

Connie Maxwell MAGAZINE



For Nate, Maxwell Farms is a Place of Peace

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BUSY CORN MAZE AND
FALL CONCERT PAVES THE
WAY FOR REIMAGINING
MAXWELL FARMS



OH WHAT FUN:
CHRISTMAS AT CONNIE
MAXWELL 2025



CONNIE MAXWELL'S
EXPANDING
PARTNERSHIP WITH
CHURCHES ACROSS SC

Connie Maxwell

MAGAZINE

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Connie Maxwell
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

MISSION

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.



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Residential Care



"The Farm was the Gift."

As we turn the corner, leap boldly into a new year, and continue to pursue our dreams, we pause to thank God for his many gifts and provisions. For 134 years, He has been faithful to this ministry over and over again. In the right season and at the perfect time, God has met our needs, answered our prayers, and fulfilled our many dreams.

In this edition of the Connie Maxwell Magazine, we celebrate one of the greatest gifts ever bestowed on this tender ministry – Maxwell Farms.

Before Connie Maxwell became a ministry for orphans in the early 1890's, a gift was given. After the death of his precious daughter Connie, Dr. J.C. Maxwell gave 470 acres of farmland to begin Connie Maxwell and initiate our efforts to care for children and families.

It is important to remember that before we were a ministry, we were a farm. In the hands of Dr. J.C. Maxwell, the land produced vegetables and fruits. The dark, fertile soil was worked by wooden plow. The horses and cows roamed across the vast 470 acres, and the majestic trees, like cathedrals, reached out across the landscape and touched the sky. It was a very special gift – a vast and beautiful working farm.

Recently, in conversations with Brad Martin, Director of Maxwell Farms, he reflected on a conversation he had with the late Doc Rhodes, who managed Maxwell Farms for many, many years. During that conversation, Doc told Brad, "We started as a Farm, and we will always be a Farm."

"The Farm was the Gift."

In the last several editions of the Connie Maxwell, we have focused on the mantlepiece of our Decade of Dreams plan, The Healing Center. However, Maxwell Farms is one of our most effective therapeutic tools and will play a major part in helping us reach our vision to address trauma on a deeper level and become a **"national leader in healing and ministry for vulnerable children and families."** Indeed, the Healing Center and Maxwell Farms will work together in a powerful partnership to bring healing and wholeness to children and families in Greenwood, the state of South Carolina, and across the nation.

As you open this issue and begin to read about Nate's love for Maxwell Farms, the Corn Maze and Concert at the Farm, and our kids showing cattle at the State Fair, you will begin to understand more clearly our desire to strengthen Maxwell Farms – the "Gift that keeps on Giving."

Again, as always, thank you for your many prayers, generous gifts, and constant encouragement.

It means so much as we "Keep Nothing Back" and carry Connie Maxwell to an unprecedented level of excellence.

For the Dreams of Children and the Glory of God,



WILLIAM D. NICHOLSON II, PH.D.
PRESIDENT



For Nate, Maxwell Farms is a Place of Peace

Nate heads to Maxwell Farms after school and arrives there around 8 a.m. on the weekends. The 16-year-old is responsible for feeding, tying up, washing, and drying a handful of show cows, along with assisting in general care for the roughly 100 beef cows living at the farm. He has helped out at the farm for about four years and became a student supervisor two years ago. Nate takes pride in

having learned how to mend fences, move hay with the tractors, and perform some general carpentry through his role on the farm.

"A student supervisor is second in charge," he explains. "Brad Martin, my boss, tells me what to do, then kids have to answer to me, which makes me feel like the 'big dog.'"

Maxwell Farms Director Brad Martin uses words like "gritty," "tough," "bright," and "ambitious" when



he describes Nate. Martin identified something special in him early on and is mentoring Nate to take on more leadership and hands-on farming responsibilities.

“I saw something in Nate a long time ago. I recognized how good he was with animals and took more time and care teaching him. I’ve also put more expectation on him, and he’s grown to cherish that. His confidence has grown so much since he first arrived,” Martin recalls.



Nate was nine years old when he and his two younger siblings came to live at Connie Maxwell in December 2019. He was shy and terrified of living in the cottage with children he didn’t know. His father, Jacob, remembers Nate’s adjustment to “not being with his mom or talking with us much” as the hardest part for Nate during those early days, but that Connie Maxwell’s “activities and wonderful experiences for the kids helped with that.”



Nate’s first cottage parents were Russ and Kelly Holeman, and then Paul and Vilette Uhl joined them as cottage parents about four years ago. Vilette recalls how Nate struggled with anger when she first met him, and how the Holemans and Uhls worked with Nate’s father as they helped Nate process his rage. “We prayed with him and for him, and we didn’t give up.”

Vilette quickly recognized Nate’s “charisma” and describes him as charming and well-spoken. “One of his most endearing qualities is his deep love for animals,” she says, sharing how Nate once tamed a stray cat living near the cottage and named it Batman. When he was younger and struggling with anger, a therapy dog would visit the cottage and could immediately calm Nate down.



Boys from Connie Maxwell gathered for a service project to help with yard work, create a flower bed, and build a fire pit for Nate’s family.

Nate’s decision to follow Jesus during a Fuge Camp in 2023 led to a dramatic change in his life. He admits not knowing what to expect after getting baptized, but “knew it was a new chapter of my

life. It's difficult because I have higher standards to meet now, but they're good standards."

Adults around Nate noticed a new sense of confidence emerging, too. "He's growing in his faith and is discipling other kids, including another boy who has prayed to receive Christ. Nate has also gained so much trust through his work at Maxwell Farms," Paul Uhl says. "It's been phenomenal to watch him mature. He has a light about him that just shines."

Nate is uncomfortable talking about himself, but admits he is good at sports, especially football and basketball. His cottage parents say he is outgoing when he gets comfortable around someone, but Nate is quick to disagree when his father calls him a "social butterfly."

"I just love to work on the farm, really doing any kind of manual labor. I've been thinking lately about going to an agriculture college, and I'd like to raise my own farm one day," Nate says of future dreams. "It's one of the main things I know how to do, so what's the point of God giving you a skill and not using it?"

According to Martin, Nate has a bright future in farming. He sees Nate as an eager, dependable worker who wants to learn new things. "I have to depend on him in this job, he has tasks that need to be done every day," Martin says. "Nate is tough. He doesn't quit."

“
Nate has also gained so much trust through his work at Maxwell Farms...it's been phenomenal to watch him mature. He has a light about him that just shines.”

Through long hours spent together at Maxwell Farms, Martin has helped Nate identify the entrepreneurial skills he already possesses to work with the public and to own his own business one day. He is showing Nate that what he learns in school is being applied to work on the farm each day. He's also encouraging Nate to believe that his dreams are within his reach.



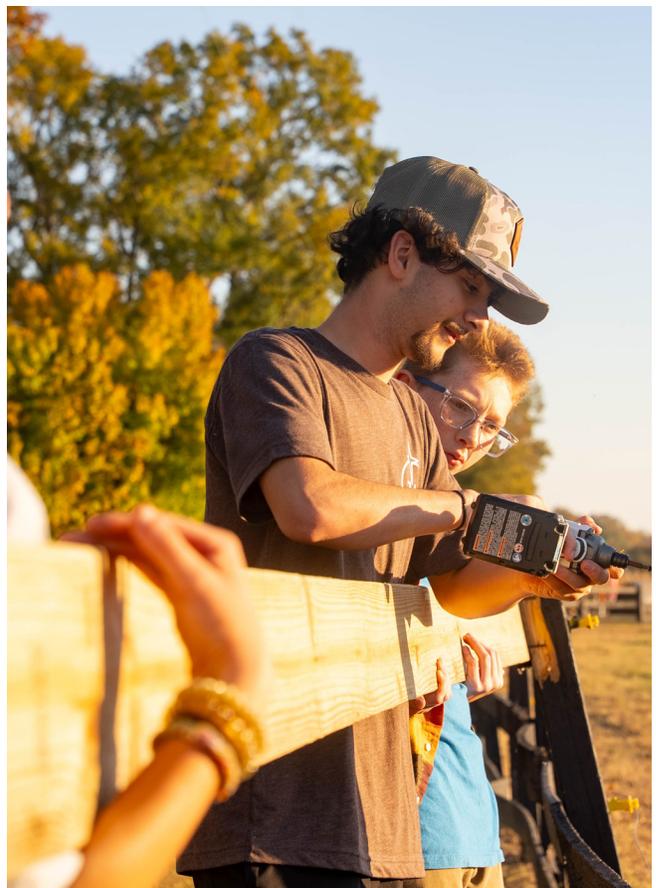
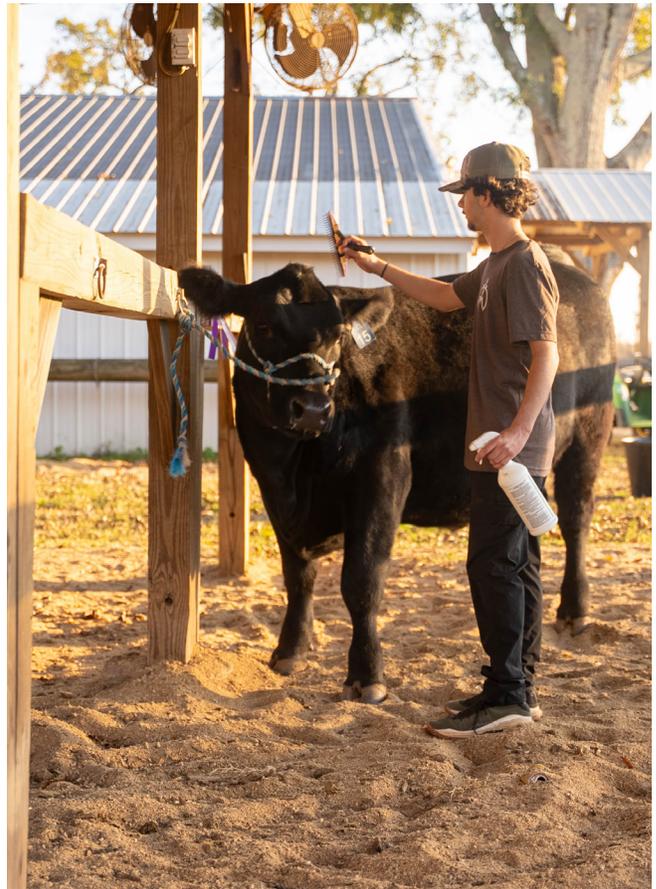
"He is passionate about farming, and he will be good at it," Martin says, adding that "Nate will be one of those 'child legends' at Maxwell Farms. He will be remembered by the other kids when they come here 50 years from now. They will remember showing cows with Nate and working with or for him."

Nate's father, Jacob, is grateful for what Connie Maxwell has done for his family. "They were there when we were hitting low times and couldn't provide for the kids like they needed. I'm thankful that they took our kids in, they've basically spoiled them," he says, adding that Nate's siblings have chosen to return home, but he supports Nate's decision to stay in Greenwood.

Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries further blessed Nate's family in November 2025 by selecting their home to receive service projects through the Cultural Services Initiative. Nate's cottage joined another cottage to perform yard work, create a flower bed, and build a fire pit for his family. The projects were made possible by funds raised through Connie Maxwell Baptist Church.

**“
You get the rest of the world
off your mind, just focused on
that one task, and it's peaceful.
Especially being out there in
nature.”**

For his part, Nate is happiest when he's working at Maxwell Farms. "You get the rest of the world off your mind, just focused on that one task, and it's peaceful. Especially being out there in nature. Sometimes I wish I lived back in the old days, when this is what we would've had to do."



Meet Our Volunteer Coordinator, *Vilette Uhl*



Vilette Uhl and her husband Paul have been Connie Maxwell house parents for four years. Originally from South Africa, Vilette has worked with Disney, Girl Scouts, a wildlife sanctuary, and Royal Caribbean, where the couple first met. They started serving as house parents after marrying 15 years ago, and have loved “showing the children and adults in our care the love of Jesus.”

In her new role as Volunteer Coordinator, Vilette is the primary contact for individuals and groups looking to serve at Connie Maxwell. Her first project was coordinating the annual Christmas Wishes gift ministry, and she now oversees monthly serve days, coordinates group projects, and engages each campus’s local community.

“I’m excited to introduce Connie Maxwell and what we do,” Vilette says. “Volunteers are a blessing by

giving their time, labor, and resources. Facilitating their service makes a difference, and I like to make a difference.”

Volunteer With Us

Volunteers are an essential part of our ministry, helping us provide the best care, help, and fun to the children and families we serve. Visit conniemaxwell.com/volunteer to learn more about how you can make a difference in the lives of children and families at Connie Maxwell.



Connie Maxwell Children Shine at the 2025 SC State Fair



Connie Maxwell children had an incredible time competing in the horse show and showing cattle at the 2025 South Carolina State Fair in October!

The girls excelled in the horse shows, putting their practice at Maxwell Farms to the test. For Monica, it was her first show away from home, while Evi stepped up to a new age group. Monica proudly earned third and fourth place in her divisions, and Evi secured fifth in one of hers—remarkable achievements against tough competition! Lynlei also attended to help the team and cheer on her friends.

Gabe, Gavin and Nate brought their A-game to the cattle shows, with Nate earning the Division Champion title for Angus!

We're incredibly proud of every student who represented Connie Maxwell with hard work and positive attitudes. We are grateful to our devoted staff and generous supporters for making these unforgettable experiences possible. A special thank you to Lauren Jones, Equine Director, and Brad Martin, Maxwell Farms Director, at Connie Maxwell.





Busy Corn Maze and Fall Concert Paves the Way for Reimagining Maxwell Farms

On the evening of September 27, nearly 1,000 people gathered at Maxwell Farms for a concert featuring Mac Powell (formerly of Third Day) with his full band and opener Holly Brand from NBC's *The Voice*.

Many in the crowd also enjoyed the farm's popular corn maze—an event canceled last year when Hurricane Helene struck just one day before opening.

"It was a lot of anxious anticipation," said Brad Martin, Director of Maxwell Farms. "[Last year,] the day before we opened the corn maze and the concert, Hurricane Helene hit. It was very devastating."

HURRICANE HELENE RECOVERY

For the past year, Connie Maxwell has been recovering from major tree damage sustained during Hurricane Helene.

"I've been here 25 years. I've been through ice storms and snowstorms and thunderstorms,

nothing like that would even compare to the way it devastated us," Martin recalled.

After first restoring the main campus back to normal—including repairs to two damaged cottages—the Connie Maxwell staff is now turning its attention to cleaning up the farm.

"About 60% of our farm is still down from the damage of Helene. But with volunteers and a lot of strong backs and minds and workers and all, we've got a good crew," Martin said. "We're getting it piece by piece."



BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF THE CORN MAZE AND CONCERT

Even without hurricane recovery efforts, much work goes into Maxwell Farm events.

According to Martin, there's grass cutting, ordering the trash cans, setting up food trucks and crowd barriers, putting up tents and tiki torches around the pond, erecting parking lights, and even fire ant control.

For the corn maze, the planting starts the week before July 4—nearly three months ahead of the event.

"We plant a variety of corn that is 90 days mature. It's made for corn mazes to be strong and withstand the wind and stay green for a long time," Martin said. "We also plant about five acres of millet as a hedge."

While the corn is still short enough to see over, workers mow and cut the initial maze path, usually a large circle. Each day after that, workers mow a different maze route with dead ends and loops.

Before opening day, Connie Maxwell alumnus Lee Foster leads a group of fellow alumni in creating a fun theme. This year, visitors encountered their decorations of mannequins in canoes placed throughout the maze—a unique touch that brought smiles to people's faces.

For Martin, every bit of the hard work was worth it when he saw families winding through the maze's intertwining paths and the concert crowd growing larger by the minute.

"It's very exciting to see people coming across the dam, pick their spots to sit down and then the family fun enjoyment starts. You see the footballs start getting pulled out, the frisbees and things of that nature," Martin described. "The closer it gets [to concert] time, you start seeing the vans and buses pull in with the talent, and they get on stage.



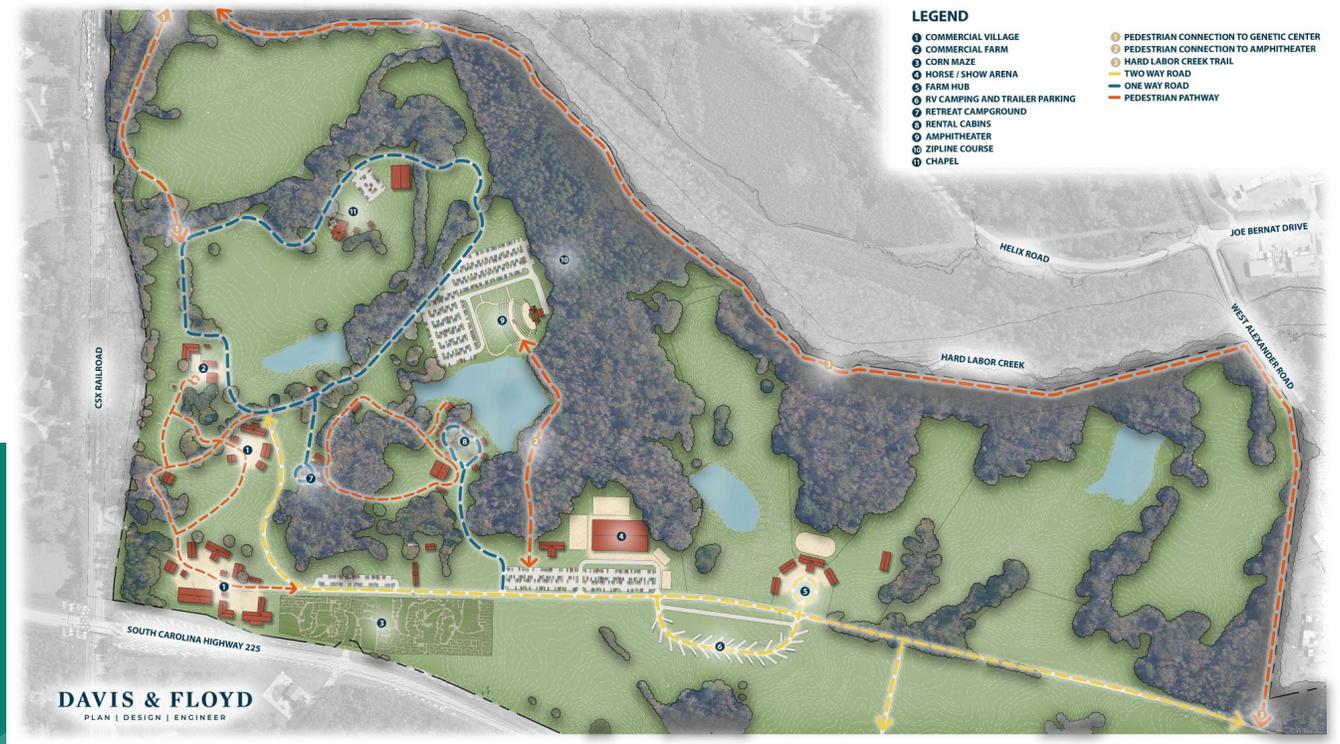
You hear the cheering. ... It seems like all of your hard work comes to fruition."

MORE THAN FALL EVENTS: CHASING A DECADE OF DREAMS

None of this fall's successful corn maze and concert would have been possible without the generosity of 14 sponsors, including stage sponsors ACO Landscaping, LLC, Southern Benefit Systems and NewSpring Church, who together raised \$62,000 to give children a brighter future through Connie Maxwell.

In total, this fall's corn maze and concert raised nearly \$100,000 for the Decade of Dreams campaign—a fundraising effort that includes reimagining Maxwell Farms with the construction of a new amphitheater.

Five years ago, Connie Maxwell began hosting concerts to boost operational revenue and build community awareness. With no tuition charged to the children in its care, the ministry depends





on donor funds and earned income to sustain its group homes and family-care services.

“The only way we can grow is to increase our operational revenue,” said Connie Maxwell President Danny Nicholson. “It hit us that Maxwell Farms could not only be a great place for animals and therapies and just the beauty of a farm with history—but we could also create something that would be an alternative revenue source.”

Connie Maxwell has already had a master plan drawn up to transform Maxwell Farms into a destination for church retreats and groups. The vision includes a chapel, retreat center, amphitheater, cow and horse arena, leadership adventure course, and horse and bike trails. Even with this large vision, Connie Maxwell is committed to keeping a working farm while enhancing its use

to care for more children.

For President Danny Nicholson, these initiatives—and especially the construction of the amphitheater—are about far more than fundraising.

“We want to educate people on our children and offer them a worship experience to remember,” Nicholson said. “The concert is like an open door to the future.”

If you would like to learn more about our 10-year strategic plan, A Decade of Dreams, and the three initiatives—building a Healing Center, reimagining Maxwell Farms, and expanding our mission by creating a campus in the Charleston area—**visit [ForTheDreamsOfChildren.com](https://www.ForTheDreamsOfChildren.com)**.

CONNIE MAXWELL CELEBRATES FOREVER FAMILIES



At Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries, the Foster Care team provides licensing, training and support for Christian foster families across South Carolina.

In 2025, Connie Maxwell served 80 children and 62 families across South Carolina—and celebrated 11 life-changing adoptions! Reunification remains our goal, but when it's not possible, we're grateful these children now thrive in safe, loving homes.

Please lift up our foster and adoptive children—and the families—in prayer. With a forever family and a Christian foundation, their brightest dreams are just beginning!






*Curious about fostering?
Want to equip your church
to wrap around vulnerable
kids and families?*

Visit conniemaxwell.com/what-we-do/foster-care





★
★
OH WHAT FUN: ★
Christmas at Connie Maxwell 2025 ★



From December 4–6, 2025, hundreds of friends and families visited the main Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries campus in Greenwood, South Carolina, for the beloved annual tradition of Christmas at Connie Maxwell.

After winding through campus aglow with thousands of twinkling lights, guests were treated to a live nativity featuring Connie Maxwell children, a festive concert series, and the ever-popular Christmas Village. Visitors delighted in the petting

zoo, sipped steaming hot chocolate, enjoyed wagon rides, and captured memories at the photo booth.

Christmas at Connie Maxwell remains one of our favorite ways to celebrate the season and give back to the community that supports our children year-round. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who came out and made this year's event truly special. We can't wait for an even brighter celebration next year!



Connie Maxwell's Expanding Partnership with Churches Across SC

Three years ago, NewSpring Church began the ForSC initiative with a desire to get more involved in their communities through partnerships—and Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries was one of their first calls.

"ForSC is our outward-facing plan to affect change in our communities for the good of the community and ultimately the advancement of the Gospel," said Aiken Campus Pastor Matt Steelman.

With 13 campuses across the state, NewSpring Church decided the ForSC initiative would focus on three areas of impact through ministry partnerships: addiction and recovery, fostering and adoption, and unplanned pregnancy.

“We believe that if we could tackle these three areas, it would affect so many other ones—like homelessness, education, incarceration—the list goes on and on,” Steelman said. “Our vision as a church is that everyone everywhere would have an everyday relationship with Jesus. And that means going beyond who’s currently in our buildings on Sunday mornings and making a difference in our communities.”

With one of their campuses just three miles from Connie Maxwell’s main location in Greenwood, NewSpring’s shared passion to help children in need of foster care and adoption opened the door for Connie Maxwell to become one of their ForSC partners this fall.

While attending with his family, Jay Boyd (then Connie Maxwell’s Senior Vice President for Strategy and Engagement) built a connection with NewSpring’s leadership. Those conversations soon brought Brad Cooper, NewSpring’s Lead Pastor of Culture and Direction, to an understanding of the urgent needs—and extraordinary opportunities—at Connie Maxwell.

The ministry’s ability to serve foster families statewide and hands-on volunteer opportunities led to a conversation about participating in the ForSC initiative. What began as a local church relationship quickly grew into something far bigger: a kingdom-minded collaboration with a transformational impact on the lives of vulnerable children and families.

“Our partnership with NewSpring Church began through shared vision and relationship,” said Mike Blackwood, Connie Maxwell’s Director of Church Engagement. “From the beginning, it was clear we shared the same heartbeat—caring for children and families in Jesus’ name. This is now developing into a statewide, multi-year partnership built on mission and trust.”





Our hope is to see every church in South Carolina play a part in caring for vulnerable children and families. A partnership can take many forms—supporting foster families, volunteering on a campus, hosting events, giving financially, or simply praying faithfully. It’s about walking alongside each other in ministry so that every child we serve experiences the love of Christ through His Church.

MIKE BLACKWOOD

FROM PARTNER DAY TO A MOVEMENT

On Sunday, November 2, Connie Maxwell Children’s Ministries had representatives at 11 NewSpring Church campuses for their Partner Day, a part of the ForSC initiative.

“It’s a really warm, smiley, engaging, we’re part of something bigger than ourselves day,” Steelman explained. “The ultimate aim is to bless our partners with more awareness and gain more volunteers, and just to be celebrated and prayed for.”

As partner representatives shared materials in NewSpring Church atriums, they were able to meet the people behind the church who give financially to their work and potentially volunteer. In turn, the special event gives church members the opportunity to get involved in local ministries—like Connie Maxwell.

Among the representatives was Blackwood, who attended NewSpring's Myrtle Beach campus and enjoyed wonderful conversations with members and leaders throughout the morning.

"It was encouraging to see so many people genuinely interested in what God is doing through Connie Maxwell and eager to learn how they can help children and families across South Carolina," Blackwood said.

But for Blackwood, the best is yet to come.

"We're incredibly excited because this partnership shows what can happen when the local church and Connie Maxwell unite around a shared purpose. It's not just about a single day or event—it's about a movement of God's people across South Carolina," Blackwood said.

"NewSpring's passion for being ForSC aligns beautifully with our mission to restore hope through Christ to children and families. Together, we can reach more people and serve more communities than ever before."



Want Your Church to Partner with Connie Maxwell?

The first step is simply to reach out. Mike Blackwood will follow up with your church to explore how they can join Connie Maxwell on mission, identifying opportunities that match

your church's unique gifts. Whether your church is passionate about service projects, foster care ministry, prayer support, or financial partnership, every church—no matter the size—can make a real difference. Visit conniemaxwell.com/engage-your-church to learn more.



Christmas Wishes:

Thank You for Loving Connie Maxwell Children and Families

Because of your generosity, every child and family at Connie Maxwell experienced a Christmas filled with wonder, love, and the unmistakable feeling of being truly seen and cherished.

Generous sponsors brought Christmas wishes to life with thoughtful gifts and clothing, while dedicated friends filled our campuses with joy on Drop-Off Day and turned the Wrapping Party into a festive celebration of ribbons, laughter, and holiday spirit at Connie Maxwell Baptist Church.

Thanks to your donations—from football fan gear to art supplies, cozy blankets, puzzles, and

devotion books—our Christmas Store overflowed with gifts. Our children proudly “shopped” with quarters in hand, chose special gifts for the people they love, and discovered the joy that comes from giving. All proceeds from the Christmas Store went directly to supporting global missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

As wonderful as every gift under the tree has been, may they all pale in comparison to the surpassing joy our children and families have received in Jesus. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for making this the most magical Christmas yet.





Connie Maxwell
CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

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Alumni Reunion Weekend JUNE 12-14, 2026



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FOR 10% OFF YOUR ORDER.**



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Debra, Gabby, Emily and Monica had fun at the Mac Powell Concert!



Everyone had a great first day of school!



The boys crushed their first MaxFit workout!



Gabe and Gabby got baptized!



Monica caught a big fish at the fishing tournament!



Our kids attended the LifeWay FUGE Camp!



We saw rainbows at Maxwell Farms!

Dreaming Big
2025 in Review

WATCH OUR 2025 RECAP VIDEO →




Summer was full of pool days!



Mari and Landon visited an apple orchard.



Kids had fun hanging out at Maxwell Farms!



Jared and Gavin carved pumpkins in October.



Holland and Kinsley helped lead worship at Connie Maxwell Baptist Church.



The boys chased waterfalls!



Emily practiced horseback riding at Maxwell Farms.

MAXWELL IMAGINEERS

CREATING DREAMS. INSPIRING IMAGINATION.

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, 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.

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- ✦ **Keynote speaker**
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- ✦ **Foster care relicensing training hours**

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Taylors, SC

MARCH 7, 2026

Shandon Baptist Church
Columbia, SC

MARCH 7, 2026

Church at Cane Bay
Summerville, SC

Learn more at
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