

# Connie Maxwell MAGAZINE

FALL 2024 | [www.ConnieMaxwell.com](http://www.ConnieMaxwell.com)



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A Journey from Connie Maxwell to The Citadel

### **The Kauffmann Legacy**

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries Honors the Legacy of Doug and Sally Kauffmann with \$1 Million Gift

### **45 Years of Love**

Rhetta Jones' Legacy at Connie Maxwell



**Connie Maxwell**  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

# Connie Maxwell MAGAZINE

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## MISSION

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries exists to restore the Faith, Family and Future of vulnerable children and families through Christian services that emphasize ministry and healing.

## VISION

To become a national leader in Christian ministries of healing for vulnerable children and families.

The *Connie Maxwell* Magazine is sent to alumni, donors and friends of the ministry. Send address changes or cancellation requests to Jill Bryant at [jillbryant@conniemaxwell.com](mailto:jillbryant@conniemaxwell.com) or call 864-942-1427.

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Dear Connie Maxwell Dreamers,

Recently, as we prepared for “A Night to Remember”, honoring the Kauffmann Family, I found myself wandering through the halls of Connie Maxwell Baptist Church. It was early evening so the light from the setting sun projected colors through the stained-glass windows and painted the sanctuary walls like an artist’s canvas. It was an awe-inspiring sight to behold...

As I walked up the stairs to the third floor, I entered a room that they say was Dr. Sam Smith’s office after his retirement. The window at his desk overlooks the Activities Center built and named in his honor in 1970. I sat in his desk chair and imagined how his soul must have been satisfied as he entered the twilight days of his service to children and Jesus.

As I looked around the room, a large black book caught my attention on top of the file cabinet. It was a Bible and the handwritten inscription inside read, “**Sam M Smith – Christmas – 1934.**”

I immediately recognized that it was A. T. Jamison’s handwriting. Undoubtedly a gift from Dr. Jamison to Sam when he returned to Connie Maxwell. Next to the Bible were some files that I opened and fumbled through. I found a speech that Dr. Smith delivered to the South Carolina Baptist Convention on November 17, 1971. There was a line in that speech that struck me and commanded my attention. Even though written 53 years ago, it felt like it was appropriate for today. It stated,

“The best efforts of our staff, and those of the courts, welfare and mental health centers have not, at times, been sufficient to meet the complex needs of our children. Our failures, however, have driven us to a more “**RELENTLESS SEARCH**” for new approaches, procedures, policies, and personnel.”

That is exactly what our hearts desire today. Through the stories and pictures in this edition of **The Connie Maxwell**, you will see our “**Decade of Dreams**” plan unfolding. These accomplishments represent a “**more relentless search**” for deeper levels of healing and ministry for our children and families in Jesus’ name. The Kauffman Legacy, Dana’s Dream, Rheta Jone’s 45 years of Love, and Red Truck Men Day, all point towards an ever-growing resolve and “**relentless**” desire for excellence in ministry.

A “**relentless**” commitment and drive to realize Connie Maxwell’s vision “to become a national leader in healing and ministry for vulnerable children and families.”

Come join us on this journey!

For the Dreams of Children,

William D. Nicholson II, Ph.D.  
President

# The Kauffmann Legacy

CONNIE MAXWELL CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES HONORS THE LEGACY OF DOUG AND SALLY KAUFFMANN WITH \$1 MILLION GIFT



*Pictured: Danny Nicholson, Joe and Kristine Hope, Jay Boyd, Eric Taylor, Christina Isenhower, Doug Kauffmann, and Lane Kauffmann*

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries, a sanctuary of healing and hope for vulnerable children across South Carolina, has long been a beacon of light for those in need. Among the many individuals who have shaped this storied institution, Doug and Sally Kauffmann stand out for their unwavering commitment and service to the community. From 1996 to 2016, Doug served as pastor, while Sally served as minister of music and education. Together, they dedicated two decades of their lives to nurturing the spiritual and emotional well-being of countless children and families.

The Connie Maxwell community recently experienced a profound loss with the passing of Sally Kauffmann on June 12, 2024. Her death marked the end of an era for the ministry, but her legacy continues to shine brightly through the lives she touched and the programs she helped establish.

On August 8, 2024, the Connie Maxwell community gathered for a special event to celebrate the Kauffmanns' enduring legacy. The evening was marked by the announcement of a transformative \$1 million gift from the Kauffmann family to support the Dreams of Children campaign, a key initiative aimed at expanding Connie Maxwell's mission to serve children from hard places. This significant donation will be instrumental in the construction of the Howard and Suzanne Kauffmann Auditorium in the new McCall Center, a facility that will play a pivotal role in enhancing the ministry's ability to care for those in need.

Connie Maxwell President Danny Nicholson spoke about the profound impact of the Kauffmanns on the ministry, saying, "Tonight is a night to remember, a night built on a lifetime of service and love." Nicholson emphasized that the Kauffmanns' legacy

is woven into the very fabric of Connie Maxwell, from the lives they touched to the programs they helped develop. Their dedication to the children and families served by the ministry is a testament to their deep faith and unwavering commitment to service.

Doug and Sally Kauffmann were not only leaders at Connie Maxwell but also integral members of the Greenwood community. Their contributions extended far beyond the walls of the ministry, touching countless lives through their involvement in various causes and organizations. Doug was known for his compassionate leadership and his ability to connect with people on a personal level, while Sally was celebrated for her love of music, the arts, and her passion for justice. Together, they created an environment at Connie Maxwell that was both nurturing and inspiring, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose in everyone they encountered.

Sally Kauffmann, in particular, was a driving force behind many of the educational and artistic programs at Connie Maxwell. Her love for visual art and music was not just a personal passion but a gift she shared with the children she served. Jonathan Charles, a former resident of Connie Maxwell, fondly recalled her influence, saying, "She was a little more direct, but definitely very kind. She was great at what she did." Sally's commitment to justice and education inspired many young people to explore the world beyond their immediate surroundings, encouraging them to pursue their dreams and passions.

Another former resident, Michael Jones, reflected on the nurturing environment Sally cultivated: "Mrs.



*A replica of the stained glass window titled "Jars of Clay" dedicated to the Kauffmann family.*

Kauffmann had a way of making everyone feel special. She believed in us even when we didn't believe in ourselves. I wouldn't be where I am today without her guidance and support."

Nicole Thompson, who participated in the music programs Sally led, shared a similar sentiment: "Sally's love for music was contagious. She pushed us to be our best, not just in our performances, but in everything we did. She taught us that we were capable of more than we ever imagined."

The Kauffmanns' dedication to the ministry is perhaps best exemplified by the words of Christina Kauffmann, their daughter, who spoke at the event.

Reflecting on her parents' legacy, she said, "There will always be a light in the darkness if everyone had a community like this one." Her heartfelt remarks underscored the deep sense of belonging and care her parents cultivated at Connie Maxwell, a legacy that will continue to influence the ministry for generations to come.

The evening also featured the dedication of a stained glass window titled "Jars of Clay," which will be installed in the Kauffmann Auditorium. Crafted by the same company that created the original stained glass windows for Connie Maxwell Baptist Church, this window serves as a symbolic representation of the Kauffmanns' lasting legacy at Connie



Scan the QR code to watch a recap of the event!

Maxwell. Doug Kauffmann, who has long been known for his love of these windows, expressed his deep appreciation for this tribute, saying, "Thank you for honoring Sally and me. This place has always been about healing and hope."

Watson Dorn, a close friend and fellow Rotary Club member, also spoke at the event, highlighting the Kauffmanns' dedication to service, particularly their involvement in the Greenwood community. "Doug and Sally exemplified service above self," Dorn said. "Their impact is immeasurable." He recounted numerous examples of the Kauffmanns' contributions to various causes, always with a focus on helping others. Their commitment to the well-being of others was a guiding principle throughout their lives, and their legacy continues to inspire those who knew them.

The Kauffmann family's generous gift represents a significant milestone in Connie Maxwell's journey to become a national leader in healing and ministry for children. The funds will be instrumental in advancing the organization's mission to provide comprehensive care, support, and education to the

children and families it serves. As Connie Maxwell "Crosses the Threshold" into a new era of service, the lives of Doug and Sally Kauffmann will continue to serve as a blueprint for the mission.

Danny Nicholson summed up the profound impact the Kauffmanns have had on the ministry, saying, "As much as anybody, Doug and Sally have had an impact on Connie Maxwell, and I've found in them examples of authentic faith, enduring commitment to the needs of children and families in Jesus' name, and most importantly, devoted friends who've fed my heart and soul on the journey."

As Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries continues to expand its mission and reach, the legacy of Doug and Sally Kauffmann will remain a guiding light, inspiring future generations to serve with the same passion, dedication, and love that defined their lives. If their lives have shown the community anything, it's that they will finish the race well. Their lives bear witness to 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith," and in the words spoken by Doug's best friend, Scott Smith, at the event, "Well Done."



# Dana's Dream

A JOURNEY FROM CONNIE MAXWELL TO THE CITADEL

Dana's dream to attend The Citadel began when she was in the eighth grade. One of her teachers introduced himself on the first day of school by sharing about his own experiences at the historic military school in Charleston, S.C. Dana took note of the sense of structure and discipline, and the life-long friendships her teacher talked about making as a cadet.

"I've always wanted to join the military," Dana explains. "But that was the year I started dreaming of becoming a Citadel cadet."

## Support from the Connie Maxwell Family

Dana's dream didn't remain just a dream. The team at Connie Maxwell, where Dana has lived since she was 10 years old, played a crucial role in helping her realize this ambition. They facilitated several campus visits, including one particularly memorable trip to celebrate her birthday in April 2023. During this visit, Dana attended a chapel service and shadowed a student, which solidified her decision to apply. Her participation in an ROTC summer camp further

deepened her connection to the campus and her resolve to become a cadet.

"Toward the end of camp, I was doing homework with friends and talking about the memories we'd made," she recalls. "We experienced difficult things there together but made the best of the situation. I looked at them and said, 'I'm going to miss this!'"

## A Bright Spirit with a Clear Vision

If you were to meet Dana, you'd immediately notice her outgoing personality and positive outlook on life. Now a high school graduate, she's more focused than ever on her future. She's quick to share her professional goals and the path she plans to take to achieve them, including studying biology and minoring in Spanish at The Citadel, with the goal of becoming a trauma surgeon.

"I've always been interested in medicine and know that I want to help people, and trauma surgeons are able to address greater areas within the body than a specialized surgeon," she explains. Dana also plans to join the National Guard while at The Citadel, with a long-term goal of joining the Army and pursuing a medical degree.

## The Day Her Dream Came True

The day Dana received her acceptance letter from The Citadel was unforgettable. With a mixture of



One of Dana's first pictures taken at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries.



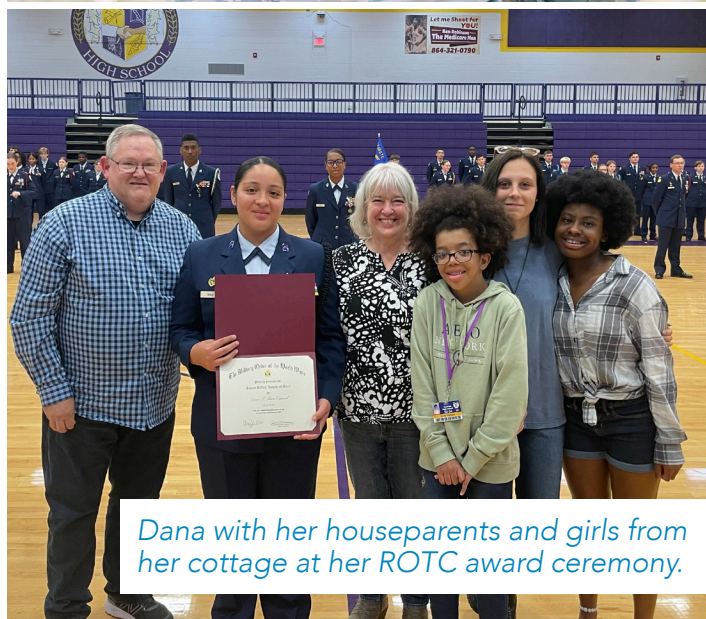


nerves and excitement, she tore open the envelope and was overjoyed to find she had been accepted. "I ran around and showed everyone in the house because I was so happy and just amazed that I got in," she says, her laughter filling the room.

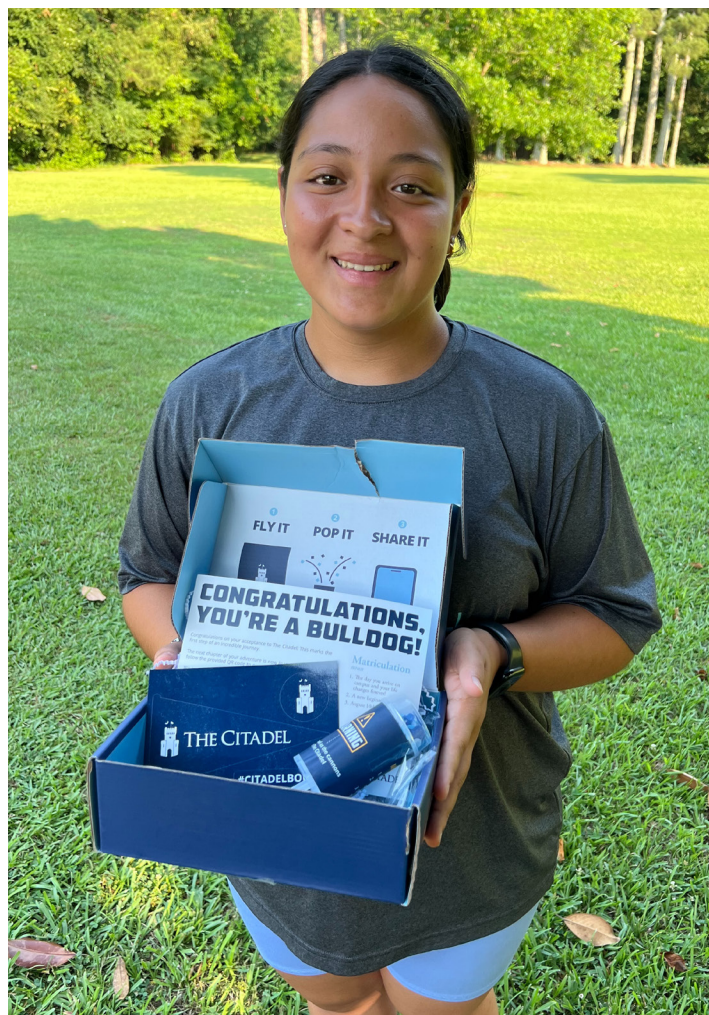
That same evening, at Connie Maxwell's Christmas event, Dana couldn't wait to share her news with President Danny Nicholson and Vice President Eric Taylor, both of whom had supported her dream. "I told them with the biggest smile on my face. I've known them longer than most people, and they've both always been there for me."

### The Impact of the Connie Maxwell Community

Dana is quick to express her gratitude for the Connie Maxwell community. "I have my own home, but Connie Maxwell is like my home because I've been here since I was 10 years old," she says. "But it is not just some place to live, the people here at Connie Maxwell make sure you have the best education possible, they help with homework, make sure you have clothes, and shoes. And they're not just peo-



*Dana with her houseparents and girls from her cottage at her ROTC award ceremony.*



ple who take care of kids, they are here to help you grow mentally, physically, and spiritually.”

Dana highlights the network of people who have worked together to help her and other children become the best versions of themselves. For Dana, Connie Maxwell is more than just a place; it’s a family that has prepared her for success in life.

Equestrian Director Lauren Jones has been a close witness to Dana’s growth over the years. “I’ve had the privilege to work with Dana for 8 years, and I am so thankful to have known such a beautiful soul! It’s rare to meet someone who explodes with passion like Dana and lights up every room she walks in. I’ve watched her confidence, leadership, and mind grow working with horses. She went from being one of the smallest and most quiet to helping anyone who needed it, especially the younger kids, and outspoken. I am so proud of her in every way and know she will go on to make a huge impact in the world with anything she decides to do.”

Dana was also a member of the Connie Maxwell equestrian team, where she competed throughout her time at the home. Additionally, she participated in MaxFit, the fitness and wellness program on campus, where she worked closely with Fitness and Wellness Specialist, Lauren Boyd to prepare her body for the physical demands of The Citadel.

### A Bittersweet Farewell

As Dana prepares to leave for The Citadel, she acknowledges the bittersweet nature of her de-



*Dana's last run on campus surrounded by her CM family.*

parture. “I knew this day would come. I have a big ‘army’ here praying for me, but it hits different to realize that I’m leaving the campus and will not be living here anymore,” Dana says before adding that she wants “to give back to Connie Maxwell because they’ve given me so much during these last eight years. I’m grateful for everything.”

### A Legacy of Achievement

Dana’s journey is a testament to the power of dreams, the importance of community, and the strength of the human spirit. She leaves behind a legacy at Connie Maxwell—a bright light formed from the love and dedication of many employees, volunteers, friends, and family. As she embarks on her new adventure at The Citadel, Dana knows she will carry a piece of Connie Maxwell with her always.

From winning the Junior ROTC Award of Merit to qualifying for the 4H Southern Regional Championships, Dana’s achievements are a source of pride for all who know her. It’s hard to say goodbye to someone who has brought so much joy and inspiration to the Connie Maxwell community, but there is no doubt that Dana is destined to continue shining brightly as she pursues her dreams and “runs with the horses” into her future.



*Dana in her dorm room on move-in day at The Citadel.*

# Volunteer Highlight

A HEART TO SERVE: SUE LUSSIER

In February 2022, Sue Lussier, affectionately called "Ms. Sue," began volunteering at a Serve Day and has attended every Serve Day since. Now, she wears many volunteer hats at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries (CMCM). She has assisted in office work and helped with numerous Christmas events and the corn maze event at Maxwell Farms.

Her most significant impact, however, is made in the lives of CMCM children. Ms. Sue completed the training required to work with students on the Greenwood campus and led a book club for some of the kids. Through the book club and her time volunteering at Maxwell Farms, Ms. Sue has developed relationships with students and staff on campus.

Ms. Sue reflected on her time working with the kids at CMCM. "I love working with these kids. It's opened my eyes so much about what too many kids have gone through. It's one thing to hear about



*Sue Lussier with Director of Volunteer Engagement, Jules Thompson.*

**MVV**  
MOST VALUABLE  
VOLUNTEER

**SUE  
LUSSIER**

165 HOURS    30 SERVE DAYS    \$4,983.07 VALUE OF LABOR HOURS

THANK YOU, MS. SUE!

the different experiences, but when you actually see the results, it's heartbreaking. It's such a good feeling to know you're helping them in some way. They are an awesome group of kids."

As of July 2024, Ms. Sue has volunteered 165 hours.

Long before Ms. Sue stepped foot on campus, God was calling her to Connie Maxwell.

Before moving to Greenwood, South Carolina, she lived in Aztec, New Mexico, where she served as an administrative assistant for her church. She had no intention of moving, but God had other plans. In small but unmistakable ways, the Holy Spirit began preparing her heart to move east. Before finding a home in Greenwood, she knew God was calling her to give her time and effort to a children's home.

She also serves in various capacities at her church, West Side Baptist, and loves encouraging other church members to get involved with Connie Maxwell.

Jules Thompson, Director of Volunteer Engagement, commented on how grateful she is for Ms. Sue. "Ms. Sue goes above and beyond in her service with her time, but also her finances. She is a faithful donor and Christmas sponsor. She is a bright light to our staff and students, and we are honored she loves this ministry so well."

# 40<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL ALUMNI REUNION: *A Memorable Homecoming*

We were thrilled to welcome 450 Connie Maxwell alumni back home for the 40th Biennial Alumni Reunion from June 7-9, 2024! This special weekend brought together alumni and their families for a time of reflection, celebration, and connection.

## **A Weekend of Connection and Celebration**

The reunion festivities began on Friday morning with a Golf Tournament at the Greenwood Country Club, where alumni engaged in friendly competition and reconnected with old friends. At the same time, the Fishing Tournament at Maxwell Farms Pond provided a perfect setting for alumni and current students to bond over catching fish. The day culminated in a time of fellowship and a delicious meal at the Early Bird Get Together.

Saturday was filled with activities, starting with a business meeting at the Church Sanctuary, followed by the annual alumni photo. Lunch brought everyone together for a meal and fellowship, while the afternoon included cottage tours and the groundbreaking ceremony for the new "Gateway" Project.

## **The Gateway Project: A Symbol of Our Future**

One of the weekend's most anticipated events was the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Connie Maxwell Entrance Gateway, a project generously sponsored by our incredible alumni. This Gateway will serve as a beautiful brick entrance, symbolizing both the gateway to our future dreams and the threshold of sacred ground. As alumni and visitors pass through these gates, they will be reminded of the enduring legacy and the bright future that Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries continues to build.

The Gateway Project is more than just a physical structure; it represents the steps we are taking towards fulfilling our Decade of Dreams, a 10-year strategic plan focused on expanding our impact and ensuring that Connie Maxwell remains a place of hope and transformation for generations to

come. The commitment and contributions of our alumni have been instrumental in bringing this vision to life, and this new entrance will stand as a testament to their unwavering support and dedication.

## **Leadership and Legacy**

The evening program on Saturday was a highlight, featuring a special ceremony at Connie Maxwell Baptist Church. The event marked the transition of leadership as we welcomed our new Alumni President, Tim Dillard. His leadership promises to carry forward the strong legacy of the Alumni Association, continuing the important work of supporting Connie Maxwell and its mission.

Sunday wrapped up the reunion with a moving Morning Worship service in the church sanctuary. The day ended with a farewell lunch, leaving everyone with cherished memories and a sense of anticipation for future reunions.

## **Looking Ahead**

Mark your calendars for the next Alumni Reunion, scheduled for the summer of 2026! We can't wait to welcome you back to Connie Maxwell to continue building on the legacy of love, support, and community.

For more information or questions about the Alumni Association, please reach out to Whitney Newby at [wnewby@conniemaxwell.com](mailto:wnewby@conniemaxwell.com).

Thank you to all our alumni for making this reunion unforgettable. Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries will always be your home. Together, we continue to make a difference!

**SCAN HERE TO  
WATCH A RECAP  
OF THE REUNION!**







## A Special Delivery

THE RED TRUCK MEN DRIVE TO GREENWOOD  
TO DELIVER BIKES

On August 10, members from the Red Truck Men, an organization dedicated to fostering camaraderie, personal growth, and community service among men, hosted a Red Truck Day at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries (CMCM).

The group generously provided a family picnic and presented CMCM children across all campuses and from all four areas of care—residential care, foster care, family care, and crisis care—with new bicycles.

Founded in 2002 by Stephen Thomas in Charlotte, North Carolina, the ministry of Red Truck Men began with informal Saturday morning gatherings.

Today, the group organizes monthly breakfasts, weekly words of encouragement, quarterly service opportunities, semi-annual retreats, and an annual men's conference.



Red Truck Men aims to create a culture of honor and support among men, emphasizing authentic friendships and consistent fellowship.

The group's name comes from the idea of a firetruck and the respect and honor of the heroes inside. Much like the first responders who meet the needs of a crisis and promote hope, Red Truck Men unites Christian men, building friendships as they serve God, their families, and their communities with humility and honor.

Founder Stephen Thomas reflected on his first bicycle. "I got my first bike when I was 16, and we were poor. It was a huge blessing to me, and the next day I was given the payment book with the bike. It wasn't a gift. It was not free, and it taught me a lot. God blessed me despite all that, but I remember when I got that bike, it came with a cost. What we want to do here is give these kids bikes at no cost, no strings attached. This is the Lord blessing these kids, and we want to show them the love of Christ through these bikes."

On Red Truck Day, these men provided not only bicycles to CMCM children but also fostered a sense of hope and community.

On Red Truck Day, Danny Nicholson, president of Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries, reflected on the time together at Maxwell Farms. "A.T. Jamison, one of our presidents for 46 years, said in his book of history, 'Lord, don't allow me riches or fame or power. Allow me the privilege of walking hand-in-hand with a child through your gates.' That's what we're doing today — carrying children to God, loving them, and healing their hearts. We're excited and thankful for this opportunity."

Visit [www.redtruckmen.org](http://www.redtruckmen.org) to learn more about this amazing organization.

To watch a video recap from the day, scan the QR code.



*Pictured: President Danny Nicholson, Stephen Thomas, and Kevin Jones.*



# 45 Years of love

RHETTA JONES' LEGACY AT CONNIE MAXWELL





In the 45 years that Rhetta Jones has directed Marie Younts, Connie Maxwell's residential campus in Mauldin, South Carolina, she has been on a mission to equip every girl who's come through those doors with an invisible bag of God's truth and life skills. This invisible bag isn't simply a plastic bag. Jones grinningly clarified, "It's a big black garbage bag. A big one. And I want them to get it so full of stuff that they can keep drawing out of it for a long period." The girls that have lived at Marie Younts have undoubtedly been left with copious tools to help them succeed for years.

Jones' career of working with children began with lifeguarding as a teenager. After graduating from college, she spent years teaching and coaching basketball in the public school system. Then, in 1975, the Lord directed her to the next part of her journey, which would combine her passions for teaching and coaching—shepherding children at a residential home.

After a season of discouragement and thinking she may leave this vocation at another organization, God led Jones to Connie Maxwell through providentially and somewhat amusingly timed events. Since her first day at Connie Maxwell in 1979, she's been a constant fixture on the team. As Jones tells the girls at Marie Younts, "When you trust in the Lord, He'll help you turn a stumbling stone into a stepping stone."

This encouraging attitude has been a great help to Connie Maxwell alums like Angel Billingsley, who lived at Marie Younts from 2009-2011. Billingsley described Jones as "the godliest, selfless woman." Memories of Jones insisting the Christmas tree needed more lights bring a smile to Billingsley's face. Charlotte Gray, who lived at Marie Younts around the same time, also fondly remembers Jones' lighthearted side. Jones once got a kick out of a bikini T-shirt Gray gifted her after a cruise, and Gray has affectionately dubbed her "Bahama Momma" ever since.

Jones acknowledged she's had "not so good" times in which hanging in there has proven challenging. There have been moments when she's walked down the hallways of Marie Younts, pondering if what she was modeling was getting through to the girls—questioning her capability and wondering why God

had her in this line of work. Blessedly, Jones continued, "When I questioned God, He'd answer! He'd send a card from a former resident or a call requesting advice or the recipe of a dish I'd made."

On these challenging days, Jones has also received encouragement from colleagues like Connie Maxwell's former Administrator of Special Services, Jack Cauley, who was on her hiring committee in 1979. "A former student has called Rhetta the 'extra-mile-lady,'" Cauley says. "If there's any resource she can find and squeeze out for anyone, she will do it." The most valuable of those resources has been, naturally, herself. Cauley says, "Rhetta kept our maintenance going—she's a fixer. She was also the administrator and the social worker and lived in the home for 45 years. She wanted to live in the home because Rhetta does not believe kids turn on at 9 and off at 5. She wanted to be there for the bulk of it." Even after Jones underwent surgery on several occasions, rather than taking sick days, she would come home and set up a "command center" from her bed. After being questioned about her restless lifestyle, Jones just laughed with that famous, magnetic spirit of hers.

When asked what advice Jones would give to those wanting to take on a parenting role like hers, she said that in this position, "You've got to keep your head on right." She explained that it's unfeasible to help children with their shortcomings if you don't know yourself and your weaknesses. She added, "Your actions will need to match your words." Saying "I love you" is extremely important, but so is how you live and interact with the children daily. According to Jones, it's when caregivers' words and actions match that children begin to see God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11, her favorite Bible verse: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

The praise of Adrienne Velez, 2009-2012 Connie Maxwell alumna, further testifies that Jones has lived by biblical principles: "Ms. Rhetta is hardworking, motivated, loving, and cares a lot about children. I think about what she taught me every day!" Lynette Gray, Charlotte Gray's sister, also touched on Jones, saying, "She is a selfless person, always willing to do anything in her power to help others. She has remained a significant part of my life even after I left.

Raising children is challenging, so I can only imagine managing a group of girls with unique personalities and attitudes while staying calm and positive and keeping emotions in check. She was always consistent, and now, as an adult, I truly admire and salute her for embracing that role and excelling in it. With one child, I can't fathom the effort required for all the children who have come and gone. Raising a child demands a lot, and she sacrificed so much. I want to thank her." Lynette Gray additionally thanks Jones for introducing her to her friend, Pat Summitt (the former University of Tennessee Women's Basketball Head Coach), and taking her to the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Tennessee. Jones has gone to great lengths to support girls in their passions, and she has never been one to forget about them once they move elsewhere.

Jones would counsel the girls in her care, as well as girls everywhere, with this insight: "When you come to an end of a rope, tie a knot and hang on. God loves you, and He's going to get you through it. You're going to reach those days when you say, 'Oh, I can't hang on any longer,' but tie that knot on that rope and hang on and say, 'God got me to it, and he's going to get me through it.'"

Rhetta Jones is adored by many for 45 years of faithfully serving the Lord Jesus Christ through Connie Maxwell. But she would like you to know that with

this 24/7, 365-day-a-year role, she has needed the aid of others. When asked who's poured into her and enabled her to perform well in this role, she listed her biological family, Jack Cauley, and her Connie Maxwell family.

Indeed, family is what Connie Maxwell is. The staff comprises a large family who want God's best for every child He entrusts to their care as they unitedly "Cross the Threshold" into more significant childhood trauma healing.

As Jones transitions into her retirement season, she denies having any one favorite memory because every day and every girl has been precious to her. She reaffirms this sentiment: "It's been a blessing to work with Connie Maxwell Children's Ministry, and it's been a blessing to me to work with the girls I work with."

To confirm what a blessing Jones has been to us, Connie Maxwell President Danny Nicholson shared, "Rhetta will be missed for her steady, dependable, and compassionate commitment to the children for so very long! It's hard to find servants who are both talented and committed beyond the call of duty. Rhetta is one who has both talent and commitment. No doubt her name will be in Heaven's Hall of Fame!"





If words were golden and we could speak them clearly and completely,  
You would be resplendent, shining,  
Clothed with speeches that could adorn you  
Yet never touch the depth of the essence of who are you.

I stand in awe of you,  
As do those whose lives have been graced  
With your kindness, generosity, integrity, faithfulness, and advocacy—  
Even the slumbering steel hand of guidance that  
Sometimes awaked in the velvet glove to steer  
Your beloved children away from the rocks as best you could.

You have said that God planned this work for you,  
And you have done it as unto Him,  
Ever striving to be the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus—  
Unhasting, unresting,

Wringing the last ounce of every resource for the good of others.

Your love for “this tender ministry” has been shed abroad  
With passion, springing from belief in its ministry to children and families—  
A living testimony of the wisdom from the late, beloved Dr. A.T. Jamison,  
“If we don’t have what the children need, go out and get it!”

Godspeed, Rhetta Cornell Jones, the “extra mile lady,”

Good and faithful servant.

*This poem was written by Jack Cauley, former staff member at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries.  
He read the poem at her retirement party to celebrate her 45 years of faithful service.*

# Well Done...

Rhetta Jones, Brenda Ponder, Steve Shiflet and Judy Tafta retired this year. They have been vital parts of our ministry and have served thousands of students and families throughout their time at Connie Maxwell. Their combined years of service totaled 133 years.



**JUDY TAFTA, ALUMNUS**  
17 Years of Service  
Administrative Assistant  
for Neb Cline



**BRENDA PONDER**  
31 Years of Service  
Accounts Payable/  
Procurement Officer



**STEVE SHIFLET**  
40 Years of Service  
Executive Vice President for  
Business and Operations



**RHETTA JONES**  
45 Years of Service  
Director of Marie Younts Home



*good  
and faithful  
servant*





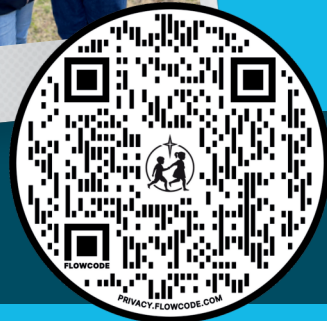
**Connie Maxwell**  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

# WE ARE HIRING HOUSEPARENTS!

- Work in ministry and impact children and families
- Competitive salary
- Amazing healthcare and retirement benefits
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- Free access to personal training and gym



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## MAXWELL IMAGINEERS

CREATING DREAMS. INSPIRING IMAGINATION.



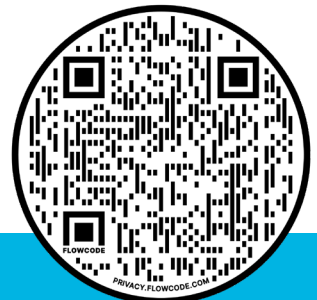
### BECOME A MAXWELL IMAGINEER

The children who come to Connie Maxwell are in the most painful and confusing times of their lives, harming their ability to dream and believe that a bright future is possible, and all this through no fault of their own. Your recurring support helps children pursue their dreams and imagine a brighter future! You can direct your support to the ministry and location of choice, while meeting the most critical needs our children will experience.

#### HOW TO JOIN

Becoming a Maxwell Imagineer is easy! There are two ways you can join now:

- Scan the QR code to visit **conniemaxwell.com/imagineer**
- OR you can also **call (864) 942-1400** to join!



**All Maxwell Imagineers receive this exclusive t-shirt!**



*Rebie Lewis, Director of the Marie Younts Home, flew to California to celebrate CMCM Alumnus, Charlotte Gray's graduation from the Naval Academy. She and Rhetta Jones have been there for numerous milestones in Charlotte's journey.*

# From Foster Care to the Air Force

Despite her relatively young age, Major Charlotte Gray boasts an impressive 12-year career with the U.S. Air Force. Her service has taken her from the mainland U.S. to Hawaii and North Africa, earning her four medals along the way. Currently stationed at Osan Air Base in South Korea, she leads seven programs and oversees two major missions.

Charlotte Gray's early life was marked by instability, as she spent much of her childhood in foster care with her siblings. Her journey through various foster homes and group settings was challenging. However, she found a sense of stability and support at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries. For two years, she lived on the Greenwood campus before relocating more permanently to the Marie Younts campus in Mauldin in 2002.

Reflecting on her experience, Gray shared, "Being in foster care can be extremely disruptive. Constant changes—new faces, rules, and expectations—can be overwhelming. Marie Younts was the first long-term placement where I felt a sense of stability."

Gray explained that her time at Marie Younts was different from previous placements. "Marie Younts was the first home-style environment I'd experienced since living with my biological family. The previous group homes were large and impersonal, which made it hard to feel settled. Having the chance to room with my sister made the transition easier and provided a sense of familiarity."

Gray speaks fondly of Rebie Lewis and Rhetta Jones, who played pivotal roles in her life at Marie Younts. "Rebie and Rhetta were instrumental in helping me navigate the challenges of foster care. They taught me essential life skills and provided support while also bringing a playful and nurturing presence into my life. Though they weren't my biological family, they offered the guidance and love I needed. I truly believe that we receive what we need from the people who are there for us."

Jones and Lewis recall Gray's transformation with

pride. Jones observed that Gray excelled in organization and academics, eventually preparing herself for college. They have supported her every step of the way, from attending her undergraduate graduation at Charleston Southern University to pinning her lieutenant and captain bars during her military career. Despite being unable to attend her promotion to major due to COVID-19, they were there in spirit and celebrated her achievements, including her recent master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Gray's journey to the Air Force wasn't initially clear-cut. She developed a passion for psychology in high school and discovered that a degree in the field could be well-suited for a military career. Joining ROTC set her on this path, leading to her current role.

Gray acknowledges the challenges she has faced. "The Air Force motto, 'Be a lifelong learner,' underscores the ongoing training and growth required. Despite the difficulties, I wouldn't trade my experiences for anything."

Her favorite aspect of her Air Force career is the opportunity to travel and engage with diverse cultures. "Foster care exposed me to many people, but the Air Force has broadened my perspective even further. It's shown me how much we have in common globally and made me more humble. Returning to Marie Younts always feels like coming home."

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries is honored to be part of Major Charlotte Gray's journey and hopes that many more children in their care will achieve remarkable, service-oriented careers. As we "Cross the Threshold" into deeper childhood trauma healing, we celebrate the successes of our alumni like Charlotte.



# Until every child has a home....

Our Foster Team has been hard at work this year. We currently have 50 licensed foster families! We also lost a few this year -- due to adoptions! We had several families that were able to enter into the adoption process after fostering. While one of the goals of fostering is always reunification with the birth family sometimes that isn't possible. We are excited for these families that have opened their homes and hearts to children in need. Please pray for these families as well as our current foster families. If you or someone you know is interested in learn more about foster care, please visit [www.conniemaxwell.com](http://www.conniemaxwell.com). Our team provides licensing, training, and support for Christian foster families across South Carolina.







NIGHT OF WORSHIP WITH  
**BENJAMIN  
WILLIAM  
HASTINGS**



**OCT. 12, 2024**  
**AT MAXWELL FARMS**

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**SHANDON BAPTIST CHURCH WORSHIP TEAM**  
[CONNIEMAXWELL.COM/NIGHTOFWORSHIP](http://CONNIEMAXWELL.COM/NIGHTOFWORSHIP)



# Class of 2024

This May we celebrated our 2024 graduates. With God's guidance, our Connie Maxwell students and staff students are embarking on exciting new journeys.

We are so proud of their achievements and look forward to seeing what the future holds for them. Please pray for them as they enter this new chapter!

*Pictured: Connie Maxwell Students: Jay, Dana, and Camden*

*Not Pictured: Staff Students: Emily Smith, Bryn Dellinger, Robert Woodard, Michele Higginbotham, Will Patterson, Rebekah Darrah and Shamira Speaks*



**Connie Maxwell**  
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

## EQUIPPING HEARTS

As Connie Maxwell continues forward in the "Decade of Dreams" strategic plan, one of the most important components of our future will be a commitment to better understanding trauma and how to bring restoration, resiliency, and flourishing to kids from hard places in Jesus' name and share that information with our community.



**We now offer Christ-centered trauma-informed training to churches, community organizations, and volunteers at no cost.**

### The training is designed for:

- After-school and Daycare Workers
- Kids Ministry and Youth Volunteers
- Youth/ Family Ministers
- Foster and Adoptive Parents
- Teachers and more!



Scan here for more info!



## DreamMakers

In May, we held our annual Graduation Celebration, honoring our high school graduates hosted by the Connie Maxwell DreamMakers. They generously provided this wonderful event, including a delicious meal at Maxwell Farms.

The DreamMakers is a group of inspired women who seek to glorify God and further His kingdom by nurturing healing, enhancing beauty, and instilling hope that helps the dreams of Connie Maxwell's children and families become a reality.

Interested in joining? Email Debra Nicholson at [dwnicholson@conniemaxwell.com](mailto:dwnicholson@conniemaxwell.com)



# Summer Recap

Thank you to our incredible donors that make these special moments possible for our children and families!





# Connie Maxwell CHRISTMAS

5-7  
DECEMBER

6 - 8:30 PM

Join us for a spectacular live nativity performance, concert series, and Christmas village, where you can enjoy a petting zoo, hot chocolate, wagon rides, and a photo booth.

[CONNIEMAXWELL.COM/CHRISTMAS2024](https://CONNIEMAXWELL.COM/CHRISTMAS2024)



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Start your holiday shopping early!  
Shop our online store! All proceeds help support children and families at Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries. Find the perfect gift and more at:

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# *Giving* TUESDAY

12.03.24

*Your Gift*  
Matters

Because of you, the children and families at Connie Maxwell find safety, hope, and healing in Jesus' name.

This will be the largest Giving Tuesday in Connie Maxwell's history.  
Our goal is to raise \$750,000 in 24 hours. Each donation will be matched that day.  
Help us make history and serve more children and families in South Carolina.

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[ConnieMaxwell.com/GivingTuesday](https://ConnieMaxwell.com/GivingTuesday)



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