

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

# BRIGHTSTONE



PAGE **10** FINDING JOY IN HELPING  
OTHERS – BRIGHTSTONE  
RESIDENT JULIE



P6 2024 MARKED HISTORIC YEAR - SEE THE NUMBERS!  
P8 TN GOV SELECTS BRIGHTSTONE TO BE RESIDENTIAL  
PILOT PROGRAM

BRIGHTSTONE IS A COMMUNITY FUNDED 501(C)3 NONPROFIT SERVING ADULTS WITH  
INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES 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 intellectual and developmental disabilities, expanding their potential and helping them develop mentally, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.



## LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR – MIKE CAIRNES

### 2024 Was A Banner Year! Unequivocally!

**L**et me start by sharing my heart felt gratitude to our donors, staff and board members. You are the driving force behind everything we accomplish, and it is truly an honor to be on this journey with you.

2024 was simply a banner year thanks to the marvelous leadership of the BrightStone team and thanks to your generosity. Here are some of the highlights:

#### Launched Our Residential Program!

*This is absolutely huge. The greatest worry of a parent with intellectual and developmental disabilities is..."what happens to my son or daughter when I'm gone?"*

- We opened 2 new homes, one male and one female serving a total of 8 adults
- Tennessee governor signed into law HB-2497, selecting BrightStone to be the residential pilot program for Middle Tennessee

#### Significantly Grew Our Day Program!

*This means we're serving more adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Middle Tennessee where this service is badly needed.*

- Last year we grew enrollment and we're not done
- Our vocational program expanded, setting a new standard of excellence

#### Shattered Our Financial Goals!

*This sets us up for future success.*

- It was a highly successful financial year that enabled us to be debt free and demonstrate resounding sustainability
- Our capital campaign raised over \$2 million, thanks in large part to a \$1 million matching gift from the Stinnett family

I believe this team will build on this incredible success in 2025 and continue a level of excellence that will transcend to these marvelous adults and families. Our future is bright with:

- Exceptional leadership guided by CEO, Lee Rose, and staff who demonstrate great perseverance everyday
- Amazing Board of Directors who deeply care - some are highly skilled clinicians, business people, government officials, and parents
- You alongside our supportive and generous community who are the backbone of making BrightStone's Land of Dreams vision a reality

Our Students thank you! You're amazing!

Mike Cairnes  
Chairman of the Board





## FROM THE DESK OF LEE ROSE

Dear BrightStone Family,

I hope this message finds you well and that you are filled with the same excitement and hope that I feel. Looking back on our 25th anniversary year, I am profoundly grateful for the incredible growth and impact we witnessed – none of which would have been possible without your steadfast support and generosity. Your kindness and faithfulness allowed us to have another landmark year, enabling us to continue the work God has called us to do. It is because of your giving spirit that lives are being changed, hope is being restored for the families that we serve, and the love of Christ is being shared.

2025 is set to be a transformative year for BrightStone, and I am thrilled to share our key priorities and vision for the future. Our focus is on building further awareness of our mission through community partnerships, welcoming more students, and setting in motion the next phase of campus growth through our Homecoming Capital Campaign.

To answer the growing demand for residential support for the families we serve, our plans include breaking ground on two new residential homes and collaborating with local organizations to enhance our residential programming and support services. In addition to the new homes, our Homecoming Capital Campaign also focuses on funding campus expansion with new recreational areas, community spaces, and vital infrastructure improvements.

We are actively preparing to grow enrollment to serve even more adults in Middle Tennessee. While we have always worked to ensure our program focuses on the specific needs of each individual, we are learning that the need for a customized curriculum and advanced resources are more important than ever. And, we are answering that need. We are introducing new vocational training programs that build life skills and foster independence and have added new staff to focus on individual job coaching. We have also added more electives to our day program to address the individual interests of our students, and continually add advanced assistive technologies to our classrooms to ensure all adults can maximize their participation in the program.

Thank you for walking alongside us as we continue this journey. Your belief in our mission empowers us to dream bigger and reach higher. I look forward to connecting with each of you through our annual events, volunteer opportunities, and donor gatherings to celebrate the impact of your generosity.

May God bless you and your family throughout this year. I am excited to see all that we will accomplish together.

Sincerely,

Lee Rose | President and CEO  
Lee.Rose@BrightStone.org | 615.790.4888

# What's New

AT BRIGHTSTONE

## A Night Full of Stars with Lauren Daigle



**ATMOS**  
energy

A Night Full of Stars," BrightStone's Spring fundraising event, will be held April 28, 2025 at Liberty Hall at The Factory at Franklin. Grammy winning artist Lauren Daigle will headline the event, which will also include the BrightStone Show Choir, dinner and reception. The event will be emceed by WSMV's Tracy Kornet alongside two BrightStone student co-hosts, Kat and Cheyenne!

The event will also feature the much-anticipated silent auction with great items for bidding including travel experiences, home decor, dining gift cards, sports and local entertainment, and much more. You do not need to be present to bid or win.

Last year's "A Night Full of Stars" event was a sell-out and we anticipate this year will be as well. Visit [give.classy.org/stars2025](https://give.classy.org/stars2025) or scan the QR code for ticket, auction, and sponsorship information. All proceeds help strengthen BrightStone's programs and allow us to serve more adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



### Interested in sponsorship?

Contact Jenny Myhr, Development Director, at 615-790-4888 or [Jenny.Myhr@BrightStone.org](mailto:Jenny.Myhr@BrightStone.org)



## FUN WITH FRIENDS ON CAMPUS

The BrightStone students enjoyed several themed celebrations in the new year. MOVE Inclusive Dance came on campus to help get everyone excited for the Super Bowl, Valentine's Day brought extra sweet friendship wishes and treats plus a Galentine's evening for the women of the Craig Home, and it was "Laissez les bon temps rouler" on campus for Mardi Gras, including beads and trinkets, king cake, and jambalaya.



*BrightStone student Anna*



*BrightStone student Brandt with teachers Megan and Lexie*

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BRIGHTSTONE EMPLOYEES!

### MILTON WELLS

Bus Driver

### HAYLEY LONERGAN

Teacher Assistant

### AMANDA PILKINTON

Substitute Nurse

### RACHEL WEEKS

Substitute Teacher

## MARCH IS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

**Join us in March as we take extra steps to celebrate adults with developmental disabilities and raise awareness of BrightStone's mission.**

life for those we serve. Or, schedule a tour today to learn more about BrightStone and how you can help be a part of our mission – contact [Elaine.Farmer@brightstone.org](mailto:Elaine.Farmer@brightstone.org).

Learn more about how our BrightStone resident Julie is showcasing her talents and abilities on page 10.

At BrightStone, we love to showcase the abilities of our students and their contributions to the community. Through our individualized curriculum, BrightStone students are able to explore their interests and grow their talents in areas they enjoy. And, our Preparation and Training for HireAbility (PATH) vocational program gives them opportunities to explore career interests, bring the skills learned on campus into the real world, contribute to the local community through employment internships, and gain further education about job roles and various types of businesses.

If you do not already, follow and like us on our social pages on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, and share our posts. Tell others about BrightStone and the contributions we are making to provide a productive and purposeful



*BrightStone Product Designer Kaye with student Patrick*

# BRIGHTSTONE'S YEAR IN REVIEW

## 2024 Operating Results

REVENUES **\$3,481,888**

EXPENSES **\$2,934,245\***

NET INCOME **\$547,643**

REVENUES  
**\$3,481,888**

**24%**  
Program Tuition  
& Residential

**13%**  
Grants

**28%**  
Fundraising  
Events

**76%**

COMMUNITY  
SUPPORT

**27%**  
Contributions

**7%**  
Misc./Other

**1%**  
Product  
Sales

BrightStone was blessed to have  
76% of its \$3,481,888 revenue  
come from the Community.

### 2024 EVENT REVENUE

NIGHT FULL OF STARS **\$443,346**

NIGHT FULL OF COMEDY **\$362,424**

JIM HINTON MEMORIAL  
GOLF BENEFIT **\$170,830**

**TOTAL \$976,600**

### 2025 Operating Budget

REVENUES **\$3,636,000**

EXPENSES **\$3,546,000**

NET INCOME **\$90,000**



\*2024 Operating Expense does not include depreciation



BRIGHTSTONE  
25  
YEARS

A NIGHT FULL OF

Joy

Christmas Program  
closed out 25th  
Anniversary Year



Nearly 1,000 community members joined BrightStone staff, students, and families in closing out BrightStone's 25th Anniversary year at the 2024 Christmas Program, A NIGHT FULL OF JOY. Held at The Factory at Franklin on December 17th, the show also boasted a historic high sales record for the BrightStone Pop Up Shoppe. We continue to be amazed by the support of our community each year and are proud of the talents of our BrightStone students, who work throughout the year to

prepare for the program. We are extremely grateful to all of those who made our event a success, including our sponsors Advance Financial and Sarah Richie, PhD, along with our BrightStone students, volunteers, and staff, and Jo's Custom Cakes and Catering of Murfreesboro, TN.

Weren't able to join us? Watch the entire magical program on our BrightStone YouTube Channel at BrightStonetn.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR  
THE 2025 BRIGHTSTONE  
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM!**

**DEC. 9, 2025**

To learn about sponsorships, contact Jenny Myhr, Director of Development, 615.790.4888, [jenny.myhr@brightstone.org](mailto:jenny.myhr@brightstone.org)



## BrightStone Chosen by the State of Tennessee for Residential Pilot Program

Because of the growing need for more choice when it comes to long-term housing solutions for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the state of Tennessee initiated a new residential pilot program to specifically serve this population. We are beyond proud that BrightStone has been selected to be the **ONLY** participant in this new pilot residential program that covers 41 counties throughout the state. The BrightStone residential program will be the first of its kind to offer residential housing options for adults with IDD within a campus-like setting.

BrightStone has been approved to build up to 18 residential homes on the Land of Dreams campus. With the support and generosity of our community, we are ready to embrace this incredible honor within the pilot program and move forward with the next stage of our residential Master Plan! The construction of the next two new homes (#3 and #4) is part of the current Homecoming capital campaign for 2025.

# Homecoming Capital Campaign

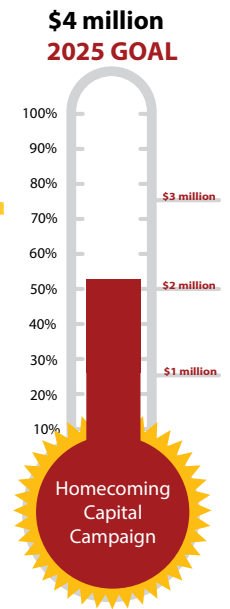
The Homecoming Capital Campaign is underway. Since August 2024, \$2.2 million of the \$4 million capital campaign goal has been raised! We are extremely thankful for the support we've received thus far, and for the generosity of our donors and community partners for helping us reach 50% of our goal!

Each of BrightStone's residential homes, including furnishings, costs \$1,000,000 to build. The goal of the Homecoming campaign is to build our next two residential homes, add an operations pavilion, new outdoor fitness courts, and an ADA fishing pier to provide additional outdoor experiences and improve the health and wellness of our adults. These new programming elements will

also expand the opportunities for more community engagement.

Your support will give adults the opportunity to lead more independent and fulfilled lives, and offer their families hope for the future.

For questions or more information about the Homecoming Capital Campaign, please contact Randy Elliott, Chief of Staff, at [randy.elliott@brightstone.org](mailto:randy.elliott@brightstone.org) or 615.790.4888.





## PROGRAM FEATURE

# Unlocking Opportunities through BrightStone's Vocational Program



*Evan and Justin*



*Nina and Colin*



*Josh, Kat, and Reggie*

**F**or students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), high school represents a structured environment with support systems, individualized education plans (IEPs), and a social framework designed to help them succeed. However, after they graduate, they and their families often face significant challenges as they navigate the transition into adulthood. The future for these individuals depends on their access to employment opportunities, independent living solutions, personal choice, and inclusion within the community. BrightStone's program address all of these needs through individualized program plans (IPP) within the day program and individual support plans (ISP) in the residential homes.

Finding meaningful employment is one of the biggest concerns for adults with IDD who often struggle to learn the skills required for job opportunities or find jobs that align with their abilities and interests. Vocational training has been a core tenet of BrightStone's education program since its inception. The Preparation for Training and HireAbility (PATH) program extends the skills students learn on campus into the community, helping them connect with local employers, gain hands-on experience through internships, explore career interests, and work toward independent employment.

More than half of the adults who attend BrightStone's Day Program participate in the PATH program. Some hold jobs outside of BrightStone's program while others have chosen to volunteer at their work sites following graduation from the PATH program. The students continue to serve in various roles three days per week at Soulshine Pizza and Grace Christian Academy in Franklin, TN, along with The Well food pantry and the Spring Hill Public Library.

Most recently, BrightStone expanded the direction of the PATH program, led by Vocation Coordinator Lindsey Wommer, to include individual job coaching. Hays Howard, a BrightStone Teaching Assistant, is now serving as the Employment Specialist for the program. Expanding the program's staff will allow for greater individualization. The goal is to identify each student's interests, provide targeted training, and proactively seek potential employers that align with those interests. Staff will also work directly with employers to connect students pursuing external employment with available opportunities in the community.

The changes within the PATH program are one more example of how BrightStone is working to create an individualized curriculum for each student where they can reach their full potential and gain purpose through their contributions to the community.

# Finding Joy in Helping Others



BRIGHTSTONE RESIDENT JULIE LEADS A PURPOSEFUL LIFE ON AND OFF CAMPUS.

*By Kerri Bryant, BrightStone Marketing and Communications Manager*

**One beautiful Monday in February, I was excited to get together with Julie, a resident of the BrightStone Craig Home, for a “girls lunch.”** What a fun outing! My goal was to catch up with her to hear more about her life story and how resident living was going, but the fun and laughter was certainly an extra bonus.

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**O**n the ride over to the restaurant, Julie and I were talking about her job at Lowe's (Cool Springs), where she has been a cashier for 17 years. She religiously works 40 hours a week, sometimes more in the busy season. “I love my job. I love the people, and it's rewarding helping others” she said. And then, in the short 10 minute ride she wowed me with all of knowledge she has absorbed from working in the gardening department. She educated me on the types of flowers I should plant come spring, how to take care of my irises that I told her had not fared well during the winter, gave me some examples of colorful plants that bloom from bulbs, and told me to be sure to wait until April 15 – tax day – before planting for the warm weather. It's apparent Julie loves what she does, and it's no surprise she has recently won Service Awards from Lowe's for her dedication.

At lunch, I asked Julie how she liked living at BrightStone. She beamed at the question and said it is “great!”. “I love being the big sister,” she said. “I get to help them learn things they can do on their own, like picking up after taking a shower, or organizing things around the house. They look up to me. I like that.”

Julie and I shared BrightStone stories and how we both fell in love at first sight. For her, it was coming to see the residential homes after her dad's friend had told him about BrightStone. “I loved the house. I knew right away I wanted to live there,” she said. Having her wish answered, she moved into The Craig Home earlier last year.

Julie said she likes to spend her free time at her new home doing puzzles, spending time with her housemates and home manager, Hannah. On her own, she enjoys coloring,

and cooking. Once a week she has a Zoom call with her best friend, Pam, and they cook together while sharing some laughs. They've been best friends since attending Westminster Elementary School together.

Julie also likes to travel with her big sister, Lisa, whom she shares some of her fondest memories with. She started laughing as soon as I asked her about Lisa. “We have fun. I love to play jokes on her,” she giggled. She shared a story about how she once gave her a gift that was a tiny little present wrapped up in a bunch of bigger boxes. “She always knows it's me because she always knows I like to play jokes on her.” As Julie and I swapped family stories, she also recalled when her sister called to tell her she was going to be an aunt for the first time and how happy it made her to hear the news.

Julie graduated from Hillsboro High School and has been a hard worker throughout her adult life. Prior to Lowe's, she worked as a cashier at CompUSA for over a decade before they went out of business. Anxious to find a new role and knowing how much she loved working with people, Julie attended a job fair and was quickly hired by Lowe's to start the position she still holds today.

When I asked Julie what she is most proud of, she said “I am most proud that I am still able to do things to help others. I love being able to get out on my own. I love my independence and my freedom.” Julie has clearly been a great contributor to BrightStone and the community.

I can't wait until our next time out to share more good times, laugh, and learn some more from Julie.





*Jack, Ben and Gracie diligently working in the reading lab.*



*Susan Sistrunk taking students for a ride in our new golf cart - thank you, Knights of Columbus!*



*"Cowboy John" confidently singing during music class*



*Stephanie and Anna sharing their silly side*



*Matt and Tammy love being creative in art classes*



*Eli and Bethany focused on learning*

# Living the Dream at BrightStone

## DO YOU BELIEVE IN BRIGHTSTONE?

Become a monthly donor and make an impact all year long!  
As we continue to grow, the collective impact of monthly donors enables us to move forward with programs that make a lasting difference in the lives of the individuals and families that we serve, providing hope and stability.

### **YOU CHOOSE THE AMOUNT TO GIVE.**

Simply choose the “monthly” option when you “give now” at [brightstone.org](https://brightstone.org). Or, scan the qr code.



*BrightStone student Marin*

### **TOUR**

TOURS FILL UP QUICKLY.  
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615-790-4888

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M-F 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
615-790-4888

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