

Connie Maxwell MAGAZINE

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In this issue

For The Dreams of Children Gala

Gala Celebrates, Inspires For the Dreams of Children

Connie Maxwell MAGAZINE

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CMCM 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 or call (864) 942-1427.

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Dear Connie Maxwell Dreamer,

"O Lord, you are my God: I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago."

Isaiah 25:1

Things planned long ago...

On a cool fall day several years ago now, a small group of leaders walked across the field in front of Connie Maxwell Baptist Church to bury an old steel box in the ground, filled with handwritten dreams and to dedicate a marker that launched the "Decade of Dreams" strategic plan. On that marker that stands in that very same place today is inscribed,

On this day, October 5, 2020, this tree was planted to mark the launch of a "Decade of Dreams." The Executive Council said a prayer and buried their personal spiritual dreams and Connie Maxwell dreams to be raised to life in the next ten years. As this tree grows so will the dreams of Connie Maxwell. For the Dreams of Children.

"Boys, don't get in a rut. If children need services and help which we haven't got, try to learn where you can get it."

A.T. Jamison

At the March Board of Trustee meeting, nearly five years later, we presented the first formal presentation of the mantelpiece of a "Decade of Dreams,"

The Healing Center at Connie Maxwell.

This edition of the Connie Maxwell spotlights the public phase kick-off of "For the Dreams of Children." The award-winning film series that was unveiled that evening and the first "Aspen Award" given to Ruth Graham who joined us for that memorable evening. Additionally, Taylor DeBerry's heartwarming journey of hope, rebuild after Helene, the Benjamin William Hastings concert at Maxwell Farms, and the dedication of the "new" Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton. All these "holy moments" take us one step closer to realizing our vision ***"to become a national leader in healing and ministry for vulnerable children and families."***

These are exciting times at Connie Maxwell! Come join us on this incredible journey of healing and hope!

For the Dreams of Children,

William D. Nicholson II, Ph.D.
President



For the Dream



ms of Children

***“In our DNA is this relentless search
to find a deeper way to heal and love our
children in Christ’s name.”***

Danny Nicholson

Gala Celebrates, Inspires For the Dreams of Children



✦ *Connie Maxwell: A Beautiful Bouquet*

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries is like a bouquet of flowers. Exceptional arrangements include blooms of different sizes, textures, and colors tucked among the greenery, inviting your eyes to explore the beauty from every vantage point. An artful arranger trims floral stems to help rehydrate them for the display, gently encouraging fragile blooms to open a bit more to showcase the varied shades that exist within the petals. Creative, unexpected placements make the overall display more interesting while allowing each stem to shine.

Connie Maxwell's For the Dreams of Children 2024 Fall Gala was held on November 15 and began with imagery of this kind of floral arrangement, brought to life through a film narrated by students voicing dreams for their future. The collective beauty of flowers depicts the heart of the mission, which is to love vulnerable children well, equip them with independent living skills, and introduce them to a loving God who will never leave them.

The Gala debuted other video testimonials and depictions of the ministry's commitment to restoring the faith, family, and future of these children and their families through services that have emphasized ministry and healing for more than 130 years. In attendance were honored guests, community leaders, valued partners, as well as current and former students. It was a night filled with celebration and hope.

President Danny Nicholson reminded the audience that "the greatest dream for a child is to be loved. And even deeper, and the center of our mission at Connie Maxwell, is for them to love and be loved by their Creator and to have this love solidly planted in their hearts."



Before you read...

This story has a video that enhances the visual story telling. Take a moment to scan the QR code and watch.





† *Dreams Are Becoming Reality*

The generous and faithful giving of Connie Maxwell donors was celebrated during the evening, which included the unveiling of several significant gifts linked to the Decade of Dreams Campaign. Larry and Jerry Anne Faulkenberry announced a \$2 million gift toward the planned building of a cutting-edge, 40,000 square foot healing and trauma center on the main campus. The facility will advance research, education, and implement "cutting edge" interventions for children and families affected by trauma.

President Danny Nicholson called the healing center a "bridge between brokenness and being whole. We've learned so much now about the heart, the brain, and the spirit. We can put those things together to be much more productive in our ability to make human beings whole and to nurture them."

The Faulkenberrys' many ties to Connie Maxwell include their family's adoption story and the invitation to manage Maxwell Farms. The couple wrestled with the opportunity at the time but ultimately decided Jerry would continue with his timber and land real estate businesses in order to pursue a second adoption for their family. The decision to decline working with Connie Maxwell haunted the couple who says God used it to prompt them to give from the financial blessings they had received through the years.

"He set another path for us," Jerry Anne shares. "And I think that's how we ended up with the life we have. This is our time to be able to give back to Connie Maxwell. This is our second chance."

The Faulkenberrys offered a second surprise during the Gala by announcing their preference that the healing center not bear their names but, instead, become the Danny and Debra Nicholson Healing Center to "reflect the Nicholsons' tireless dedication to the ministry."

Calling the honor "one of the most gracious things I've ever seen done in all my career of fundraising," Nicholson told the couple they "have profoundly changed my life, and inspire me to continue surrendering my time, my life, and my money to what is most important - Jesus and children."

For his part, Larry Faulkenberry invited the audience to join them in other forms of giving to vulnerable children because "those of us who have the means to help should step up and be counted. What better thing to leave your money to than to a mission like this that touches the children and mothers, too."





The Kocak Campus at Charleston

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries

✦ *Expanding to the Lowcountry*

Connie Maxwell announced another dream for children that is becoming a reality – the opening of a new campus in the Charleston area. Citing an unprecedented increase in brokenness and trauma in the world today, Nicholson shared that despite the ministry's 130 years of existence in South Carolina "we've never been in the Lowcountry. It is important for us to move to a place where the density of need is great."

Nicholson described first learning about an anonymous \$2 million gift over a year ago during a phone call with a financial advisor. The donors, who were eventually identified as Mike and Suzie Kocak, wanted to help establish Connie Maxwell's new campus on James Island. Nicholson announced during the Gala that the Kocak family's gift is in honor of Mike's best friend and Connie Maxwell Alumni Billy Ridgill.

"We need more people like Billy in the world and this gift is our way of ensuring that happens," Mike Kocak said of his family's donation.

Noting this special friendship, Nicholson officially presented The Kocak Campus "for the family's legacy, for the dreams of the children of Charleston, and to fill the world with Billy Ridgills."

"We need more people like Billy in the world and this gift is our way of ensuring that happens." - Mike Kocak





† *Inaugural Aspen Award Recipient Recognized*

Nicholson introduced Ruth Graham as the recipient of Connie Maxwell's inaugural Aspen Award, in recognition of her dedication to ministry and the healing of children and families. Citing Graham's many ministry impacts, Nicholson said she is "a gift from God to thousands of people, including me."

Following an introduction from her son Graham Dienert who referred to his mother as a "hero," Graham accepted the award by saying it was undeserved but meant a great deal to her. "It's God's faithfulness. He will be faithful to these kids and will not let them down. I accept this on behalf of Jesus, if this is something I can put at His feet one day."

"Ruth Graham has dedicated her life to loving and healing others. She exemplifies the essence of this award," Nicholson told the audience.



"Ruth Graham has dedicated her life to loving and healing others. She exemplifies the essence of this award,"





*Scan the QR code to watch
the full video of the evening!*



Michelle Maikoetter,
Director of Special Projects
Neurosequential Network



✦ *Gaining Momentum as Connie Maxwell Looks to the Future*

Citing great momentum in giving and sacrificial gifts, Nicholson announced the Board of Trustees and For the Dreams of Children Steering Committee's decision to increase Connie Maxwell's initial giving goal of \$10 million to \$25 million. "We've already surpassed expectations, but we remain committed to being fiscally responsible," Nicholson said, adding "I pray you'll come with us and be a part of that moving forward."

Future campus improvement projects were also unveiled during the Gala. A 3,000-seat amphitheater will be constructed on Connie Maxwell's 450-acre farm. The space will host public events, which can also provide alternative revenue streams. Cottages and some historic buildings will undergo renovations soon to enhance services to children and families.

As Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries passionately pursues its vision of becoming a national leader in healing and ministry to vulnerable children and their families, beautiful floral arrangements will continue to be cultivated on campus each day. As stems are lovingly pruned to allow for blooms to be revived and stand tall once again, each flower within the arrangement will always be encouraged to shine with its unique beauty.

Fueled by God's love and supported by God's people, Connie Maxwell is committed to a future of healing and hope For the Dreams of Children.



A Journey of Hope: Taylor DeBerry's Path from Connie Maxwell to Counseling

No child should ever have to experience separation from their family. But when it becomes necessary, Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries provides a safe haven filled with support and hope. Taylor Martin DeBerry (MS, LPC-A), a proud alumna of Connie Maxwell, is a testament to the transformative impact of this ministry.

DeBerry's journey with Connie Maxwell began at age 13 when she spent a summer at the Pee Dee campus in Florence, South Carolina. Two years later, she returned and remained through high school, graduating in 2014. Through Connie Maxwell's higher education program—offering both scholarships and ongoing support—she pursued a psychology degree at Clemson University. During school breaks, the Pee Dee campus always welcomed her home.

Reflecting on her time at Connie Maxwell, DeBerry fondly recalls the dedicated cottage parents who shaped her journey: "Ms. Marcy, Ms. Jenn, Ms. Shaniqua, Ms. Rachel, Mrs. Barbara, Ms. Martha, Ms. Wendy..." While no place is perfect, her memories are overwhelmingly positive. "Living in a house full of teenage girls came with challenges," she admits, "but overall, it was a great experience. The staff were incredibly supportive and provided resources whenever we needed them."

Connie Maxwell's support extended beyond tuition and a place to stay—DeBerry was even offered assistance with transportation. But more than material resources, the ministry fostered a Christ-centered environment that deeply influenced her. Among her peers, one friendship stood out: a bond with her best friend, Idasia (Dasia), who became like a sister.

After earning her bachelor's degree in 2018, DeBerry began her career as an early intervention supervisor at Great Kids & Awesome Adults in Florence. While working there, she also started attending Capella



Barbara Moore, Director of Pee Dee Campus, celebrated with Taylor DeBerry at her Clemson graduation

University on the side to pursue her master's degree. As part of her graduate studies, she began an internship at Stewart Behavioral Health with Martha Stewart. Once she graduated and obtained her counseling license, she transitioned into a full-time role as an LPC-A at Stewart Behavioral Health.

As she moved into counseling at Stewart, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 took on new meaning: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

DeBerry embraced this calling, working with young people—some who, like her, had lived at Connie Maxwell. "At first, it was very emotional," she shares. "When I told my story, I'd start crying. But it was also incredibly rewarding. I bonded with these girls and offered them a different perspective on their journeys."

In January 2024, DeBerry followed God's calling to CARE House, a children's advocacy center in Florence. As a therapist specializing in trauma, she collaborates with law enforcement and the Department of Social Services on some of the toughest

cases. Despite the emotional weight of her work, she finds deep fulfillment in helping others heal. “It really just fell into my lap,” she says, reflecting on how her own therapy experience at Connie Maxwell inspired her to pursue counseling. “I’ve always been interested in trauma, having grown up around different struggles. When I interviewed at CARE House, I knew it was the right fit.”

Beyond her career, DeBerry cherishes her family. She met her husband, Wesley, through connections with Great Kids & Awesome Adults. Together, they live in Florence, are active at NewSpring Church, and are raising their son and daughter. “Being a mom is my greatest blessing,” she says. “I love children—both at home and in my work.”

For young people hesitant to seek counseling, DeBerry offers this encouragement: “Counseling can be scary, especially when discussing things you’d rather keep buried. There’s a stigma around mental health, but getting help is never a weakness. It’s better to work through things now rather than let them build up. I always compare it to shaking a Coke bottle with Mentos inside—it’s going to explode if you don’t let it out.”

Barbara Moore, Pee Dee’s campus administrator, speaks highly of DeBerry: “Taylor was bright and determined from the moment she arrived. She had goals and was committed to achieving them. I’m so proud of her and her beautiful family. She will continue to accomplish great things.”

Reciprocating the gratitude, DeBerry acknowledges the profound role Connie Maxwell played in her life. “They gave me hope for a better future,” she says. “I think so highly of the Pee Dee campus, especially Mrs. Barbara and the staff. Many of them are no longer there, but their support meant everything to me.”

Taylor DeBerry’s story is a powerful testament to the mission of Connie Maxwell—to help children heal and cross the threshold into a brighter future. May her journey continue to inspire and bless others as she brings hope and healing to those in need.



Among her peers, one friendship stood out: a bond with her best friend, Idasia (Dasia), who became like a sister.





After Helene

God's Presence Amid the Storm: Rebuilding After Helene

There's a different kind of peace that envelops the campus of Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries.

It's the kind of peace that comes from the unmistakable presence of God, a quiet that can be found when he draws near.

On September 27, Hurricane Helene's touchdown may have disrupted the calm of the Greenwood Campus, uprooting century-old trees, destroying vehicles, and damaging cottages, but it didn't disrupt the peace that came from knowing God was with us—both during and in the aftermath of the storm.

God's protection was evident in the lives of one family in the Family Care program, when a tree fell on their bedroom during the storm. The children were safe, and the Family Care mom suffered a broken nose and a gash to her face, but has since recovered.

Diana Johnson, Director of Family Care, attributes the family's safety to God. "We're very thankful and blessed because the outcome could have been so much worse. God is good," Johnson said. Shortly after the storm, Connie Maxwell's campus became a central hub of hope for the Greenwood

community. Hundreds of volunteers and multiple churches and ministries, both local and from across the nation, were stationed on campus to provide relief from the impact of Helene.

Cleanup efforts began immediately, with more than 600 dump truck loads of debris removed from the campus.

In the days and months following Helene, the generosity of donors and churches led to hundreds of gifts to Connie Maxwell totaling \$225,094 to assist with relief efforts.

Although insurance claims provided coverage to the damaged homes and structures on campus, the financial toll of clearing roads and removing dozens of massive trees and storm debris has proven costly. Still today, Maxwell Farms has hundreds of trees and miles of fencing in need of repair!

After accounting for designated gifts and insurance funds, the economic loss to Connie Maxwell is estimated to be around \$255,617.

Essential repairs have now commenced on the damaged cottages. Every cleared path and every restored structure is a testament to the compassion and generosity of faithful donors and volunteers.



While there is still plenty of work remaining on the road to recovery, the prayers and gifts from God's people have continued to make a difference! We have seen HIS hand of protection and provision each day since the storm.

No matter the storm or what the future may hold, we know the peace and presence of God is with us every step of the way.

Together, we can rebuild and continue providing hope and healing for vulnerable children and families.



Help is still needed!



If you are Interested in donating, scan the QR code or visit www.conniemaxwell.com/helene.

If you are skilled with operating large machinery, mending fences, and using chainsaws, please email volunteer@conniemaxwell.com.





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Night of Worship with Benjamin William Hastings



Scan the QR code or visit conniemaxwell.com/now to see photos and videos from the event!

On Saturday, March 15, Maxwell Farms came alive as over 500 guests gathered for an unforgettable Night of Worship featuring Benjamin William Hastings.

Originally planned for October, the event had been postponed by Hurricane Helene. As attendees strolled along the wooded path to the open field, the sight of fallen trees served as a reminder of Helene's impact and God's provision through it all.

The event, sponsored by NewSpring Church, was a powerful night of music and praise for the community. The opening worship was led by NewSpring Worship and the Shandon Baptist Church Worship Team.

As the sun set over Maxwell Farms, headliner Benjamin William Hastings took the stage. Hastings' songs have streamed over 500 million times, including his hit song "So Will I (100 Billion X)." He has collaborated with artists, such as Hillsong United, Brandon Lake, Corey Asbury, Cody Carnes, and Passion Worship.

The Night of Worship took place at the future site of the Barbara "Binky" Mead Amphitheater, an area

that will draw thousands of people to campus to make an introduction to the mission of Connie Maxwell.

The event set the stage for part of our 10-year strategic plan, *A Decade of Dreams*. Connie Maxwell is working toward reimagining Maxwell Farms as a destination for ministry, concerts, recreation, animal therapy, and leadership programs, all of which will provide an income stream that supports ministry and healing for the children in our care.



Learn more about our 10-year strategic plan, *A Decade of Dreams*, at conniemaxwell.com/dreamon

A heartfelt thank you goes to our sponsors and volunteers, who made the night possible, and to every person who attended—your presence made an impact. Every ticket purchased helped support our mission to restore the faith, family, and future of vulnerable children and families in Jesus' name.



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**SEPT.
26-27**

**OCT.
3-4**

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The children who come to Connie Maxwell are in the most painful and confusing times of their lives, through no fault of their own. Your monthly support helps children experience the love of Christ as they pursue their dreams and imagine a brighter future!

\$20 a month can provide a "school-ready" sponsorship for one student for one school year. This includes shoes, clothes, a backpack, and supplies for the year.

\$50 a month can provide extracurricular activities like field trips, band, sports, and Connie Maxwell trips for a child for the year.

\$100 a month can provide 13 meals for a child in our residential care.

**To sign up, scan the QR code or visit
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CORN MAZE AT MAXWELL FARMS



SAVE THE DATES!

**CORN MAZE,
KID ZONE,
FOOD TRUCKS,
PUMPKINS,
AND MORE!**

**SEPT.
26-27**

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**To sign up, scan the QR code or visit
conniemaxwell.com/imagineer**



Until Every Child Has a Home

Our Foster Care Team has been hard at work this year. After reaching a historic milestone of 51 licensed foster families in 2024, we are continuing to celebrate with the eight foster families who's foster care journey led to the adoption of 12 children. 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 learning more about foster care, visit connie-maxwell.com. Our team provides licensing, training, and support for Christian foster families across South Carolina.





Dream On

In 2020, we embarked on a bold and ambitious 10-year strategic plan entitled A Decade of Dreams. In our latest video, Dream On, we brought this vision to life.

The inspiring film recently won a Gold Addy at the Birmingham Alabama AAF Awards. The music for the film was written, recorded, and produced by the incredibly talented Ben Rector, an award-winning and platinum selling artist with over a billion streams.


If you haven't had a chance to watch it yet, we encourage you to take a few minutes to experience it. It's a beautiful reminder of the hope and potential we help nurture in each child.

To watch the video, scan the QR code or visit conniemaxwell.com/dreamon.





Honoring a Legacy: Museum Exhibit Showcased Connie Maxwell's Impact Through the Years



The Museum of Greenwood welcomed the public to the opening of a special exhibit, Connie Maxwell's Calling and Story: Past, Present, and Future.

During the months of October through December, guests were invited to experience the exhibit, which highlighted the rich history and lasting impact of Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries.

The display featured a collection of black-and-white photographs capturing moments from Connie Maxwell's past, depicting children at play, working on the farm, and learning in the print shop.

Marion Smith, the museum's exhibits coordinator, explained that these images provided a glimpse into daily life at Connie Maxwell over the decades. "We showcased some wonderful photos that reflected the heart of this ministry," Smith said. "From farm implements to a football helmet and a letter jacket, the memorabilia highlighted key moments in history. Children were always at the center of the story because that was what the



ministry had always been about. Connie Maxwell continued to have big plans for the future.”

Beyond photographs, the exhibit included artifacts that told the story of Connie Maxwell’s evolution. Farming tools, vintage school materials, and hand-crafted items illustrated the history of the ministry. Visitors could also see personal memorabilia, such as letters and journals, offering firsthand accounts of life at Connie Maxwell.

Smith emphasized that the exhibit not only focused on historical elements but also shared personal narratives from those who had lived at Connie Maxwell or had served as houseparents. “Hearing directly from those who experienced life at Connie Maxwell added a deeply personal touch,” he said. “It was important for us to include their voices so that visitors could truly understand the impact this ministry had on individuals and families.”

For many in the community, Connie Maxwell is a familiar name, but Smith hoped the exhibit would offer new insights into its broader influence. “Connie Maxwell had long served this community and was essentially in our backyard,” he said. “Many people may have been familiar with the organization’s annual Christmas lights or the corn maze in the fall, but their impact on lives extended far beyond those events. The exhibit helped tell a much deeper story—one of dedication, faith, and transformation.”

Throughout its run, the exhibit attracted visitors of all ages, from longtime supporters of Connie Maxwell to those who were just learning about its mission. We are grateful to Marion Smith and the Museum of Greenwood for showcasing the ministry’s history and sharing the voices of those impacted by Connie Maxwell Children’s Ministries.



Grand Opening of Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton Honors a Legacy of Faith and Service

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries announced the grand opening of The Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton, a newly renovated facility dedicated to serving and housing volunteers and guests of the ministry. The celebration took place on March 6, 2025, featuring a dedication and recognition of all those that gave of their time and donations to make this renovation possible.

The Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton stands today as a testament to faith, resilience, and generosity. This updated facility continues the legacy of the Dunbarton Baptist Church, which, in 1952, was compelled to disband after the Federal Atomic Energy Commission selected the town of Dunbarton, SC, and the surrounding area for a defense plant. Called upon to relinquish their homes, institutions, and community life, the members of Dunbarton Baptist Church faced this challenge with quiet courage and faith, rebuilding their lives in new communities.

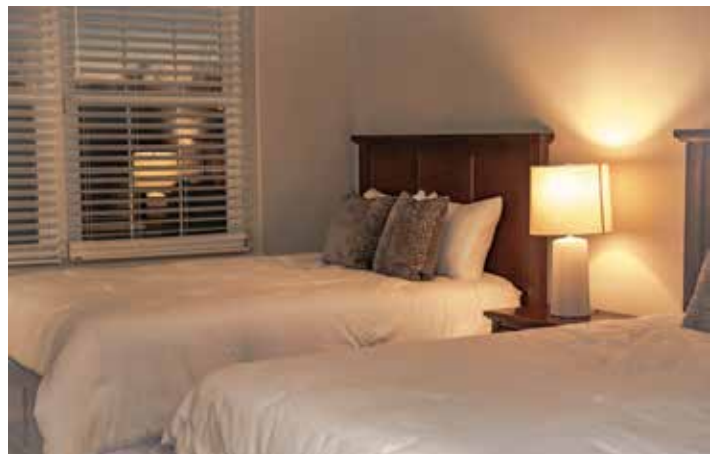
During the church's closing service on March 23, 1952, the congregation chose to turn loss into legacy, donating the proceeds from the sale of their church property to Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries. This generous act led to the construction of the Dunbarton Memorial Infirmary, a place dedicated to the healing and care of children.

Now, more than 70 years later, that same spirit of generosity lives on in The Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton. Dedicated to the glory of God and the service of children and families, this facility continues the mission of love and care that began with a faithful church and an unshaken community. The newly renovated inn will be used to house the hundreds of volunteers that come to the campus every year for mission projects and to work with Connie Maxwell students and staff.

These renovations would not have been possible without the support and dedication of Larry and Jerry Anne Faulkenberry, Lowe's Home Improvement, and the countless volunteers who served thousands of hours to see this dream come true. Their commitment has ensured that The Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton will remain a place of hope, rest, and renewal for years to come.

The Dreamer's Inn has thirteen bedrooms, a full kitchen, laundry room, and a large dining and living room for fellowship and meetings.

May the name The Dreamer's Inn at Dunbarton forever honor the unwavering faith, strength, and selflessness of those who gave so much for the future of others.



Winter Recap

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



2024 S.C. State Fair Cattle Show



2024 S.C. State Fair Horse Show



Daughter of the King Event



Halloween



Packing Food for Rise Against Hunger



Self Defense Training for Our Family Care Moms



Girls Camping Weekend at Maxwell Farms



Pottery Class



Christmas Card Winner



Snow in Greenwood



Watch our 2024 Recap Video



Hanging Out at Maxwell Farms



Family Care Christmas



Christmas Wrapping



2024 S.C. State Fair Cattle Show

On the Hunt

Thanks to the generous landowner and staff of Eden Hall Plantation, some of our students were given the opportunity to make memories in the great outdoors.

On a September afternoon, several Connie Maxwell students enjoyed their first dove hunt with two harvesting their first dove! In November, other students returned to the woods for an exciting deer hunt. Many deer were harvested, and one student shot his first buck—a 175lb 8-point!



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Connie Maxwell Christmas 2024





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