

Buckner International

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SPECIAL HOUSTON EDITION

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Today

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Chat with the Executive Director

2020 Vision

As I reflect back on the past decade, I'm in awe of all the blessings, miracles and favor that God has shown the Buckner ministry, our local Houston programs, and the children and families we work with each day. Through our hard work and dedication, thousands of lives have been changed...



- Children have improved grades and are thinking toward their future
- Teens have graduated high school and become first-generation college students
- Parents have learned to be better leaders and nurturers for their families
- Men have learned to be fathers and how to contribute positively to their communities
- Adults have earned their GEDs and found employment to better support their families
- Families have received food, clothes, housing and resources during crisis and times of need

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ALSO INSIDE:

- Financial skills for all ages
- Volunteer Opportunities

Single mom found the running start she needed to change her and her son's life

When Chanique Steele reflects on her life, she doesn't know where she'd be without her time at Buckner Family Pathways in Houston. Juggling a chaotic home life, struggling in school and raising her then 4-year-old son, the Family Pathways program was an answered prayer for Chanique.

In 2010, on a hiatus from school and looking to get back in, she sought out her school's advisor. "I was telling her about the struggles of balancing everything and she shared about Buckner with me. She connected me with Family Pathways," Chanique shared.

She and her son, Dee, arrived at Family Pathways looking for stability and peace. She describes her home life as, "not horrible, but I wanted something more." Dee and Chanique both found many friendships on campus and excelled in school.

"I was able to take him [Dee] out of one environment and put him in one I thought was better. I feel like putting him in this environment that was calmer and less chaotic really helped him," she said.

Graduation from Family Pathways came in 2014, as well as Chanique's graduation from school. After completing a bachelor's degree in psychology, she also earned a master's degree and is now a registered behavioral therapist working alongside children with autism.

Chanique credited Buckner with life skills she still relies on today such as showing her that balancing school, work and family is possible, and how to have a strong work ethic.

"It's not easy being in school full time with kids. The resources are there, and as long as you're committed to the program and to bettering yourself, this can really

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2020 Vision

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- Individuals have learned about God and have grown in their faith
- Participants have come back to volunteer for those who are experiencing what they've been through
- Staff in our Agape Prayer Room adding answered prayers to our prayer wall.

As we continue to grow, I realize how much of a team effort it takes to ensure that we are able to provide ongoing quality services, nurture partnerships and relationships, and strive toward making Buckner a household name in the Houston area – all of which directly affects the level of impact we have on the lives of those we serve.

My hope for 2020 is simple – clear vision! Like the analogy of wearing glasses... We don't want to be nearsighted and only think about right now. We don't want to be farsighted and only plan for the future. We don't want an astigmatism where the busyness keeps us from focusing on anything. We want 2020 Vision!

Please join us in prayer for clarity about how God will continue to use Buckner in this new season to continue to change lives. We want to work toward His vision, not our own. Our donors, supporters and volunteers are such an integral part of our work and we can't do it without you so please also pray about how he can continue using you as well. Our children and families are so valuable, and they deserve to have amazing futures – clear vision will help us serve them in the best way so that the trajectory of their lives is changed forever. ■



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Financial skills for all ages

Photography by Janet Roe

Growing up, children look to their parents to teach them many life skills – and for some parents, they didn't learn those skills either. The Buckner Family Hope Center at Reed Road is seeking to break the generational poverty cycle. For the first time, they are offering financial literacy classes to both children and parents.

"It is important to begin teaching financial literacy from a young age to help develop good habits and skills when handling money," said Dior Burns, Family Hope Center director. "Oftentimes, we learn things from our parents – whether negative or positive. This early learning will help kids turn into adults who can make smart decisions with their money."

The classes offered are for adults to children in pre-kindergarten as well as upper elementary ages. On the third Friday of each month, Allegiance Bank teaches the adult Financial Literacy course. Prosperity Bank is working with the pre-kindergarten children twice a month. Upper elementary children are being taught financial literacy by Thrivent twice a month as well.

Activities within classes range based on the age of the children, but include counting money, learning about the use of piggy banks,



dividing money into save and spend categories and determining the value of items. By pouring this education into both the parents and the children, the families have the opportunity to hold each other accountable and work together to move forward.

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The Family Hope Center at Reed Road was inspired to begin offering this course due to the number of situations they saw with parents mismanaging their income. "There is a trend of generational poverty that we hope to correct while kids are young enough to learn and develop how to make wiser choices with their money," said Dior.

While this may be a newer program at the Hope Center, the staff are looking ahead and setting goals to accomplish as they evolve and adapt the course. Financial literacy is a big component of empowering families – a main goal of Buckner Family Hope Centers.

"Financial literacy fits into the overall mission we have, which is to elevate our families and help them to become more independent. By teaching families how to manage their money, we are able to empower them to make smart choices that help them plan for the future," explained Dior. ■



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give you a running start to a better life," Chanique said.

As a mom who found stability through the program, she shares it with anyone she knows looking to transform their life. Chanique and Dee, now 12 years old, both formed life-long friendships through Family Pathways.

"Before Buckner, I had told my grandmother that my mindset just wasn't where it should be. I was looking at dropping out of school after flunking out that semester. And now, I don't think I would've graduated if it weren't for Buckner." ■

Buckner Volunteer Opportunities

During this season of uncertainty, many of our volunteer events and opportunities are on hold or have been canceled to maintain healthy social distance to stop the spread of the coronavirus. However, there are still ways you can support Buckner safely from your home, and more coming soon!

Here are a few examples of ways you can support Buckner in this new season:

- Write an encouraging note to a senior adult or a foster family. We are accepting letters both digitally and through email. For information on where to send your note, check out our volunteer page on the Bucker website.
- Pray for the vulnerable children, families and seniors in your community. Pray for health, safety and protection.
- If you are passionate about helping families struggling due to implications of COVID-19, we are accepting financial gifts to support them in this season.

As the situation progresses, we are continuing to update our website with ways you can volunteer and serve throughout this time. To check out the most up-to-date ways we are continuing to serve our Buckner families (and how you can help), **visit [buckner.org/volunteer](https://www.buckner.org/volunteer).**