



the encouragement project

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Everyone has plans that are made, both short and long term. We would all be hard pressed without them. Over the past years, the Lord has taught me to hold my plans very lightly. And once again this year my ideas were far different than the reality that the Lord had planned.

God lays His path out for us, and we must each choose whether we will walk in it. It's often difficult where He leads, but He invites us to follow one step at a time. In the process, He is found deeply faithful as we learn trust, patience, endurance, and faith.

Our "successes" this year have not been what we imagined months ago. Rather, they are more exactly what was needed. Be encouraged that following the Lord faithfully is the most important decision you'll ever make. No matter what He leads you through, saying "yes" to Him is never a regret.

~ Stephanie



"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

(Luke 6:38)

TRIBUTE

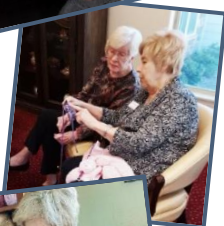
On October 10, 2024, my mom, Reba Shackelford, passed away. We moved her in with us in May after she went on hospice and needed fulltime care. It was the most difficult thing I've ever done, but the strength the Lord gave us in those months was simply incredible.

Mom loved to help people — as a teacher, administrator, pianist, music director, friend, and TEP volunteer. I never met anyone who didn't love her and appreciate the gifts and talents she so generously shared.

Mom also worked faithfully behind the scenes here at TEP over the years — serving on the board, making connections, arranging deliveries, prepping items to share, encouraging folks, editing newsletters, and as a sounding board for the numerous ideas I worked through. Of all her involvement, I think I will miss those conversations the most.

She fought cancer and related issues for almost thirty years, bouncing back countless times. There are a number of you who knew her or shared a conversation with her at some point along the way. Thank you to those who have sent cards and donations in her memory. She, too, would be grateful for that.

Walking with mom through her final days brought many deep lessons. The Lord knows what is best for each of us, and to experience that best means we have to surrender our own plans and ideas. I am most grateful to have been able to care for mom these last months. Although a heavy road, it certainly held many blessings.



THE BUILDING UPDATE

Renovations on the new building have gone a tad slower than anticipated for several reasons. There have been some unexpected repairs that have cropped up along the way that have needed attention to ensure the building is well sealed and in good working shape for our needs. As we work within the budget we have, God continues to provide for the costs and needs of this fantastic space. Lord willing, we'll be able to move in very soon!

MOVING IT OUT

We sure love to share the things you all generously donate each month. So far this year we have given out over **8,400** items, with more being packed up daily!

Here's what has gone out lately:

- North Carolina/Hurricane Helene Relief
 - blankets, scarves, mittens, shawls, quilts, stuffies, books, simple gifts
- Georgia (50 counties served)
 - books, quilts, scarves, hats, shawls, simple gifts, baby items, stuffies
- Tennessee
 - books



BRINGING IT IN

Our hearts are grateful for those of you who so generously share things you've made, items you've bought, what you've cleaned out, and your financial resources.

We love connecting with new volunteers and donors of all kinds, too, and are always excited to receive such great things that help those we serve!

We only get to do what we do because of the help you give. Thank you!



COMING IN 2025

After many prayers, refining ideas, and a good bit of planning, we're excited to share that we will be adding a new project to our efforts in the New Year!

This new branch is being created specifically to help and engage those who are homeless.

More about this much needed effort will be shared in the next update and on our social media in just a few months. Stay tuned!