



FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

# BRIGHTSTONE



## *Campus Horticulture Program Gets Underway*

**NASHVILLE SQUASH GUY CONNECTS BRIGHTSTONE TO THE COMMUNITY**

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BRIGHTSTONE PROVIDES A COMPREHENSIVE WORK, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY FOR ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, EXPANDING THEIR POTENTIAL, AND HELPING THEM DEVELOP MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY.

**BRIGHTSTONE.ORG**

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## BrightStone's Mission

To provide a comprehensive work, social support, and residential community for adults with special needs, expanding their potential and helping them develop mentally, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

**BrightStone is supported through the love and generosity of the community. By supporting BrightStone, you make a profound difference in the lives of the individuals we serve, and their families too.**

**DONATE TODAY AT**



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

**A**s we approach the end of another year, I wanted to take a moment to extend my deepest gratitude for your commitment to our work and our mission. Whether you have followed and supported us for 20+ years or if we are just becoming acquainted, thank you for believing in BrightStone.

I am thrilled and think you will be too by the activity taking place on our Land of Dreams. This year, we welcomed new students, teachers, and administrative staff. We also laid the foundation for a new horticulture program; expanded our vocational program to include new participants, work sites, and deeper career exploration; and, welcomed hundreds of new community members to tour our campus and use our facilities. As we move forward, we remain committed to expanding our programs, reaching more individuals, and making an even greater impact.

This fall, the first of our residential homes will open on campus. The opening is an exciting milestone for our long-term vision and we are confident that our residential program will bring independence for those adults who are able to live on their own but need supervision for their safety and security. Their new home will also provide peace to families and loved ones who have been desperately looking for long-term solutions as they grow older.

Each day, we witness the incredible progress of our students whether it is learning a new skill or mastering an old one. Or maybe its stepping out of their comfort zone and joining one of our pull-out programs like PATH, Drumming, or Book Club. Whatever their achievement might be, we celebrate it all and we are thankful for your support and prayers that makes it all possible.

Your contributions have provided vital resources such as specialized equipment, educational materials, and expert staff, ensuring that our students receive the personalized support they need to thrive. As we move forward, we remain committed to expanding our programs, reaching more individuals, and making an even greater impact.

I would like to extend to you a personal invitation to visit BrightStone, see your investment at work, and see for yourself the impact you are making. It is evident in the smiles on our students' faces, the confidence in their strides, and the sense of accomplishment they exude. Your generosity has not only transformed their lives but has also touched the hearts of their families who witness their loved ones achieving milestones they once thought were unattainable.

Once again, on behalf of the entire BrightStone family, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for you. With your continued support, we can continue to break barriers, challenge stereotypes, and create a more inclusive society where everyone is valued and celebrated.

Please consider BrightStone as you plan your future philanthropy and legacy plans. Together, we are building a brighter future, one empowered individual at a time.

With deepest gratitude,

Lee Rose President and CEO, BrightStone

*P.S. Mark your calendars! November is National Caretakers Month. May we all celebrate the families and caretakers of those with disabilities, and the efforts they make to ensure their loved ones live the most rewarding lives possible.*

# UNIFIVED WEEK RAISED OVER \$85,000!

Earlier in 2023, the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee made a decision to eliminate their Big Payback campaign, an annual fundraising event that has long been a call for the community to support local nonprofit organizations. In response, we got to work to introduce our own fundraising campaign on an even bigger scale to allow the community to still express their philanthropy. Coined UniFIVED, the five day campaign worked to unify BrightStone with the community through student field trips, our vocational program, sponsor visits, business partner participation, live feeds, and more.

We are extremely grateful for sponsor commitments, matching donations, and contributions by community members who helped us raise \$85,230 over the course of the five days. Due to the success of our first campaign, we plan to make this an official annual campaign for BrightStone going forward! Plan your sponsorships now - be a part of the 2024 UniFIVED campaign! Contact Jenny Myhr, Director of Development, 651.790.4888.



## BOWLABILITY RAISED \$91,939 FOR OUR BRIGHTSTONE PROGRAMS!



SPECIAL  
THANKS  
TO :



THANK YOU TO  
OUR SPONSORS



YOUR Williamson



# What's New

## AT BRIGHTSTONE

### NEW TEACHING STAFF ADDED TO OUR GROWING PROGRAMS

We are excited and proud to introduce two new staff members to our educational day program.

Megan Lechner comes to us from Franklin High School where she was the Transition 2 teacher. She holds a Masters of Science in Applied Behaviors Analysis and has 9+ years of experience in the special education classroom. Megan is leading BrightStone's new Flex Program. This program was created to help students adapt to change — it is a small, limited group of students who have been accepted into the day program, but who need extra support and time to transition into our core curriculum group.

Cameron Williams comes to us from Page High School where he was a Teacher Assistant in the Transition 2 class. Cam has a Bachelor's degree from MTSU and 11+ years of experience working with individuals with disabilities. He is a talented artist and also coaches football at Page High School.

### EXCITING NEWS FROM OUR P.A.T.H PROGRAM!

A heartfelt thank you to the Truist Foundation, who extended to BrightStone a \$25,000 grant to support the P.A.T.H program!



We are so excited to welcome Grace Christian Academy as one of our work sites for our program! GCA joined as a partner in September. Work sites now include SoulShine Pizza, The Well, Spring Hill Library, and GCA. The P.A.T.H students have also been involved in Career Exploration days in the community to explore their career interests even further and learn what it takes to serve in roles at restaurants, theatres, the library, and more.



Several students completed a 16-week drumming program taught by Belmont student Ethan Collier. Families, students, and staff were invited to a special performance and certificate presentation on August 7th.



## “FRIENDRAISER” EVENT CALLS AWARENESS TO BRIGHTSTONE

Long-time supporters of BrightStone, Mary and Dr. Colin Looney, and Emily and Dr. Ian Byram, hosted a wonderful private event, dubbed a “Friendraiser” at the Looney home in Franklin on August 5th .

BrightStone has been close to the hearts of the Looneys and Byrams for many years, through their connection to Dr. Craig Ferrell, who was also a former Director and Chairman of the Board at BrightStone. The event featured live music by The Green Hillsbillies and food graciously provided by Blue Coast Burrito.

The event was attended by nearly 200 friends and family. With BrightStone as a cause the Looneys and Byrams so strongly believe in, the evening was meant to join

their friends together for a great time while calling awareness to BrightStone’s work.

“Ian and Emily and Mary and I wanted to host this event to introduce more of our friends and neighbors to BrightStone,” said Colin, a BrightStone board member. “We want everyone to know about this incredible organization and how it’s changing lives in our community.”

“This event has set the stage for what we hope to be many more events initiated by those who want to help call awareness to our work,” said Lee Rose, BrightStone President and CEO. “We are extremely grateful to the Looneys for opening their home

in support of our mission, and to both the Looneys and Byrams for serving us in such a personal and heart-felt way. We are all protective of our friend circle. Because of that, I can’t think of a more touching way to show that they believe in BrightStone so much that they want their personal friends to be a part of it too. ”



## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: SAVE THE DATE

Sponsorships now available. The annual Christmas event is December 5th at the Factory in Franklin! Mark the date for this annual, magical event!

Be our guest for an evening of festive holiday music performed by the adults who attend the BrightStone day program, plus food, shopping, and fellowship! The event is free to the public and our way of giving back to the community. You can also enjoy our holiday event shop to buy our student-crafted ceramics, food mixes, Christmas decorations, and other great gift items for Christmas!

Doors open at 6pm. Concert starts at 6:30pm. A reception of light hors d’oeuvres will follow.

To sponsor the event, contact Jenny Myhr at 615.790.4888 or [jenny.myhr@brightstone.org](mailto:jenny.myhr@brightstone.org)

# CREATE YOUR LEGACY THROUGH PLANNED GIVING

No matter your age, having a Will and plan for the future provides for your loved ones and for the organizations you care about, like BrightStone!

Your Planned Gift creates a legacy of giving beyond your lifetime that will improve the lives of adults with disabilities and provide peace of mind to parents and family members.

Making tax-smart planned gifts, including Charitable Lead or Remainder Trusts, will ensure BrightStone has the resources to continue serving our community for decades to come.

The logo for BrightStone Legacy Society is a circular emblem with a scalloped edge. Inside the circle, the word "BRIGHTSTONE" is written in a small, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, the words "Legacy Society" are written in a large, elegant, serif font. The background of the circle is white, and the text is dark red.

BRIGHTSTONE  
Legacy Society

*Every Legacy Gift ensures BrightStone will serve our community for generations to come.*

*Thank you!*

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## TYPES OF PLANNED GIFTS

### BEQUESTS

A bequest is made through your Will by designating either a specific dollar amount or a percentage of your estate after other disbursements. Consult a qualified attorney or advisor to request the following language be added to your Will:

“I give and bequeath to BrightStone, Inc., P.O. Box 682966, Franklin, TN 37068, Tax ID 62-1783260 \_\_\_\_\_ [a certain sum, a percentage or the remainder of the estate, or description of property] to be used where needed most, or as determined by BrightStone’s CEO and Board of Directors.”

### BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS

Make BrightStone the beneficiary of an insurance policy, investment account, or retirement account.

### RETIREMENT ASSETS

Did you know that your retirement assets may be taxed if you leave them to your heirs? As a charity, we are not taxed upon receiving your retirement plan assets from an IRA, 401(k), 403(b), pension or other tax-deferred plans. Making a planned gift of your retirement account will help sustain BrightStone.

### NON-CASH ASSETS

Donating part or all of privately held business interests or real estate (a home, vacation property, undeveloped land, farmland, ranch or commercial property) are great gifts that would benefit BrightStone. Your gift will be based on the property’s fair market value, which must be established by an independent appraisal.

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Please mail your Planned Giving notification to BrightStone, P.O. Box 682966, Franklin, TN 37068 or email us at [Info@BrightStone.org](mailto:Info@BrightStone.org). For more information, please call Randy Elliott or Jenny Myhr at 615-790-4888.

# Emily Magid's Heartfelt Plan for Her Legacy



In her lifetime, Emily Magid has accomplished a lot. But even at the age of 77, it is her engagement with the community that makes her feel complete. She grew up in Nashville but found her home, and heart, in Franklin 26 years ago. Over the decades, she has watched her community blossom from small town farmland to a place where people want to live and work. "I care about the community, I really do," she says. "I've been a part of most everything going on here. I'm on eight different boards or advisory boards."

When it comes to BrightStone, it was an unexpected but immediate connection. "I didn't know about BrightStone until my friends, Marilyn and Calvin LeHew, asked me if I would like to go see some of the students and tour the property," says Emily.

But during her visit, she got that feeling in her heart when she walked through BrightStone's doors. "Everybody is so in tune to sweetness, innocence, and happiness. It's really an indescribable feeling," she says. "My interest has always been partnerships, which allow people to get involved. They broaden horizons and the minds of people. Within minutes, I knew BrightStone was an organization that I wanted to fully partner with."

As she became more and more invested in BrightStone's story, Emily knew her intuition was right. "Love is what life is all about - truly. BrightStone loves people and they just hit your heart," she says. "When your heart is glad, the world is good. And, after my first visit, I could see it and I could feel it. I knew this vision that BrightStone had was essential to adults with disabilities and their families in our community."

Since becoming a Founding Partner of BrightStone's Land of Dreams Capital Campaign that launched in 2017, Emily has seen BrightStone's Land of Dreams go from a vision to reality. "It's just been a great ride and it's so exciting to see the whole dream come to fruition," she states. "It didn't happen overnight, and it didn't happen by just one person. It takes everybody to make some big dreams like this come true."

When it comes to giving, Emily has two rules. First, you can't take it with you. "When I die, I want what's left to go to places that mean so much to me. That's why I added BrightStone to my Will, to help them establish an endowment," she says. Her second rule is that to give you must give from the heart. "It doesn't matter how small or big a donation is. Giving is not a competition. It's just a sweet thing that makes the world a better place. Life is all about people and organizations helping people - that's the whole crux of it. It's not about putting my name on something. Long after I'm gone, BrightStone will still be here and that is the only thing that matters - not who did what. It's not about the limelight, it's about loving people. My family may all be gone now, but now I get to pick my family - and I picked BrightStone as being a part of my family and life."

Emily hopes that others can see in BrightStone what she sees. When thinking about BrightStone's need for awareness, Emily says, "I just want to grab all my friends and everyone in the community by the hand, call BrightStone and say, 'we're on our way - I'm bringing friends for a tour! I believe in BrightStone that much.'"

# BrightStone Horticulture Program



## CROPS FLOURISH ON THE LAND OF DREAMS

It began with a simple conversation and a servant's heart. Charlie Coffey, known as the "Nashville Squash Guy," learned about BrightStone while working at a site for Cul2vate, a faith-based nonprofit organization he volunteers for that works to grow, harvest, and donate produce to the hungry. Given his love of gardening and the desire to help serve even more people in need, his discovery led him to a conversation with BrightStone President and CEO, Lee Rose, and an ask if a "giving" garden was something of interest. Knowing that a horticulture program lies within the coming phases of BrightStone's growth plan, the prospect of laying the foundation for one while also giving back to the community was exciting.

Four quarter-acre plots were planted on BrightStone's campus this summer with the goal of providing

Fall Season fresh produce with no pesticides and/or herbicides. They were planted and overlooked by Charlie. From there God, indeed, provided wonderful soil, sufficient and timely sunshine and rain, and a bountiful harvest. A multitude of crops has included: Butternut squash, Kabocha squash, Acorn squash, Spaghetti squash, watermelons, pumpkins, and decorative gourds.

"My gardening experience has reinforced for me the concept that serving is more rewarding than being served. I am appreciative of the assistance given me by the BrightStone administration and staff," says Charlie. "I am especially honored that BrightStone chose to sponsor the Squash Hunger Campaign." Through the Squash Hunger Campaign, several local restaurants have partnered with BrightStone to purchase the squash at a reduced price for use in their menu items, and in return





**THANK YOU THE FOLLOWING RESTAURANTS WHO HAVE PROUDLY USED BUTTERNUT SQUASH GROWN AT BRIGHTSTONE ON THEIR MENU:**

- Red Pony
- Herban Market
- Darfons
- Amerigo's Cool Springs
- Amerigo's West End
- Mangia

they will contribute a portion of the item's sale to The Well, a food pantry and distribution center in Spring Hill.

As part of its establishment as a "giving" garden, many of the crops for the first year have been donated directly to area nonprofits. In addition to the Well, crop donations have been made to GraceWorks, One Generation Away, Servant Group International, Working Mission, and the Franklin YMCA.

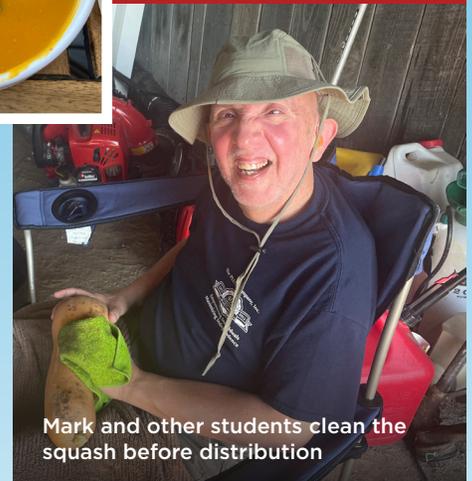
The crops grown on BrightStone's campus have now laid the foundation for a future horticulture program, one in which the students will fully participate in the growth and care of crops, and the selling of produce through a campus Farmers Market.

We are very blessed by Charlie and Karen Rogers, his gardening friend, who has worked side-by-side with him and has helped lead distribution of the squash to donation sites, plus sale of the squash to area restaurants. She is also leading the training for students on the proper way to wash vegetation, and will play a large role in helping to train students on other aspects of gardening as the program continues to evolve. Currently, the students continue to care for several small gardens on the back patio of the main learning center that they began as part of the existing core curriculum.

Karen sums up the importance of horticulture on the Land of Dreams campus perfectly. "Life began in a garden, so it shouldn't come as a surprise when we are reminded of the most important life lessons there. Look at our butternut squash. They are all, but no two are the same. Yes, there is a predominant form, the "classic" form, but they are all butternut squash. Typically, the classic form will be chosen because it is faster and easier to prepare, but each squash has the ability to provide nourishment. They all have a purpose. They all have value. Some forms just take a little more time and effort to prepare in order for their potential to be realized. BrightStone recognizes that we may not all be the "classic" form, but that we all have purpose. We all have value. And BrightStone is willing to take the time and put in the effort to help each student realize their potential. Being a small part of that is what has been so special to me about this first garden at BrightStone."



**Herban Market  
Butternut  
Squash Soup**



**Mark and other students clean the squash before distribution**



## 2023 Health & Wellness Goals



Student Tracey has been working hard this year to meet his personal health goals. About three times a week, you can find Tracey using the exercise equipment on campus. He is now riding about an hour each time. On the weekends, he also swims at the YMCA for additional exercise.

"I just want to be healthy," says Tracey. It is hard to swim during the week because they have swim meets after I leave here. BrightStone helps me stay healthy when I can't swim because I can ride the bikes instead. I am really enjoying getting exercise and helping myself get healthy."

**We are so proud of Tracey and the dedication he has put in to being healthy. WAY TO GO, and keep it up!**

## NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH

In November, we praise the unsung heroes – caregivers! Caregivers help raise our children, ensure seniors age with dignity, and support people with disabilities. It takes a special person to dedicate so much of themselves. We are so blessed and inspired every day by the caregivers of our BrightStone students – whether it is their family members, health professionals, or concerned friends who have stepped in to ensure their adults have the best and healthiest life possible. Of course, we are also blessed and grateful for our own amazing BrightStone staff, who works tirelessly to ensure student safety and care in top priority.

Caring for adults with disabilities is a full-time job, often requiring the ability to juggling work, enjoy personal time, or address the urgent needs of other family members. BrightStone works to support these caregiver obligations by providing a safe and loving place where their loved ones can develop friendships, use their talents, and contribute to the community during our day program. We are now able to take that a step further with our new residential program, and help provide long-term solutions for caregivers who are left wondering what will happen to their adults long-term when they are unable to care for them.

## BrightStone's New Residential Program Coming This Fall

BEAUTIFUL RESIDENTIAL HOME SOLUTIONS  
DESIGNED WITH YOUR LOVED ONES IN  
MIND TO PROVIDE INDEPENDENCE AND  
STATE-OF-THE-ART SAFETY FEATURES



## LAND OF DREAMS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Thanks to the multi-year pledge commitments from our faithful supporters, 100% of our Phase One goal has been reached!



While we wait for the final \$1,475,000 in pledges to be fulfilled over the next 3 years, your support of our Capital campaign today will help us fund additional homes and other facilities. We won't begin construction until the cost of each home or facility is fully funded.

**For more information, contact Randy Elliott, Director of Advancement, at 615.790.4888, or [randy.elliott@brightstone.org](mailto:randy.elliott@brightstone.org)**

# Student Life



## Jack's Corner

We are so excited to introduce a new article that will become a regular feature in our future newsletters. The article will include fun and engaging content from one of our newest students, Jack, who loves journalism. Be on the lookout for "Jack's Corner" beginning next year as Jack shares his own stories and interviews with other students about campus life.

My name is Jack. I came from Illinois, but we moved to Tennessee. I like to watch game shows and play on the computer. I am working part-time at home, Affordable Portables. I change prices, add new things, inventory and take things off the website. I have a dog named Henry. I like to give him treats. On the weekends, I will hang out with my mom and dad, play some games and go out for dinner. I like field trips at BrightStone, specifically The Animal Center.

I hope to share with families and friends the perspective of students about BrightStone and what we do here.

*Jack*





## WISH LIST

Thank you for supporting our programs through Wish List donation items!

Student clothing and organizational shelving units are needed. We are seeking to get five units. Each unit is \$259.

Gift cards to Sam's, Lowe's, Walmart, Target, and Amazon in any denomination are appreciated to help us purchase lunch and classroom supplies.

Large scale projects for landscaping of our Land of Dreams campus continue to be a need. Please contact Lee Rose at Lee.Rose@brightstone.org if you are able to assist with large-scale landscaping solutions.

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF ONGOING NEEDS, PLEASE VISIT  
[BRIGHTSTONE.ORG/WISHLIST](https://brightstone.org/wishlist)**



[BRIGHTSTONE.ORG/DONATE](https://brightstone.org/donate)

## GIVE

Thank you for considering a gift to BrightStone! Your gift ensures that adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities gain purpose and the ability to use their talents while contributing to the community. We are grateful for your support of our capital campaign and our educational, residential, and scholarship programs.

For General, Capital or Planned Gift donation questions, contact:

**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, JENNY MYHR**  
615- 790-4888 • [JENNY.MYHR@BRIGHTSTONE.ORG](mailto:JENNY.MYHR@BRIGHTSTONE.ORG)

**DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, RANDY ELLIOTT**  
615-491-0096 • [RANDY.ELLIOTT@BRIGHTSTONE.ORG](mailto:RANDY.ELLIOTT@BRIGHTSTONE.ORG)

## TOUR

TOURS FILL UP QUICKLY.  
RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!  
ELAINE FARMER  
615-790-4888

## CONTACT US

3000 BRIGHTSTONE PKWY  
FRANKLIN, TN 37064  
M-F 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
615-790-4888

## STAY CONNECTED

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