nonprofit organization to make smiles one toy at a time. They produce and donate brightly painted, hand-made wooden toys to 51 agencies for sick and needy children in stressful environments.

In addition to making toys, they also source, repair, and recycle bicycles back into their community to needy children, returning veterans, and homeless working adults.

The Woodshop of St. Luke's United Methodist Church

The Woodshop of St. Luke's has been making wooden toys for over 22 years and they give away four to five thousand toys each year. The Craddock Center was one of the first recipients of their toys. Their main goal is fellowship and giving to others.











New Books, Knitted Hats and Gloves! AN ANNUAL TRADITION OF LOVE CONTINUES

Winters in the mountains can be cold, and many of the children we serve do not have adequate clothing for the cold, winter months. A warm, knitted hat helps tremendously in preventing loss of critical body heat in the very young.

On November 13, 2024, volunteers from The Craddock Center delivered new children's books, hand-made knitted hats, and gloves to the 1,178 little ones we serve. The area we serve consists of nine (9) counties including Dawson, Gilmer, Fannin, Lumpkin, Pickens, Towns, and Union Counties in Georgia, Polk County in Tennessee, and Cherokee County in North Carolina.

Our volunteers deliver messages of love, hope, and happiness through the children's joy-filled experiences of these gifts. Our mission of "Happy & Hope. We Deliver" is a mission in action that comes alive each day through the work of The Craddock Center.

Thanks to volunteers for packing the hats, gloves, and books for delivery: Sue Hriljac, Denise Dinardo, Elder Davies, and Elder Gustafson from the Church of Latter-Day Saints.

Thanks to the following volunteers for delivering these gifts to the children: Carolyn Lakes, Beth Roberts, Cathy Cavagnaro, and Joe Cantwell.

Thanks also to the following knitters for supporting this wonderful annual event and providing warmth to our special kiddos: the Fiber Art Group of the Blue Ridge Mountain Arts Association, the Encouragement Project, Peachtree Christian Church, Bascomb UMC United Women in Faith, Lutheran Church by the Lake Women, Gloria Frey, Carrie Johnson, Mary Flynn, Ann Grant, Susan Marino, Gladys Keith, Emily Matthews, Darlene Bundrick, Tricia Colburn, Penny Lindsay, Christina McMichael, Linda Sutton, the Drake Family, the Geiser Family, Patricia Marchlowitz, Rosalie Parson, Rose Bonnett, Marcia Congdon, Janet Elder, Peggy Denmark, Stacy Trepanier, Cindy Minick, Laurie DeBlase, Anne Patrick, Laura Fuhrman, Charles Ferguson, Ms. Towson, and Lynn Starr.









FEEDBACK FROM TEACHERS

"Thank you so much!! They loved them!" Holly Cook, Director, Union County Pre-K

"Our children were so excited to receive their hats, gloves, and books!" Haley Gilreath-Brewer, Teacher, Lumpkin County Head Start

"Thank you again for everything you do for the children. It brought smiles to their little faces today." Stacey Trammel, Director, Lumpkin County Head Start

"Thank you very much for this gesture. The children loved everything and we are all very appreciative." April DeHart, Director, Andrews Head Start "Many thanks to The Craddock Center for all they do to promote literacy and love of music and art in our students! Each child was given a book, a hand knit hat, and gloves by their wonderful volunteers!" Union County Head Start

"I have attached some pictures of the kids receiving their hats, gloves, mittens, and books today. We THANK YOU and those who make this possible every year. The kids love their hats and mittens so much!" Julie Murphy, Teacher, Fannin County Head Start

"Thank you so much for sending the beautiful hats, gloves, and books to our students. With this cold weather, the hats and gloves were very needed!" Katrina Kingsley, Director, Gilmer Pre-K



We Serve by Sharing – The Legacy Program of The Craddock Center

First, thank you for your support of the work of The Craddock Center. Because of you, we **ARE** making a difference in the communities of southern Appalachia. The Craddock Center wants to continue to make a difference in the decades to come and beyond.

This month we are launching the Legacy Program of The Craddock Center - We Serve by Sharing. **"We Serve by Sharing"** is from The Craddock Center Mission Statement. **We serve the children and share our time, skills, talents, and money** to sustain the work and plan for and build for the future of The Craddock Center.

The Craddock Center has been serving the children and families in our communities for 23 years. We don't know what our communities will look like 25 years from now, but we have no doubt that what we do for the children will continue to be needed.

Please consider a planned gift to support and sustain the work of The Craddock Center. You can call The Craddock Center at 706-632-1772 to request a brochure.

Thank you again for your support of The Craddock Center and thank you for your consideration on how you can support its future.





The Legacy Program of The Craddock Center





"You may be more comfortable SAYING YES to invitations to serve others, especially children who will someday remember you with fondness and gratitude."

-Dr. Fred Craddock

SMART BABIES Celebrates Its First

On November 16, 2024, The Craddock Center celebrated the first birthday of one of our newest and very innovative programs, Smart Babies. On November 16, 2023, we provided our first workshop at Her Hope Pregnancy Center in Blue Ridge, GA. Since then, we have provided workshops at Safe Choice Pregnancy Center in Ellijay, GA, and Georgia Mountains Healthcare which provides medical care in four counties in north Georgia. From November 16th of 2023 to April 18th of 2024, we provided 7 workshops with 17 attendees.

Then something HUGE happened!

On April 18, 2024, The Craddock Center received a grant for \$100,000 to support Smart Babies through 2028. We are grateful that an anonymous donor saw the value and need for Smart Babies and wanted to support the program for the next four years. Because of their generosity, we are able to reach more parents who can in turn teach their "little ones" and help prepare them for pre-K and kindergarten.

Since May 2024, we have added two more locations to conduct workshops: Gilmer County Head Start and Fannin County Head Start. We have conducted/scheduled 18 more workshops through November 13, 2024 with an additional 80 attendees.

We have also trained six new volunteer facilitators to support our growth.

Pickens County Head Start and other organizations in the community have heard about the program and have reached out to us about becoming workshop locations. The quality and value of this program is spreading throughout our community and because of the grant we will be able to add many more locations in the years to come.



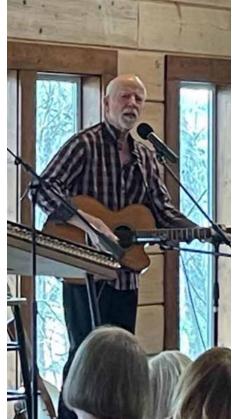












THANK YOU ANONYMOUS!

During the year we receive many monetary donations, books, and hats from many anonymous donors. Thank you for your generous gifts! We wish we knew who you are so that we could thank you. Please know that your anonymous gifts are valued and appreciated, and they help us bring joy to the many children that we serve. Thank you!



Friends of The Craddock Center

The Craddock Center cannot do what we do for the children and families of Southern Appalachia without the financial support of our donors. Thank you and recognition to those individuals, organizations, and foundations for their generosity in supporting The Craddock Center, from August 1, 2023, through December 31, 2024.

\$100,000+

ANONYMOUS FOUNDATION

\$50.000+

The Warren & Augusta Hume Foundation **Regina Mitchell Diaz**

\$20,000+

Eugene and Karen Boring Gary and Nancy Fayard

\$10,000+

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\$3,000+ Sarah Allred

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\$2,000+

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Lillie Mae Lumpkin

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Andy Meeks Jeff Boring C. Dawn Johnson Karen Stockwell Jennifer Rider Peter Harvey Carol Jorgenson Lisa Ogle Sammie Maxwell and W. Russell Pregeant Anne Haltiwanger Debbie and Marc Liskin Susan Spencer AA Tuesday Nights Amy Grosklags Lisa Helbling Laura Jensen Katie Tomlin Liese and Philip Connell Kenneth Carlo Benton MacKaye Trail Assoc. Beverly Cook Carole Hahn Dr. and Mrs. Roger Beck Jacqueline Mann Diane Payne Anonymous

The Scott Hudgens Family Foundation Linda Kliros Mrs. Nettie Craddock Hammill Family Foundation New Hope Christian Church

\$5,000+

United Community Banks John and Frances Tipton Milly Hastings & Steve Stevens Ray Larson

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Kirk Cameron and Michael Kilpatrick Christian Women's Fellowship AA Thursday Nights Judith Clairmont and Timothy Vanduser Southern Comfort Cabin Rentals Loahna Brenner John McMullan

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