

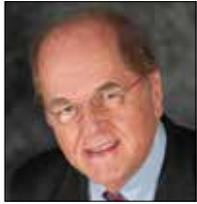
# HELP FOR THE JOURNEY

Fall/Winter 2019

The Newsletter for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry

## CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? NCBAM is ten years old!

By Michael C. Blackwell



**The North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry** is proof that there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.

First off, let's get the pronunciation of NCBAM correct. The "N" and the "C" are pronounced as separate letters. BAM is pronounced as the word BAM.

**Thus: N.C.BAM.**

Lots of people now shorten it to just BAM. Some people still say all letters, N-C-B-A-M. But it's NCBAM or BAM for short. Lots of lovely people say it all—"The North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry."

The original idea that N. C. Baptist State Convention Executive Director/Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield, Jr. and I discussed was a non-residential ministry that would do whatever we determined it would do.

That's right—there was **no blueprint, no guidelines, no similar ministry**, no nothing. **We started from scratch.**

I was asked to begin this ministry because, as Rev. Hollifield put it, "Dr. Blackwell, you are highly respected and trusted by North Carolina Baptists. The Baptist Children's Homes is known for **innovative ministries** and that's what we are looking for in **a new ministry** to senior adults."

With that "charge" from Rev. Hollifield, **we assembled a "blue ribbon committee"** of experts in social services, elder law, finance, and ministry. The **energy level was high** and never ceased during our year-long study.

Bobby Boyd, BCH trustee and Department of Social Services legend, enlisted experts from Area Agencies on Aging. **The excitement was palpable.** We met at Caraway Conference Center, ate at Caraway, prayed at Caraway, and had our final "breakthrough" at Caraway.

**I had to sell the idea. I loved doing that.** First, to my own

Board of Trustees, then to the Baptist State Convention and its appropriate committees.

We renovated (state-of-the-art) a dingy building that had, to be kind, seen better days—much better days.

The Baptist State Convention funded the renovation and fully funds operations for NCBAM. **To celebrate that partnership, we dedicated a "Partners Library"** with resources, a meeting table, and office. The much larger "Michael C. Blackwell Conference Room" hosts various events throughout the year.

**Dr. Sandy Gregory has been the one-and-only director of NCBAM.** I didn't even interview anyone else for the job. I instinctively knew that Sandy was the perfect fit. Ten years later, I'm pleased to say that **my choice has been proven right** many times over.

We have six full-time and eight part-time staff. **They cover North Carolina like the "dew covers Dixie."** They are women and men of Christian faith and conviction and **all have hearts for carrying out NCBAM's mission of providing "Help for the Journey."**

**I can't wait to see what the next ten years will bring.**

*Dr. Michael C. Blackwell is president/CEO of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina and the founder of NCBAM.*



**View NCBAM's 10th Anniversary video at [ncbam.org/resources](http://ncbam.org/resources) or on our YouTube channel!**

# Just a Little Talk

By Whitney Brooks



**Inspiration winds its way** to us in so many ways: prayer, scripture, poetry, art. Recently I found myself humming a tried and true gospel number, "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" — you know the song. It's a catchy tune, and that day

I could not get it out of my head.

I've heard that the best way to get a song unstuck from our mental radio is to **actually listen to it**, so that's exactly what I did. Behold the power of the Internet!

**As this beloved hymn** wound its way through my headphones, something sounded different. This song, which I've sung too many times to count, **made a fresh impression**. One line in particular pinched me: "Just a little talk with Jesus made me whole."

I listened again. And again, and again. I leaned back, eyes closed, and visualized the words of the song. **My brain and my spirit formed their own chorus**, singing a connection between the lyrics to this classic southern hymn and NCBAM's groundbreaking One Hope program.

One Hope and its accompanying **NCBAM Hope Line exist to serve aging adults suffering from loneliness and social isolation**: folks who are in need of community and quality connection. Evidence has shown that a **lack of access** to daily interactions with others contributes to **serious health problems**, from cognitive decline to premature death.

The power of connection is mighty, and **NCBAM is bridging this broad gap in the senior adult community** by offering a friendly voice to anyone 65+ who needs to hear one. Once the

Hope Line is fully up and running over the next year, **aging adults can call in anytime between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, Monday through Friday**, and share whatever is on their minds. They can talk with NCBAM Call Center staff or a Hope Line volunteer, pray together, and speak about their lives. **The goal is that callers will really and truly feel heard**. NCBAM staff and volunteers will help callers rediscover their purpose and reinforce their connection to Christ. **One Hope strives to help people feel whole**, the same way Jesus does in that treasured gospel tune.

As children of God, we were created to be connected and in community, to be in company with others. **Feeling seen and heard is a basic human need**, something we take for granted at times. Smartphones and computers provide the illusion of constant connection, but they are **no replacement for good old-fashioned conversation**.

As the One Hope outreach grows, NCBAM will be following in Christ's footsteps **to have lots of "little talks" with aging adults in an effort to make them feel whole**. We hope YOU are part of the conversation.

*Whitney Brooks, NBC-HWC, works with individuals and groups as an integrative health coach. She refers to herself as a Healthy Aging Cheerleader. She is a member of First Baptist Church in uptown Lexington. Whitney is a member of NCBAM's Advisory Team and also serves as an advisor for the ministry's One Hope outreach. Connect with Whitney at [www.mswhitneybrooks.com](http://www.mswhitneybrooks.com).*



## Mark your calendar for these senior adult events in 2020!

**March 3**  
Northeast Aging Well Conference  
West Oxford B.C., Oxford

**March 10**  
North Central Aging Well Conference  
Griffith B.C., Winston-Salem

**March 17**  
South Central Aging Well Conference  
Trinity B.C., Mooresville

**March 24**  
North Central Aging Well Conference  
S. Albemarle B.C., Albemarle

**March 31**  
Southeast Aging Well Conference  
Charity Rebuild Center, Rose Hill

**April 25 & May 2**  
Rampin' Up!  
*The Road to Hope*

**May 5**  
Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference  
Bay Leaf B.C., Raleigh

**May 25-29**  
Summerfest  
Fort Caswell

**June 28-30, July 2-4**  
Grand Camp  
Camp Caraway

**August 10-14**  
Summerfest  
Fort Caswell

**September 17**  
Senior Adult Ministry West Leadership Gathering  
Woodlawn B.C., Conover

**September TBA**  
Senior Adult Ministry Central Leadership Gathering  
Green Street B.C., High Point

**October 6**  
Senior Adult Ministry East Leadership Gathering  
Judson B.C., Fayetteville

**October 12-15**  
Fall Festival of Fellowship  
Camp Caraway

**We hope to see you there!**

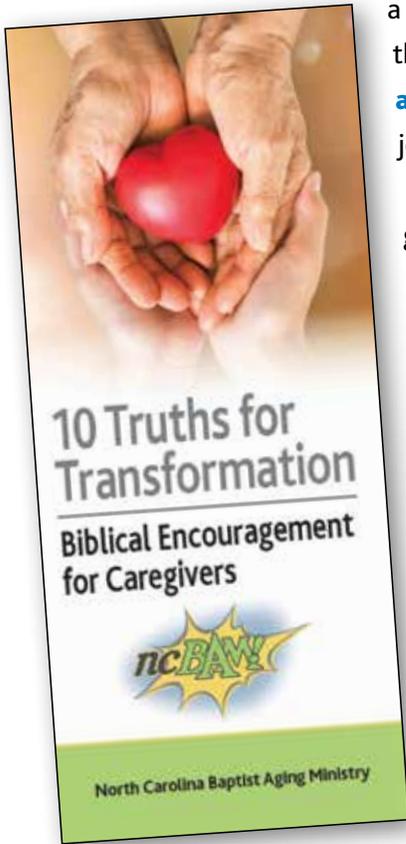
# The Heart of the Caregiver

By Robert Leonard



The NCBAM team had the privilege of meeting and hearing Mary Tutterow share her story in 2018, which gave me a greater appreciation for her and the teachings in her book, *The Heart of The Caregiver*.

I recently walked with a small group of caregivers on their journeys through the book and saw how her **use of scripture and personal experiences** not only challenged them but was



a source of encouragement for them as **they shared the ups and downs** of their caregiving journeys.

Kay, a member of the group who cares for her husband, writes: "The class helped me to **depend more on God**. It showed me **scriptures to know** I was not alone in the **daily duties** of being a caregiver. The videos were a **great way to see Mary** and **know she was a real person**, going through what she wrote about and how God helped her. Our leader, Robert, led



Joann Baker, Joanne Nichols, and Kay Beamon recently completed the nine-week Bible study / support group session, *The Heart of the Caregiver*.

us through the discussions and scriptures. This helped me **feel better about myself** and how **God is always and forever going to be there** and I am never alone."

I highly recommend *The Heart of The Caregiver* to anyone serving as a caregiver. The introduction to the book states: "**Our goal is transformation – from overwhelmed to overjoyed. At the end of this study, you will emerge with a new heart, a new attitude, new strength, and new hope!**" My challenge to any caregiver: find or form a group; begin the transformation for your sake and for the good of your care recipient.

For more information or to receive a **free copy of Ten Truths for Transformation**, contact NCBAM at **877-506-2226**.

Robert Leonard serves as south central regional director for NCBAM. Contact Robert at [releonard@bchfamily.org](mailto:releonard@bchfamily.org).

## “IN THEIR OWN WORDS”

*My name is Betty Mattox and I live in Statesville. I was one of NCBAM's first callers in 2009. They helped me get a ramp and I saved their card in a little purse for many years. I called them again recently because I had to put my scooter on high to get it out the door and it kept running into the door until it broke. NCBAM connected me to Rocky Hill Baptist Church who fixed my door and my threshold. Rev. Cook, Timothy, Joe and his wife Sue are so good to me. They check on me and have prayer with me. I tell them every time, "God bless you!" I thank God for NCBAM and for putting these people in my life. They are like my second family. No, I take that back. They are like family to me.*

# Hearts on a Mission – NCBAM Call Center

By Melanie Beeson



**When I accepted a part-time position** with North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) in 2011, I was doing volunteer work in my church and community. I felt led to **shift my mission focus to working with aging adults** through my position at NCBAM. I did not know just how much my heart would shift and my love for meeting the needs of aging adults would grow. I have since transitioned to **full-time Call Center Director** for NCBAM. The outreach of the Call Center has become an integral part of my personal mission direction.

This mission-minded focus is prevalent among all Call Center staff. NCBAM **receives calls from vulnerable aging adults across the state** who are often facing overwhelming obstacles. Whether the need is as complex as a wheelchair ramp or as simple as an occasional friendly visitor, Call Center Specialists **show the love of Christ through actively listening** to each caller and responding with care and compassion. We recently received a thank-you note from a client that read, “NCBAM was a blessing. **They could not have been more helpful.** They were loving, kind, and included me and my family with the process. We would love to say, **THANK YOU!**”

To meet the varied needs of aging adults, the Call Center **relies on churches and church volunteers.** Churches are often looking for mission opportunities in their local communities and we connect them to aging adults in need. Call Center Specialists **work diligently to build relationships** with volunteers across the state.

Volunteer Larry Brush, with Judson Baptist Church, spoke of the collaboration of Call Center staff and church volunteers when he stated, “You (Call Center Specialists) get to do more

than we even do. You do for all these people and never get to see the end result. We get to be there and see their smiling faces. **I want you to know that volunteers are thankful** for all you do.”

If you are 65+ and need help **maintaining your independence** at home, or if you can assist an aging adult in your community, **phone the Call Center at 877-506-2226.** You will speak with a **Christ-loving, compassionate Call Center Specialist** and experience firsthand the mission-minded ministry of NCBAM!

*Melanie Beeson serves as Call Center Director for NCBAM. Reach Melanie at [mbeeson@bchfamily.org](mailto:mbeeson@bchfamily.org)*



*The Call Center appreciates volunteers who have helped NC's aging adults the past ten years. (l-r) Call Center Specialists (CSS) Sharon Chastain, Renee Adkins, Director Melanie Beeson, CSS Trina Ivey, Shirley Carlson, and North Central Regional Director Samantha Allred. (Shirley Carlson was with Baptists on Mission in Coastal NC following Hurricane Dorian.)*



## The Road to Hope

April 25 & May 2, 2020

Matching grants will be available for reimbursing supplies.

**Call 877.506.2226**  
to register to build a ramp!

## Foster Grandparenting: Ministry Opportunity for Seniors

By Carol Layton



In 2018, 16,796 children were placed in North Carolina's foster care system. Baptist Children's Homes of NC (BCH)

responded to these numbers by launching "Family Foster Care." While continuing to provide residential care, the ministry now trains and licenses individuals to provide foster homes to children.

BCH also trains churches to come alongside foster parents, as a church body, and provide support and Christian community to both them and the children who come into their families.

Providence Baptist Church in Harrisburg and Salem Baptist Church in Dobson have couples in their congregations who have become foster families through BCH's training and licensing process. Currently, seven children have been placed with foster families from Salem's congregation. Six of those children are siblings — two siblings each living with three of the families. These brothers and sisters are able to worship together and celebrate birthdays together. Co-parenting between the families adds another benefit.

Dr. Sandy Gregory, director of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), envisions senior adults supporting BCH Family Foster Care as "foster"



Interested in fostering through BCH? Call 800.476.3669 or visit [bchfostercare.org](http://bchfostercare.org).



grandparents. "All children need the special relationship that only a grandparent provides and foster kids desperately need it," says Gregory. He and his wife Renee received foster parenting training through BCH. They have provided foster respite care and are currently fostering two children.

Gregory offers a 90-minute workshop for senior adults who attend BCH Family Foster Care churches. The training includes information about the foster care system, the needs of foster families, and responding to emergency situations. Gregory's workshop also explains how foster grandparents can serve as mentors and share their Christian legacy with foster children—possibly changing lives forever.

One of NCBAM's newest outreaches, "One Hope," will also intersect with BCH Family Foster Care. One Hope engages socially isolated and lonely seniors with community activities, such as foster grandparenting.

NCBAM's newest "Passport" brochure provides more information on BCH Family Foster Care. The brochure provides ideas that churches, senior adults and all ages can use to support foster parents and the children they serve. Call 877.506.2226 for more information or to request your free copy today!

Carol Layton serves as director of communications and administration for NCBAM. Contact Carol at [clayton@bchfamily.org](mailto:clayton@bchfamily.org).



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The mission of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry is to help aging adults maintain their independence. Sandy C. Gregory, director; Carol Layton, editor; Amy Burns, proofreader; Melanie Beeson, circulation manager; Betsy Huffine, art director. **Free subscriptions** are available by calling **877.506.2226**. NCBAM is a ministry of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina – Michael C. Blackwell, president/CEO and NCBAM founder.



## Letter from the DIRECTOR

*"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling." – Ephesians 4:4*

### The First Ten Years: "It's a God Thing!"

When I think about NCBAM starting as an idea 10 years ago and exploding into an internationally-recognized ministry, **I realize there is no other explanation than the ministry is "a God thing."** Yes, we researched, consulted experts, planned and prayed, but God has surrounded NCBAM every step of the way!

The growth of the ministry has felt explosive at times (BAM!), **but God has always provided partners and resources just when needed.** He's also been faithful **to bring in team members with a variety of talents, skills, and experiences that "join and knit together" the ministry** like Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

In 2009, there were waiting lists for services such as home-delivered meals, respite care, and transportation help. Those lists are still growing as state budgets are stretched to the limit. **But NCBAM, Baptist churches, and partners are bridging the gap to help NC's aging population.**

We began our most ambitious outreach this year—**One Hope: a spiritual response to isolation and loneliness.** Like NCBAM, One Hope began as a pilot program in Davidson County with Liberty Baptist Association. The **NCBAM Hope Line** is active in the county and will eventually cover the state. We've seen favor and resources appear to support One Hope at just the right time—one



"God thing" after another!

**My goal for NCBAM is that people will see Jesus in its ministries.** As outreaches grow, the good that comes will be because of God's hand on the ministry and the churches who honor the aged. I agree with our founder, Dr. Michael Blackwell, as he said in our anniversary video – **"You ain't seen nothin' yet!"**

Dr. Sandy Gregory has served as director of NCBAM since its inception in 2009. Contact Sandy at [scgregory@bchfamily.org](mailto:scgregory@bchfamily.org).