

Happy Spring!

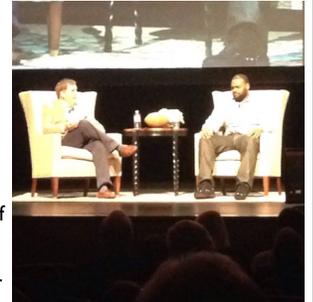
The Brantwood Brag

Issue 3 April 2015

OUT AND ABOUT: AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL OHER

On February 24th, the Montgomery chapter of Agape hosted their *Connecting Hearts with Michael Oher* event at the Montgomery Performing Arts Center. Thanks to the generosity of our friends, faculty and staff from Montgomery Academy, Brantwood staff and approximately 20 of our children were able to attend. Oher, an NFL star who recently dried the ink on a \$7 million deal with the North Carolina Panthers, is better known as the muse for the best-selling novel and critically acclaimed motion picture *The Blind Side* chronicling his road to success and mindset to overcome the most negative of circumstances— child abandonment. As our Brantwood children filed into the reception hall, dressed in their best with smiles of excitement and anticipation, another sense of truth lingered in the air— Oher's struggle of child abandonment is unfortunately *not* unique; his outcome is.

As adults, we look back and remember the heroes we had growing up— those people we looked to for strength, hope, and to lay a path for us to follow when we were on shaky ground. For the children of Brantwood, Michael Oher is their hero and to their delight, they are his. Sitting at a statuesque height of 6'4, Oher was small and gentle as one by one the voices of our Brantwood children asked thought provoking questions in pre-recorded video shots. As he answered our children's questions, and those from the audience, he let it be known that all children who work hard and have clear internal determination are his heroes. Hearing the hope-filled voices of at-risk and neglected children was meant to resonate and hopefully inspire audience members to implement acts of heroism in their daily lives for a child. Oher challenged both children and adults to find their inner hero, and for our children, they can rearrange the letters in *HERO* and get *OHER*.



Master of Ceremonies Jason Isbell & Michael Oher on stage

MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

April is **National Child Abuse Prevention Month**. As a refuge for victims of abuse, Brantwood challenges **you** to get together with your community to create strategies for prevention and awareness. This year's theme is "Making Meaningful Connections" and the first step is being educated on abuse by visiting www.childwelfare.gov. Here you will find tips and at-home practices to stop child abuse now!

A HEARTFELT THANKS

Brantwood wishes to acknowledge and thank this year's *Love Run 5k* participants, volunteers and generous sponsors. We appreciate all of the hard work, cheerful attitudes, and bright smiles which ensured everyone had a great time! Thank you for warming up such a frosty February morning to make a difference in the lives of our Brantwood youth. You showed our children the strong ties of a community's love by raising over \$16,000! Your giving allowed our kids the opportunity to observe and participate in the power of the philanthropic spirit.



A CHANCE TO WIN



One big truck for all the little engines that could.

Don't forget our 26th Annual Truck Raffle taking place Thursday, April 30th from 5:00-6:30 pm on atop our famous hill! Tickets are limited and are available for the price of \$100. Each ticket carries the chance to win a brand new pick-up truck, listen to live music, feast on barbeque and win door prizes!

Secure your exclusive ticket today by:

1. Calling 334.265.0784 and we will mail it to you.
2. Visiting www.brantwoodchildrenshome.org to pay credit card via PayPal. The memo line can be found in the Telephone Field. Please designate your gift to Truck 2015 in the memo field. Your ticket will arrive by mail.
3. Mailing a check, payable to Brantwood Children's Home, to 1309 Upper Wetumpka Road, Montgomery, AL 36107. Please designate your gift in the memo line to Truck 2015.
4. Coming by and purchasing in person!

**All tickets are a charitable donation and cannot be refunded.
Drawing to be held at 6 pm; you do not have to be present to win.**

Thank you
...to some of our
special partners!



along with

The Kiwanis Club of Montgomery
Alabama Power
Montgomery County Commissioners

IF IT DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU, IT WON'T CHANGE YOU

ALABAMA POWER SERVICE ORGANIZATION: ALWAYS ON



New bookshelves in girl's hall

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Alabama Power Service Organization (APSO) for transforming the TV common rooms on the halls of the boys and girls. The project kicked off September 12, 2014 with more than 70 volunteers. This project holds a special place in our children's hearts as APSO allowed our Brantwood youth to give their input on colors, fabrics and themes to make them feel like they were really *home*. For the boys, home meant the Seattle Seahawks' team colors on the bookshelves and sports motifs on the warm cream colored walls. The boys enjoy watching TV on fresh fabrics and comfortable cushions. They are also taking an active interest in the project by displaying books and other mementos of their accomplishments in the newly painted bookshelves. The girls also took an active interest in the project by selecting soft gray and blue tones. The plush sofas and fluffy rugs make for the ultimate "girls talk" atmosphere. Their focal point is a white framed cork board which serves as a "vision board" to tack up their hopes and dreams.

As incredible as the transformations are, Brantwood Executive Director Kim Herbert remains impressed with APSO as a whole. "Those folks are willing to jump, do whatever it takes and problem solve. They have been dedicated to Brantwood's success since day one" she said. Herbert had the privilege of speaking at an APSO training conference on December 5th, in which ten regional presidents were in attendance. In order to motivate new members, Mrs. Herbert slid on a pair of 3-D glasses to illustrate the perspective of our children. She said to them "when our kids sit in their new TV rooms, they don't see the paint color; they see love." To which further cemented their devotion to our mission, APSO donated a monetary gift to Brantwood on the same day. The impact of this project will be long lasting. Thank you APSO for proving **it's not just the power that is always on; it's the service.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Brantwood Children's Home began in 1917 for children whose fathers were fighting in WWI and their mothers were incarcerated? Not only does that make Brantwood an integral and unique part of Montgomery's history, but also in America's history as we assisted those in the Armed Forces. Take advantage of this patriotic piece of history by scheduling a tour or making a gift to keep her at her best!

WISE WORD WATCH

Philanthropy- *noun*. Goodwill to fellow members of the human race



60 MINUTES

We all get busy; here is a list of the top ways to make a difference for Brantwood by dedicating just 60 minutes or less of your time:

1. Make a lasting impression in the life of a child by joining our Be-a-Friend Mentor Program.
2. Donate gently used adult-sized bikes.
3. Be sure to "like" our Facebook page and visit our website to learn more about Brantwood.
4. If you've had a great experience working with Brantwood, write a review and share the great news!
5. Phone-a-friend about our cause.
6. Make an online gift by visiting our website to give directly or by visiting websites like Amazon Smile, Give Back America and Good Shop to give a portion of your purchase.
7. Take a scheduled tour of our campus.
8. Make a "care package" for our kids. You can include items such as fuzzy socks, a journal, toothbrush, hairbrush, deodorant and an encouraging card.
9. Donate teen magazines and other teen-friendly subscription services.
10. Clean out your DVD/book collection and bring the child appropriate options to our campus!
11. Write a letter to our children and encourage community leaders to do the same!

FROM BRANTWOOD'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Spring is in the air and at Brantwood that means the kids are enjoying riding bicycles, skateboards, and anything else that has wheels and rolls! It is refreshing to hear the laughter and watch as some of our youth learn to ride a bike for the first time! On more than one occasion, I have witnessed staff modeling how to wear a bike helmet while teaching the art of balancing on a bicycle or riding a scooter. Everyone is definitely enjoying the warmer weather, especially our 4 baseball and 2 softball players. It's going to be a fun summer of attending their games and experiencing evenings at the ballpark as a family group. Come join us in cheering them on and providing words of encouragement.

Because you give to Brantwood from your resources, youth living on our campus are enjoying typical childhood experiences such as playing organized sports, learning to ride bikes and experiencing a spring break camping trip! Yes, you have provided those blessings and *so much more*. God uses you, our community friends and supporters, to make a real and tangible difference that the youth can see and feel. Partnered with counseling and prayer, it is through those blessings the kids experience God's love and healing for them. They move past their hurt and press on towards their future. A future that is full of possibilities, a future full of hopes and dreams. Thank you for making their futures possible.

Sincerely,

Kim Herbert

kherbert@brantwoodchildrenshome.org

