



MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Ten years ago, two moms had dreams of something **bigger** and **better** for their sons with intellectual disabilities once they graduated from high school. They wanted more for them than just sitting idle at home while the days passed. They also knew that other families shared this same dilemma – most individuals with intellectual disabilities have few opportunities for post-secondary education, training, employment, or independent living. Supportive communities that provide opportunities like this do exist, but they are far from home. Research was done and visits were made to several of those communities, and they sensed God calling them to develop such a community **here** in Johnson City.

The same two mothers began working toward their dream. The name Brother's Keeper (BK) was chosen and after many prayers, on March 27, 2014, Brother's Keeper became a nonprofit corporation in the state of Tennessee. Boones Creek Christian Church graciously provided us with our first home. Over the next 2.5 years, a Board of Directors was formed, Policies and Procedures were written, steps were made to gain licensure, an application was submitted to the IRS for a 501c3 designation, building code was approved from the state fire marshal, families were hosted to tell them about BK, and more. During this time, they also began fundraising efforts, and thankfully, the community responded generously to embrace and support our mission.

These mothers **kept the faith and trusted in God's leading**. It was finally time to hire our first three staff members as the date to open BK's doors to the first six participants was in sight. They wanted to make sure they had the perfect staff in place. I must stop here and brag, because when we opened on July 1, 2016, Kara, Josh, and I had no idea how or where to start building a program from scratch, but we were up for the challenge. The three of us are still on staff, providing the same level of love and commitment as we did on day one. To top it all off, we now have four other amazing, dedicated staff members walking alongside us and twenty participants to care for.

At Brother's Keeper, we are changing the narrative. Limitations become possibilities. Every participant, regardless of their intellectual abilities, can reach their full potential. We empower adults with intellectual disabilities to discover their strengths, build skills, and live meaningful lives. Every day is filled with purpose. Days are filled with activities that are tailored to each participant's individual skill level. We are educating and empowering these adults to engage with their community, and they have built quite the community amongst themselves at BK. Every day, Brother's Keeper operates with a whole lot of love and a whole lot of faith. We trust in the Lord's plan for BK, and we are excited to see how beautifully it continues to unfold.

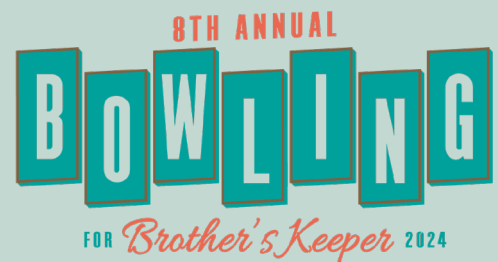
Today, **ten years after this vision began**, and we are still thriving and growing as we serve our participants. These adults need us! More importantly, we need them in our lives. We need them to remind us how to love like Jesus. We need them to remind us to live our lives in bold and fearless ways. Most of all, we need their warm embraces, joyous celebrations, and true happiness.

*Ashlee Thompson*

2024 BOWLING FOR BROTHER'S KEEPER

Join us on **April 19, 2024**, at Holiday Lanes for a fun-filled bowling event! Help us raise money to support adults with intellectual disabilities. Every roll will count toward making a difference! Let's strike down barriers together!

For more information on our event, forms, or how to help, please visit www.BrothersKeeperTN.org/Bowling.



BUILDING UPDATE

The need for our services has continued to increase, reflecting the positive impact we have had on the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. While this is an encouraging development, it brings with it a pressing challenge: ***the need for a larger and suitable space to accommodate our growing community.*** To continue offering the quality programs that our participants deserve, we urgently need to secure a larger and more versatile building.

We are reaching out to you, our valued community partners, to seek assistance in identifying potential locations for our program. Ideally, we are looking for a space that meets the following criteria:

- » Enough space to accommodate our current participants and anticipated future growth.
- » A safe and easily accessible location for all members of our community.
- » A functional layout that allows for various activities and services tailored to the unique needs of adults with intellectual disabilities.
- » We operate as a nonprofit organization, so finding a space within a reasonable budget is crucial for our sustainability.
- » A location that offers us a visible presence in the community

If you or anyone within your network has leads, recommendations, or insights regarding potential buildings or spaces that align with our requirements, we would greatly appreciate your support. Please feel free to reach out to us at 423-202-0620, Cecile Huddleston, Executive Director, if you have any information or if you would like to discuss this further. We are grateful for your ongoing support and collaboration in making our community an inclusive and supportive place for everyone.

BK HAPPENINGS



Nondiscrimination Policy:

Brother's Keeper admits program attendees of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to program attendees. Its application procedures and daily operations do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship program, athletic program, and other school-administered programs.