

# Like its residents, Breckenridge Village overcomes decade of challenges

June 6, 2008

TYLER—Life presents daily challenges for developmentally disabled adults. But the successful struggle can be rewarding, friends, family and caregivers agree.

So, there is symbolic symmetry in [Breckenridge Village](#) of Tyler, which after conquering numerous obstacles, survives and thrives to celebrate its 10th anniversary as Texas Baptist's only residential care facility for mentally and developmentally challenged adults.

Brien's singing and Brooke's sign-language translation of "Thank You For Giving To The Lord" evokes strong emotions whenever they perform.

(Photos/Craig Bird/BCFS)

Of course, a nonsymbolic surprise gift of \$100,000 helped.

"Blood, tears and sweat equity have all been invested in making our first decade possible," said Breckenridge Village Executive Director Charles Dodson. "Looking back, we see clear evidence of God's protection and provision. Every seemingly insurmountable obstacle has been answered by God's grace and God's people. Today, in the first month of our 11th year, we look forward and anticipate continued growth in our resident census, expansion of programs and facilities, and further improvement in the

quality of care we provide. The families we are privileged to serve are deeply grateful for the care we provide.”

Born after a six-year process through the committees of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Breckenridge spent its first nine years on institutional life-support, even as it provided care to residents from as far away as Canyon and San Antonio.

Kevin Dinnin, president of [Baptist Child & Family Services](#), admits he questioned if he understood God’s leadership when his organization accepted the state convention’s plea for one of its agencies to provide the service.



It didn’t help that an outside consultant made major errors in the financial model, and new government regulations announced just months after Breckenridge opened compounded the pressure. Plus, almost all residents were on scholarships—also funded by BCFS.

Still, the dream moved forward. Jean Breckenridge, whose son still lives at

Breckenridge, donated a 70-acre farm for the facility. Texas Baptist Men invested thousands of man-hours and skilled labor worth hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of dollars erecting buildings.

In 2006, BCFS reached a crossroads and set a goal—to pay off its \$3.7 million building bond debt within one year.

“The trustees felt Breckenridge belonged to God, and he would show us how to manage it,” Dinnin recalled. “Everyone told us we couldn’t raise that amount of money to pay a debt in 12 months, and they were right. We couldn’t. But God could.”



The gym gets lots of use at Breckenridge Village, but so do the arts and crafts classes, the swimming pool, the candle-making and fern-growing fund-raising projects and all the other activities and outings that crowd the calendar.

In June 2007, the note was burned. And by the time the anniversary of the 1998 dedication arrived, the last two of the six residential cottages were opened, and more adults than ever were being cared for.

The Tyler community participated in the party in force. Billboards and

public service announcements on television and in movie theaters touted the milestone, scores of local high schoolers spent time on campus doing service projects and interacting with residents, local stores donated a percentage of profits to Breckenridge Village, the county judge declared a special week to honor the facility, and staff spoke to churches and social service clubs and schools.

The signature moment came when Green Acres Baptist Church hosted a special day that included testimonies and musical performances by Breckenridge residents. In an especially tender moment, two residents—Brien and Brooke—joined in singing and “Thank You For Giving To the Lord.”

Linda Taylor, director of development at Breckenridge Village, received a note a few days later from a couple who had been at the service.



“We honestly were hoping that David wouldn’t like it when we came to visit,” David’s Dad said. “But from the very first he was so much at home and so content, we knew his life would be so much fuller here than what we could provide at home.”

They never had given to the facility and didn’t have a family member who is

developmentally challenged. But they felt led by God to make an anonymous gift to the scholarship fund to help more families take advantage of the residential care program. They enclosed a check for \$100,000.

“They said their hearts were touched by God, and they responded,” Taylor said. “God can do more in a couple of minutes by his Spirit than we can to do in a lifetime.”

But that is pretty much standard operating procedure at Breckenridge—and has been for more than a decade, Dodson said.

“Our goal is to be ever more widely recognized as a leader in faith-based residential care for developmentally disabled adults,” he said. “From where I stand, ... (our) future ... is very bright.”

For more information about Breckenridge Village, visit [www.bcfs.net](http://www.bcfs.net) , call (800) 237-0234 or e-mail [cdodson@bcfs.net](mailto:cdodson@bcfs.net).