



FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

BRIGHTSTONE

Helping Adults with Special Needs



What a year it's been!

BRIGHTSTONE
25
YEARS

**CELEBRATING OUR
25TH ANNIVERSARY
WITH THE COMMUNITY**

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BRIGHTSTONE IS A PRIVATELY FUNDED 501(C)3 NONPROFIT SERVING ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE.

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.



FROM THE DESK OF LEE ROSE

Just when I thought my excitement for BrightStone couldn't grow any more, 2024 arrived! It has been a truly remarkable year as we celebrate—and continue to celebrate—BrightStone's 25th Anniversary. With the support of our incredible community, a dedicated staff, and passionate volunteers, this year has seen tremendous growth, successful program expansions, and memorable events. We've launched our residential program, increased both student enrollment and staff, and hosted some of the most impactful events in our history.

Twenty-five years ago, our founder, Brenda Hauk, began BrightStone in such humble surroundings that her expansive vision might have seemed impossible to achieve. Yet, today, as I reflect on our journey, I'm in awe of how that vision has not only endured but grown stronger, coming to life bit by bit. This journey has deepened our faith as an organization and community. There is no greater pride and joy for me than to now lead that vision and witness our organization—and more importantly, our adult students—thriving. It is the true picture of success.

Adults with special needs desire to be seen and valued, just like anyone else. I'm incredibly proud of how our community embraces these individuals and how our students are growing in confidence, showcasing their talents, and contributing in meaningful ways. They aren't just listening to music anymore—they are singing proudly on stage with Grammy Award-winning artists and co-hosting our BrightStone events. They're not merely spectators—they are performing comedy, acting in community clubs, and starring in our BrightStone news stories. Our students aren't just looking at photos; they're learning photography and discovering new ways to communicate through the lens. They're not just completing vocational programs; they are advancing into leadership roles. They aren't just enjoying meals; they are actively involved in growing the herbs and vegetables that go into those meals. In fact, BrightStone home residents even prepare meals weekly to deliver to others in the community!

God continues to show how He is working within us. Who would have thought that we'd go from operating out of donated rooms in a church to owning 140 acres, complete with a forward-thinking learning center? Our center, the first in the state to use virtual reality to educate adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is a testament to that growth. We've expanded our reach from hosting small local events to filling the 1,700-seat Fisher Center at Belmont University. We've gone from opening our first residential homes to becoming a pilot program for the state of Tennessee's residential services for adults with special needs.

Everything we've achieved over the past 25 years, the position we find ourselves in today, and the vision we continue to have for the future could not have been possible without your steadfast support and belief in our mission. When this year began, I knew it would be special because of the milestone, but I had no idea it would bring so much pride, joy, and new accomplishments.

It takes a village, and each person who has touched BrightStone—whether through giving time, sharing our mission, or providing financial support—has played an important role in our success. For this, I am forever grateful. As we look to the future, we will prioritize building more homes and advancing our 2025 Homecoming Capital Campaign. I know you will continue to celebrate our achievements and walk alongside us on this journey. I look forward to sharing every milestone with you in the years to come.

With gratitude,

Lee Rose | Chief Executive Officer
Lee.Rose@BrightStone.org | 615.790.4888

We Keep on Growing!

NOTHING MAKES US HAPPIER THAN TO SERVE MORE FAMILIES AND WELCOME NEW STUDENTS AND STAFF!

IN 2024, WE WELCOMED:

15

NEW STUDENTS
(22 since we moved into our new campus in 2022!)

8

NEW RESIDENTS

6

NEW TEACHING, PROGRAM, & ADMINISTRATION STAFF



And 3 new little campus friends!

NEW 2024 BRIGHTSTONE STUDENTS

William, Jack, Colin, David, Micah, Carrie, Ben, Gracie, Madison, Bethany, Yulia, Eli, Marin, Grace, and Matt!

NEW TEACHING AND PROGRAM STAFF

Hays Howard, Emma Fletcher, Peggy Oram (former substitute teacher), Andrea Ford (former volunteer), Steve Zanolini (former volunteer)

NEW MARKETING STAFF

Mary Fran White (Digital Marketing Manager)

NEW BRIGHTSTONE RESIDENTS

Marin, Grace, Bethany, Julie, Allen, Matthew, Tracey, and Jack.



Celebrating our 25th Annive

BRIGHTSTONE 2024 EVENTS



BRIGHTSTONE
25
YEARS

★ ★ ★ *A Night Full of Stars* ★ ★ ★

A Night Full of Stars was held in April at The Factory at Franklin and was emcee'd by seven-time Grammy award-winning news anchor Tracy Kornet and co-hosted by BrightStone student Kat. The event featured a reception and dinner, auction, and BrightStone shoppe. Alan Bartram, Gena Britt, Jason Carter, Johnathan Dillon, and Darrell Webb led opening performances. The BrightStone student choir, directed by J'Nae Fincannon, performed group and solo acts. Grammy winning trio Lady A headlined the event, and invited the students to join them on stage to close out the show.



Sold out crowd
of 600 community
members

Historic event revenue
of \$443,000

Featured performance
by Grammy
winning trio
Lady A

PRESENTING SPONSOR

S★T★A★R
PHYSICAL THERAPY

In honor of Dr. Craig Ferrell

rsary with the community

BRIGHTSTONE
25 YEARS
A Night Full of
COMEDY



A Night Full of Comedy was held at the Fisher Center at Belmont University in September and marked BrightStone's largest and most well attended event ever. 2024 NBA World Champion and Former Vanderbilt Commodore, Luke Kornet emcee'd the event, along with BrightStone student and home resident Marin Melone. The event featured a VIP reception and performances by BrightStone students, along with comedians Aaron Weber, comedic magician Stephen Bargatze, and headliner Grammy-nominated comedian Nate Bargatze.



Sold out crowd
of 1,600+ community
members

Event revenue of
\$326,000

Featured performances
by **Grammy**
nominated
comedian **Nate**
Bargatze

PRESENTING SPONSOR

ATMOS
energy

Celebrating our 25th Annive

BRIGHTSTONE 2024 EVENTS

UniFIVED

Our second annual UniFIVED fundraising week was held in July. The five-day fundraising week included a Bowling for BrightStone event where community members filled Franklin Family Entertainment Center to enjoy a night of bowling with our students, staff, friends and coworkers. California Pizza Kitchen, Krispy Kreme, and Chipotle also hosted fundraising days in support of our students and families. Students enjoyed community outings throughout the week.



"Generations" Art Show

In September, BrightStone hosted a free community art show event at the BrightStone Stinnett Center for Learning, Art and Enterprise. Artist Johnny Bone, a native of Tennessee, curated a special collection of paintings, prints, and other work for the show, with 50% of sales benefiting BrightStone. Along with meeting Johnny Bone, guests enjoyed viewing the work of some of our BrightStone students who recently completed photography classes on campus in conjunction with AbleVoices Photography.



rsary with the community



2024 Event revenue of
\$164,250

60+ Golfers and peer
fundraisers

PRESENTING SPONSOR



Annual Jim Hinton Memorial Golf Benefit

BrightStone's 25th Anniversary events continued this Fall with the annual Jim Hinton Memorial Golf Benefit. The event is held each year in October at The Governors Club, an award-winning Arnold Palmer course. Now in its 23rd year, the annual event has raised more than \$3,000,000 to support our mission and positively impact the lives of those we serve. The event is held in memory of Jim Hinton, a former BrightStone board member and avid supporter who passed away in 2012.



Thank you to our volunteers!

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who contribute countless hours to ensuring the success of BrightStone's Programs and Events. BrightStone volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Monday through Friday, our front desk is run by a dedicated group of volunteers. Others share their time and talents through individual and corporate volunteering dedicated to music and art with our students, maintaining our facilities and grounds, assisting with our BrightStone garden, classroom assistance, and administrative special projects.

We were proud to honor Nancy Pewitt, BrightStone parent, as the Volunteer of the Year at A Night Full of Comedy. We also honored HCA Healthcare as the first corporate recipient of Chaplain Larry Yarborough's Award of Excellence.



In 2024, 116 volunteers have dedicated their time and talents to BrightStone, resulting in 3,498 hours.



Vocational program forms new leaders

CONGRATULATIONS TO PREPARATION AND TRAINING FOR HIREABILITY (PATH) PROGRAM GRADUATES!

Two groups of students graduated from the PATH program in 2024. The PATH program works to evolve each student's vocational interests, talent, and skills, and allows them to participate in expanded responsibilities for BrightStone both on and off campus. Those who graduate from the program have the opportunity to participate in the new BrightStone Leadership Club. Two of the graduated students continue to independently volunteer at their former worksites since they completed graduation.

The Leadership Club has helped to plan and host several parties on campus this year, including a baby shower and retirement party for former staff members, and the annual student summer party. The graduates have also started an encouragement program in which they write an encouraging card to someone at BrightStone each week. They are now training to help with tours of BrightStone's campus.

To graduate from the PATH program, students complete a 15-month program led by Lindsey Wommer,

Vocational Coordinator and Program Assistant. During that time, students work at various work sites within the community, rotating throughout the program period. Students also attend career exploration days at community businesses in order to learn about different job roles and the requirements to be successful for each. On campus, students spend time in the classroom learning work ethic, discussing vocational opportunities, and reviewing their roles within their current work sites. Two of the newly graduated students, Cheyenne and Jane, even help Lindsey teach the curriculum on campus. The skills learned in BrightStone's packaging, consumable, and other classes also carry over to the work they do in their internships.

There are now 30 of BrightStone's current students who are or have participated in the PATH program. Two more groups of students will be graduating from the program in 2025!



LOOKING FORWARD

HOMECOMING

the Capital Campaign for BrightStone



In 2024, the residents of our first two residential homes – the Ferrell Home (for men) and the Craig Home (for women) – moved in and are now living an amazing life of independence and personal choice. Each of these homes costs \$1million and were fully funded as part of Phase one of our Land of Dreams Capital Campaign. The development of these homes became the center for new, historic legislation passed this Summer by the State of Tennessee and signed into law. BrightStone is now the only nonprofit organization allowed by law to be Tennessee’s pilot housing program serving Middle Tennessee adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



The 2025 Homecoming Capital Campaign will focus on funding for two additional homes on BrightStone’s Land of Dreams Campus, along with ground infrastructure, an ADA Fishing Pier, a Recreational Area and walking and bike trails, and a maintenance storage facility.

Future plans for BrightStone’s long-term vision also include more homes, a Chapel and Event Center, Equestrian Center, Aquatic and Gymnasium facilities, Medical Clinic, Horticulture Center, and more, all designed to enrich adults’ lives and foster community engagement while giving parents hope.

To learn more or to make a donation or pledge, visit BrightStone.org/LandofDreams.

We also welcome RMD donations, donor-advised fund grants, and encourage tax-smart donations of appreciated stock.

For more information, Director of Advancement, Randy Elliott at 615-491-0096 (cell), 615-790-4888 (office) or email Randy.Elliott@BrightStone.org.

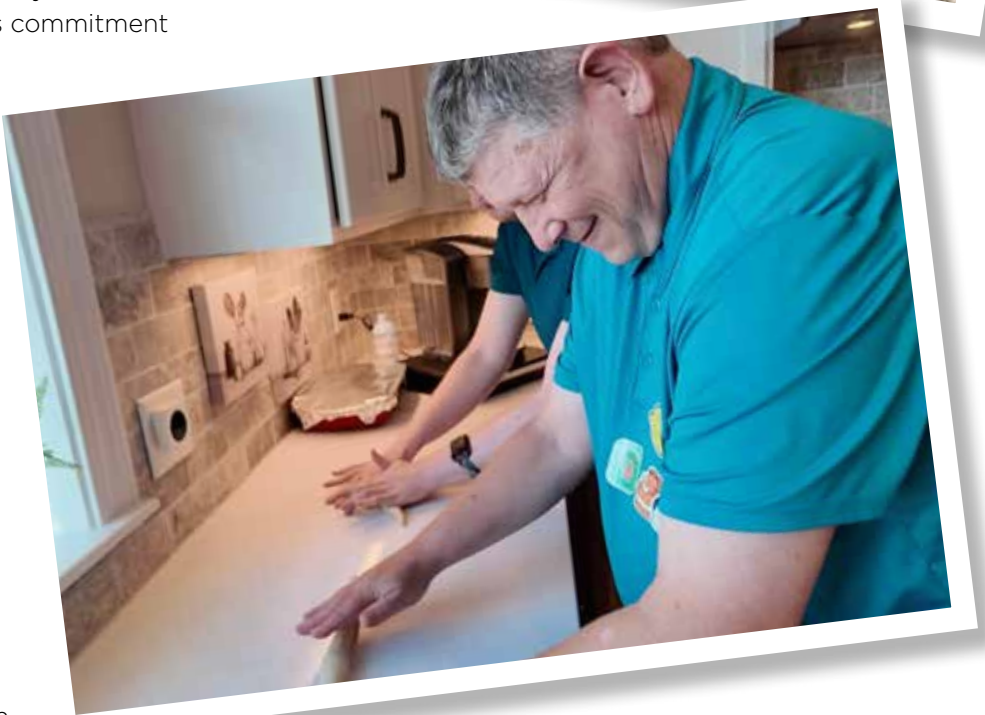
BrightStone's Residents

Living the Dream

In August, the last of our eight student residents moved into our first two residential homes, The Ferrell Home for men and The Craig Home for women. These residents have formed a special bond as they share time together both at home and in the community. Most attend BrightStone's educational day program, all spend time together in the evenings and on weekends cooking and sharing meals, enjoying community events, and spending time outdoors on BrightStone's campus. They are supported by their live-in home managers, but are enjoying the independent life they envisioned. The homes build independence, responsibility, and personal choices in line with BrightStone's commitment to education and learning. The residents take care of their own laundry, personal care, and cleaning up after themselves.

In each home, the residents have their own bedroom and bathroom which have all been decorated by the resident's themselves! There are separate quarters for home managers, and shared living and dining spaces for the residents.

BrightStone's residential homes, like our educational day program, are privately funded at \$1 million each. With these two homes fully funded, it speaks to the success of the organization and the generosity of the community. The 2025 Homecoming capital campaign focuses on raising capital to build more homes.



Letting our students shine

BST NEWS PUTS OUR STUDENTS AT THE FOREFRONT OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT



We have some incredibly talented students! The community has long gotten a glimpse of that at BrightStone's Annual Christmas Program over the years, but our students are taking new opportunities to let their talents shine and show the world what they can do!

This year, students performed musical acts and comedic skits at BrightStone's 25th Anniversary events, A Night Full of Stars and A Night Full of Comedy. Attendees at each event celebrated the amazing contributions of our students' talents, ending each performance with standing ovations! On campus, the BrightStone Show Choir has now been created, who will provide entertainment at both BrightStone events and at special engagements within the community in the coming year. The annual BrightStone Christmas Program, free to the community, will continue to feature the talents of all of our students.

To expand opportunities for our students to showcase their talents and interests even further, and to create engaging content for our audience viewers, this spring BST NEWS was introduced, allowing the students to serve in lead roles as newscasters, weather reporters, and more in BrightStone generated videos that are used in our social channels and email communications.

The participation by students in the news videos has boosted student confidence in a whole new way, helping them gain public facing speaking experience, allowing them to practice memorizing lines, and providing them opportunities to incorporate their own creative ideas. It has also been an engaging way to help the public share in BrightStone's campus experiences.

"I love seeing them get excited to appear "on air," says Mary Fran White, BrightStone Digital Manager who is leading the tapings. "More and more of them are jumping at the chance to participate in the newscasts and they always add their

own piece of humor and creativity. They have done such a great job in following instructions and telling our stories from their own point of view."

Hayley Preston, mother of BrightStone student Bayden who helps host BST News says, "The BrightStone news videos are amazing. Bayden absolutely LOVES doing them and is so proud of himself and the other students. He is living a dream and it is so fun to watch. All of the students are doing such a good job & look like they are having a blast. I can't wait for the next one!"

Episodes of BST News can be found on BrightStone's Youtube channel, @BrightStonetn.

Several BrightStone students also exercise their talents through theatre and comedic groups within the community such as Backlight Productions. We are proud to see our adults out in the community confidently showcasing their talents.



Celebrating the holidays



Each year our students enjoy an outing to the mall to pick out their Christmas gifts for their BrightStone student friends. A student Christmas party is also held on campus, including a special visit from Santa Claus, who helps distribute the gifts.

DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL BRIGHTSTONE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM!

This year's event will be held **December 17th** at Liberty Hall, The Factory at Franklin, 230 Franklin Rd, Franklin, TN. **Doors open at 6PM, program starts at 6:30PM.**

The event is **FREE** to community and is family friendly! Celebrate the holidays with great performances by the BrightStone students, with a reception following. Shop for wonderful gifts and holiday décor in the BrightStone Pop-up Shoppe and visit our Wish Tree to help support our teachers and classrooms.

Our annual **BrightStone Christmas Shoppe** will also be open in the lobby of The Stinnett Center at BrightStone December 6-13 from 9AM-3PM (closed on Sunday). Come check off your Christmas list, say hi to our students, get in the holiday mood, and shop a big selection of handmade décor, ceramics, our signature cookie, dip and tea mixes, Christmas ornaments, and much more. 3000 BrightStone Pkwy, Franklin, TN.

PLEASE NOTE:

BrightStone offices and day program will be closed on the following dates in order for students and staff to celebrate the holidays and spend time with their families.

NOVEMBER 25 - 29

DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 3

JANUARY 6 - ADMIN ONLY



THANK YOU!

This year has not just been a celebration of our own journey, but the journey we have taken together. We have some exciting things planned for 2025 that we are looking forward to sharing with you. Together, we will continue to do amazing things!

GIVING TUESDAY



GIVING TUESDAY | December 3, 2024

Help support BrightStone during the 2024 Giving Tuesday Campaign. Donations are being accepted now. Scan the QR code or visit give.classy.org/GT.

Want to Make A Difference this Holiday Season? We would be blessed to have your support with your year-end contributions and tithes. Checks can be made to BrightStone and sent to P.O. Box 682966, Franklin, TN 37068, or you can give online at brightstone.org/donate/give-now/. All donations are tax-deductible and must be post-marked by December 31.

Does your company match the gifts you make to BrightStone?

Many companies offer corporate matching programs for their employees, some even dollar for dollar. To find out if your company will match your donation, visit brightstone.org/donate/give-now/ or ask your HR Department for more information. We are happy to help too! Just email Jenny Myhr at jenny.myhr@brightstone.org





Student Life

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Franklin, TN 37068

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BECOME A PART OF BRIGHTSTONE'S LEGACY SOCIETY!

Consider supporting BrightStone through Planned Giving.

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.

brightstone.org/legacy

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