

Nurturing God's Children Since 1875

THORNWELL'S HISTORY AND MISSION

What is Thornwell?

Thornwell is a non-profit ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and one of the oldest faith-based children's homes in our nation. It is located in Clinton, SC, and serves children and families throughout South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

How did Thornwell get started?

Thornwell was founded on October 1, 1875, by Dr. William Plumer Jacobs, a minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Clinton, SC. Dr. Jacobs named his children's home after his friend and mentor, Dr. James Henley Thornwell, a highly respected professor at Columbia Theological Seminary.

What is Thornwell's mission?

Thornwell is a joyful Christian community, offering hope and wholeness to children and families. Its goals are to nurture God's children, preserve the family unit, and ultimately whenever possible, reunite children with their biological family.

What is the relationship between Thornwell and the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

Thornwell is a non-profit organization with a covenant relationship with the Synod of South Atlantic—a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

OFFERING HOPE AND WHOLENESS—THE THORNWELL WAY

What are Thornwell's main programs and services?

- Residential Care
- Child Development Center
- Hartness-Thornwell Memorial Presbyterian Church
- Preparation for Independent Living Program
- Three-State Referral Network

How many children does Thornwell serve?

While the number varies, typically each year Thornwell's referral network receives more than 300 calls from families in crisis. At full capacity, Thornwell can house 92 children in its 13 cottages. During the past five years, Thornwell has served 232 children in residential care and fielded more than 1,500 referrals.

What situations bring a child to Thornwell?

A variety of situations and conditions bring children to Thornwell—any of which can leave a child frightened, disillusioned, full of sadness, and in despair.

- Physical/sexual abuse
- Neglect/abandonment
- Incarceration of parents
- Death of parent/parents
- Parent's separation/divorce
- Financial difficulties within the family
- Parent's/grandparent's physical inability to care for the child
- Parent's substance dependency or abuse
- Parent's/guardian's disabling health or advancing age
- Removal from foster home
- Failure of adoption process

How long can a child stay at Thornwell?

As long as they need to—this makes Thornwell unique among most children's homes.

How are children referred to Thornwell?

Children are referred to Thornwell by pastors, social workers, family members, the justice system, schools, social service agencies, and others concerned for the well-being of children. Thornwell networks with other agencies, as well as with child and family advocacy organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY—HOPE AND WHOLENESS THE THORNWELL WAY

What are some of the ways that Thornwell nurtures God's children?

At Thornwell, children have a safe haven and a home-like cottage in which to live. We provide nutritious, well-balanced meals to help them grow and caring adults from whom they receive love, encouragement, and acceptance. Through Christian guidance, we help them develop faith in God, as well as in themselves and others. We provide programs and services that encourage individual responsibility, personal growth, and positive living. We also offer opportunities for them to develop their God-given gifts and talents through team participation and activities.

What makes Thornwell unique among children's homes?

Thornwell is not an institution. There are no barracks or stark living quarters. The children at Thornwell live in historic cottages on a beautiful 35-acre campus surrounded by 450 acres of farm land that includes ponds and pastures. There are 13 cottages in all—each providing a warm, loving family environment for six to eight children. Family Teachers help create a positive family experience for the children, helping them grow in faith, while teaching them self-governing skills that instill self-confidence and personal responsibility.

Thornwell's home-like environment strives to serve siblings whenever possible. Though siblings of different ages and genders may live in separate cottages, they have consistent contact with one another, helping to preserve their family connection.

What does it mean to be a "Teaching Family"?

Thornwell's Teaching-Family Model (TFM) residential program attempts to model a healthy, functioning family for the children who live in the cottages. Children are given responsibilities and they earn privileges just as children do in a regular family. Every moment in the program is considered a teaching moment—helping Thornwell's children to become accountable for their actions and teaching them positive skills for a lifetime.

What are Family Teachers?

Family Teachers are married couples or individuals who live in cottages with the children. Each Family Teacher embodies sound Christian principles and considers his/her job to be a true calling from God. Many Family Teachers had demanding and prestigious careers before coming to Thornwell. Individually and collectively, they are dedicated to Thornwell's mission.

How are Thornwell's students being educated?

Since the closing of the Thornwell School in 2007, Thornwell's children have made a very successful transition into the local public school system. The children are transported by bus to and from campus. Their education is supported by The Thornwell Learning Center, where they are provided tutors, as needed. An on-campus library and computer lab provides continuous resources for study and research.

What spiritual nurture is available at Thornwell?

For many of the children, Thornwell is their first exposure to God and to a family that loves and cares for them. For that reason, faith in God and Jesus Christ permeates every aspect of living at Thornwell.

Thornwell has its own on-campus church—Hartness-Thornwell Memorial Presbyterian Church—a full-time pastor and a full-time Christian educator. Children learn that their sustenance and strength come from the One whom we know as the life, death, resurrection, and abiding presence of Jesus Christ. There are devotions in every cottage, Sunday school classes and worship services on Sundays, youth group activities on Sunday evenings, and prayer offered before every meal. Prayers open and guide Thornwell's staff meetings as well.

Is a community like Thornwell really necessary?

Absolutely. Thornwell saves lives. It gives children who don't have a chance at life their life back. A life filled with hope and promise. It saves children and families, and it benefits society as a whole. It instills principles of faith and positive living that prevent the repeated cycles of child abuse, poverty, welfare, crime, and incarceration.

How is Thornwell's 450-acre farm being used?

Thornwell is collaborating with the local school districts to provide agricultural courses to students. In addition, it will continue to make its farm, ponds, and other facilities available to community organizations as an educational resource.

What significance is there to the physical beauty and historic buildings on campus?

The spreading oak trees, the stately buildings, the inviting cottages, and the lushness of the campus create a safe haven—a welcoming home and a foundation for living—not only for the children at Thornwell, but also for its alumni. Its features provide an environment conducive to healing, as well as a place to which children and youth can return to their roots as adults.

THORNWELL'S FINANCIAL PICTURE

How is Thornwell funded?

Thornwell's ministries, programs, and services receive 50% of their annual funding from gifts of support given by individuals, churches, foundations, and businesses. Nearly 50% of the remainder of Thornwell's funding comes through bequests from estates and beneficial trusts,

Thornwell's endowment fund, and other investment income. Less than 1% of funding comes from the State of South Carolina for children placed in Thornwell's care by the state.

What steps has Thornwell taken to secure its financial future?

Fiscal responsibility and maintaining a mission-focused organization are two of the Board of Trustees' primary goals. In 2007, the home and its board took the following positive steps to ensure the preservation and continued growth of its historic ministry.

- Reduced operational expenses
- Hired new independent financial advisors and new fund managers
- Developed a new investment policy to ensure the protection of the permanent endowment with a mandated spending rate not to exceed 5% of the average market value of the endowment for the 12 trailing quarters
- Restructured the educational services, Child Development Center, and farm resources

Restructuring the endowment portfolio and launching a first-ever campaign are two additional significant steps that the Board of Trustees have taken to secure Thornwell's financial future.

What contributes to the cost of caring for children at Thornwell?

Costs include but are not limited to the following factors:

- Four full-time Family Teachers per cottage for 13 cottages housing a total of 92 children (two Family Teachers are on duty at any time)
- Food and clothing costs
- Medical and dental costs
- Transportation costs (vehicles, gas, insurance, maintenance, etc.)
- Education costs (fees, supplies, etc.)
- Counseling costs
- Insurance (employee health, liability, and worker's compensation)
- Pre-service and in-service training
- Heating, cooling, and power for all buildings and cottages
- Maintenance and upkeep on all buildings and cottages

ENSURING THORNWELL'S FUTURE

Why did Thornwell initiate its Capital Campaign—Nurturing God's Children?

Thornwell needs to increase its fundraising efforts for three very important and specific needs. Thornwell hopes to:

- Increase the permanent endowment
- Establish community-based services

throughout its three-state area

- Renovate and repair historic campus facilities, as well as build off-duty housing for Family Teachers

Through this Capital Campaign, Thornwell hopes to extend the reach of its ministry, increasing the number of children it serves now and in the future.

What will the Capital Campaign achieve?

A successful Capital Campaign will:

- Sustain a legacy of Thornwell services to children and families
- Provide family-centered care for hurting children by highly trained Family Teachers
- Nurture children in a loving, safe, structured, and Christian environment
- Create a vision for community-based services throughout South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida
- Break the cycle of violence, abuse, and neglect
- Create a strong endowment to support Thornwell's high standard of excellence and service
- Help restore historic campus cottages and facilities, and build additional off-duty housing for Family Teachers

SPONSORING AND GIFTING

Can an individual or group sponsor a child or cottage at Thornwell?

Absolutely! Thornwell offers many sponsorship opportunities for groups and individuals. Many sponsors provide monthly support toward the basic needs of a single child. Other sponsors provide just a portion of the funds toward expenses, while others choose a specific type of sponsorship. Individuals or groups who wish to sponsor a child or cottage can contact Thornwell's Sponsorship Office at 864-938-2700.

How can I get involved in the Capital Campaign?

Call Nancy Lindeman at 864-938-2734 for campaign details; then, visit Thornwell's website at www.thornwell.org to learn more about Thornwell and its ministries and programs.



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