



Center for New Beginnings

Spotlight on a Child: Meghan's Miracle

While I have helped to write many of the spotlight articles in the past, this one is very personal as it is about my daughter and our journey. Many of you have witnessed our struggles and successes over the years, but for the rest of you let me share with you. Meghan is a vivacious three-year-old who lives life with joy and excitement. She is full of spunk and always willing to take on a challenge (usually involving dangling from high altitudes which has added many gray hairs to those watching her). Ever ready to make a friend, Meghan draws out others and is highly expressive. She is the middle child with an older sister and a baby brother.

Meghan was born with congenital deformities that have impacted her development. Her world has revolved around doctors and therapists with sixteen standing appointments every month and more if she was sick. Learning to be the advocate for my little one in big bureaucratic systems has been a bigger challenge than I expected. In the last three years, Meghan has faced seven surgeries with at least one

more on the horizon to deal with her multiple health issues. She was born with a malformed skull which had to be taken apart and rebuilt at eleven months old in Dallas, TX. She has an under-developed immune system so she is always getting sick and problems with her GI track not working consistently. Most noticeable to others is her profound hearing loss. By a fluke, she passed her newborn hearing screening. Much time passed before the doctors agreed to test her for hearing loss. She was diagnosed after much insistence by us that something was really wrong.

Due to the deafness, she and our whole family have had to learn sign language as a primary form of communicating. Nationally, only 10% of families with deaf children learn to sign, which limits the interactions and relationships with members of their family. That was not what we wanted for our family. Her health concerns have shaped our lifestyle



Meghan (3) and sister Callie (5)

and has drawn us closer together rather than pushing us apart. Praying for guidance, wisdom and provision, her dad and I decided to pursue a cochlear implant for Meghan to provide her access into the hearing world. She will always be deaf, but the implants will open up doors that would otherwise be closed; like sharing the world of music with her, letting her hear birds sing, and the sound of my voice.

In March of 2014, we turned on her device for the first time. It was wonderful to see her first reaction to sounds. You can watch it on youtube.com under **Meghan's Miracle**. The journey before us is still long, but we are grateful to be walking through this with her. Many times I have thanked the Lord for allowing me to be her mother. Before becoming a mom, my training and work revolved around special needs children and their families as a counselor. Little did I realize how personal that preparation would be for me. I had been working at the Center for three years prior to Meghan's arrival. Then I

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Director's Letter



“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for life and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”
Jeremiah 29:11



“However, the single most helpful thing is knowing that I am not alone.”

Spring has sprung and Summer is fast approaching! As you can see, CFNB is gearing up for our Spring fundraisers which benefit our Summer Programs.

In my last Director's Letter, I mentioned two potentially big happenings for the Center: 1) I would finish my course and work requirements to be eligible for the Behavior Analyst Board Certification Exam, 2) The opening of the RE-New Thrift Shop.

I did finish my requirements and am now submitting paperwork for the May exam (Praise the Lord!). We are in the process of seeing how this will best be used to help CFNB families, both in services and finances through possible insurance benefits. Georgia almost (again!) passed a law to make insurance available for research based autism services. It was an 'amended' law that would have only covered children under 6 years. Hopefully, when it does pass it will not be so limited by age. This seems to me to be a slap in the face to families with older children. There are many instances of children much

older making remarkable gains with such research-based methods! Unfortunately, even this amended law did not make it all the way through. Please be mindful of the bill called Ava's Law; look into it yourself and if in agreement speak to your representatives. Georgia is one of a limited number of states who does not require insurance companies to cover therapy for individuals with autism.

Secondly, our RE-New Thrift Shop did not receive the grant money needed, so we are still on hold with this venture. We are looking for new funding options and believe this will happen when the time is right. Our vision is to use the Thrift shop as a training opportunity for job and social skills for a Pilot Program for young adults with special needs. We have a building and LOTS of stuff, just need the funding for start-up costs. Both our community and clients will benefit from this project.

Saying all this, while the Center continues to move forward with our programs and fundraisers, several BIG

events remain on hold until clear direction is given. I remember about a year before we moved into our present building, I was driving down the road feeling sad that a door had just closed to our getting a building that I thought would “for sure happen”. I literally prayed to be given a sign of what to do next. I looked up and there was a billboard in the middle of downtown that said “Sometimes a ‘No’ just means a ‘Wait’.” Isn't our God wonderful? So here at CFNB in the midst of all our doing for the Lord, we wait expectantly for the next direction!

As always I thank each of you who faithfully help in service, prayer, and finances. Today I sit in a beautiful building which is full of love, the fruit of many hands. May this be true of this place: “For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you.” (2 Cor. 1:12)

~Sarah Ashe

Spotlight cont.

became a recipient of Sarah's efforts with the Center. I now have first-hand experience of the support, encouragement and knowledge that Sarah and the Center provide to families. Her genuine care for us is evident as she held my hand while I cried over struggles and jumped for joy

with me in our success. The Center has met the needs for our family in a variety of ways; like a place for speech therapy, hosting sign language classes and navigating the maze of medical and educational options. However, the single most helpful thing is knowing that I am not alone. Others care and

are willing to share the burden when it becomes too heavy and rejoice at the “small” steps that are mountains conquered in our eyes. Thank you for your support of the Center, and I pray it will continue to bless others as it has our family.

~ Faith Edmondson, MS
Meghan's Mom
Counselor at CFNB

In the News:

Yard Sale: Spring is here and it's a great time for you to clean out those closets. The Center is holding a yard sale **Saturday May 3rd from 8am-1pm.**

You can drop off donations from Wed. April 30th until Friday, May 2nd. If you would like to help with sorting, pricing or selling, contact Ambar at 706-437-0505.



Summer Programs: Our summer schedule will begin June 2nd. Please let us know if you are interested

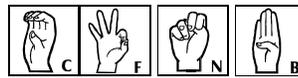
in attending groups or would like to continue tutoring for the summer so that we can create the most efficient schedule. You can talk to your child's therapist or tutor or contact the front office. We always have a great time, especially on our annual Water Day.



The week of June 23rd-27th the Center will be participating in First Baptist Church's VBS program providing shadowing so

that all of our kids can attend. Center groups will not meet that week. Registration forms will be available.

Sign Language Class: Nina Springer Campbell will be teaching a beginner sign language class on Mondays from April 14–May 19 at 6pm at the Center. A \$5.00 donation will help cover the cost of materials. Childcare is available. Please let us know ASAP if interested.



Committed to Training and Education

Through generous grants such as Planter's EMC and Autism Speaks, CFNB has been able to send staff and parents to conferences in GA to learn more about meeting our children's needs. One parent summarized her experience at an Atlanta conference: "It very inspiring. I got to hear from doctors doing cutting edge research to help me gain new ideas and insight, and a mom's inspiring speech on the day-to-day

roller coaster ride of raising a special needs child."

We are committed to training and educating our local families and service providers. In the past, CFNB has brought trainings to our area, such as Brain Balance, CPR/First Aid, and Ipad for Assistive Technology. In reality it's very difficult for many of our parents to find childcare to be able to travel out of town.

We are in the process of planning a local two-day Fall Conference for parents, teachers, and service providers. As we plan our topics and book speakers, we need your input as to what our community would most benefit learning more about.

Please contact Sarah Ashe to share your needs and thoughts, as we plan this event!

Faith's Corner

As parents of special needs kids we face worries few people understand. Yet to carry the worry becomes a weight we are unable to bear. I came across an article and felt it was worth sharing...A Psychologist walked around a room while teaching Stress Management to an audience. As she raised a glass of water, everyone expected they'd be

asked the "Half empty or half full" question. Instead, with a smile on her face, she inquired: "How heavy is this glass of water?" Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz. She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, it's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my arm. If I

hold it for a day, my arm will feel numb and paralyzed. In each case, the weight of the glass doesn't change, But the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes. She continued, "The Stresses and Worries in Life, are like that Glass of Water... Think about them for a while and nothing happens. Think about them a bit longer and they begin to hurt. And If you think about them

all day long, you will feel paralyzed – incapable of doing anything!" Author Unknown.

Remember to put the Glass Down



Green Egg Raffle:

This year we are raffling off a Big Green Egg smoker and 4 gallon two



basket deep fryer. Tickets are \$10 for two chances to win at this year's Boss Hog May 9th and 10th.



You do not have to be present to win.

If you would like to help sell or purchase tickets, please contact Ambar at the Center. We will also have a booth with lots of yummy baked goods at the event. Stop by and see us.



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CFNB is a Christian non-profit center serving children and adolescents with special needs (behavioral, educational, emotional, intellectual, physical), as well as their families and caregivers in the rural counties south of Augusta. It is our mission to offer healing and hope to families in need through the provision of resources, services, and support to meet the challenges they are facing.

Available Services:

Community Services:

- Trainings, Consultative, and Shadowing for community programs

Children Services:

- In-home and Center-based Individualized Programs
- Academic Tutoring
- Special Needs Playgroup
- Social Skills Groups
- Individual & Family Counseling
- Speech, Occupational & Physical Therapy available through private providers

Family Services:

- Lending Library & Resource

Prayer and Praise

SUMMER PROGRAM NEEDS:

Volunteer tutors needed for summer schedule to cover an array of academic needs.

People/Organizations from the community to volunteer to come in 1-2 days to share your talent or interest with our group children, such as drama, music, dance, gardening, gymnastics, art, cooking.

Increased need for snacks and drinks, craft supplies, and paper products.

Need volunteers for shadowing for VBS. Training

can be provided.

Vacation Bible School— June 23rd—27th, Full-Inclusion for Special Needs Children ages 4 to 5th grade at First Baptist Waynesboro

Weekly Playgroups, Social Groups, Academic tutoring and Individualized Sessions for children with developmental delays.

Thank you:

~ Border Bash Foundation for a grant awarded to us in December.

~ CSRA Community Foundation awarded us \$15,000

in December 2013

~ RD Electrical for their generous end of the year donation

~ Plugged-In girls retreat for a cleaning day at the Center

~ Monthly donors for their faithful support!!

~Thanks to Beta Zeta Club for a large donation of paper supplies

~Tara Bradley for donating multiple computers

~Thanks to Glenda for all of the organizing and cleaning that you do every week.