

“Rookie” inspiration Morris joins BCFS as motivational specialist

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SAN ANTONIO—Jimmy Morris, whose Major League Baseball debut as a rookie pitcher at age 35 inspired a Disney movie, has joined the staff of [BCFS](#)—formerly Baptist Child & Family Services—as motivational specialist.

Morris will speak to teenagers and families in BCFS programs and facilities around Texas, including youth transition centers and transitional housing for youth in foster care, and others struggling with issues like poverty, homelessness or abuse.



Jimmy Morris with his wife Shawna. “I want to give back,” Morris said. “It’s not about me. It’s about what God can do through me.”

Morris, who spent his teen years in Brownwood, coached baseball at Reagan County High School at Big Lake in the 1990s. At one point, his students challenged him to heed his own advice never to give up on dreams. The coach and players made a friendly wager: If the team won the district championship, Morris agreed to try out for the major league again, reigniting a dream extinguished by injury 10 years earlier.

Morris eventually earned a role as pitcher for the Tampa Bay Rays. His major league career only lasted a few years due to persistent tendonitis.

'The Oldest Rookie'

However, he recorded his inspirational story in his autobiography, [*The Oldest Rookie*](#), and Dennis Quaid portrayed him in a 2002 movie, [*The Rookie*](#).

His subsequent journey as a motivational speaker led him to BCFS, a global system of health and human service nonprofit organizations headquartered in San Antonio. BCFS Health and Human Services operates transition centers across Texas that provide youth counseling, case management and assistance with education, employment and housing. Several BCFS transition centers also offer parenting education programs that connect parents to community resources to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Morris has served as the keynote speaker at BCFS fundraising events in Lubbock, Abilene and Kerrville the past several years.

"BCFS aims to empower struggling teens and families to dream big, set goals and work hard to achieve them," said Ben Delgado of BCFS' community services division. "So, it's powerful to show them what the quintessential underdog is capable of. Jimmy is living proof that no dream is too big."

Morris credited his grandfather, Ernest, with teaching him lessons about

perseverance and reminding him, "Remember who you are and where you came from."

Facing another daunting physical challenge

At age 51, Morris works to inspire people in need, while he confronts a daunting obstacle of his own. In 2013, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, a progressive disorder of the nervous system that causes uncontrollable tremors throughout the body.

Morris, whose fastball once was clocked at 102 mph, acknowledges life can come at a person fast. But he stands firm in his belief that with God all things are possible, and it's never too late to make a difference.

In spite of continuing challenges, he remains eager to serve as motivational speaker, mentor and advocate for BCFS youth and families.

"It's about who I can help and who I can push," he said. "It's my job to tell the kids what they're capable of."