

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND NEWSLETTER

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FOTB PUMPKIN PATCH DAY AT DEEP WELL FARM

Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs gathered for one of our favorite fall traditions...Pumpkin Patch Day at Deep Well Farm in Lenoir City. Even the blustery weather couldn't dim the joy of the day. Families bundled up, brought umbrellas and smiled as laughter carried across the fields, and our little explorers made the most of every moment. Children raced to the new and improved playground complete with a school bus, climbed, swung, and played with pure delight. They dug into the corn crib with both hands, visited with the farm animals until their hearts were content, and took on the farm's wonderful slides with fearless enthusiasm. Of course, no pumpkin patch adventure is complete without choosing the perfect pumpkin, and our families proudly carried home bright orange treasures of every shape and size.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous sponsors Concord-Farragut Sertoma Club and the Garden Club whose support makes events like this possible. Because of you, our families enjoyed a day of connection, celebration, and seasonal joy in a welcoming, accessible environment. We are already counting the days until we enjoy this wonderful event again next fall!



*Friends of Tennessee's
BABIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS*

4th Quarter 2025

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Best of Luck, Betty!

Honoring Betty and Wishing Her a Fond Farewell...



In December, we said farewell to our faithful finance manager, Betty, who moved to Ohio after 3 years of dedicated service to Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs. We are deeply appreciative of her hard work, steady guidance, and unwavering commitment to our organization. Betty has been an important part of our story, including setting up and managing our new donor management platform, Bonterra Network for Good. Betty has graciously agreed to work remotely until we are able to hire and train a new bookkeeper. While we will miss her dearly, we wish her all the very best as she begins this new chapter and settles into her move up north!

PRESERVING OUR PAST

As we celebrate 30 years of serving babies and families across East Tennessee, we took a special moment to sit down with our founders Don Thompson and Susie McCamy, along with longtime leader Teresa McMahan. Together, they reflected on how Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs began as a small, heartfelt effort to support families in crisis and has grown into a trusted resource offering connection, encouragement, and hope serving hundreds of families each year.

They shared stories of those early days, when passion and determination fueled every step, and spoke with pride about how the organization has expanded to include sensory-friendly events, emergency assistance, respite support, and our statewide Hearing Aid Loaner Bank. What started as a simple desire to help special families has become a 30-year legacy of compassion and community. We are grateful for their vision and for every family, volunteer, donor, and partner who has helped FOTB grow into the organization it is today. Here's to the next 30 years of serving Tennessee's tiniest warriors.



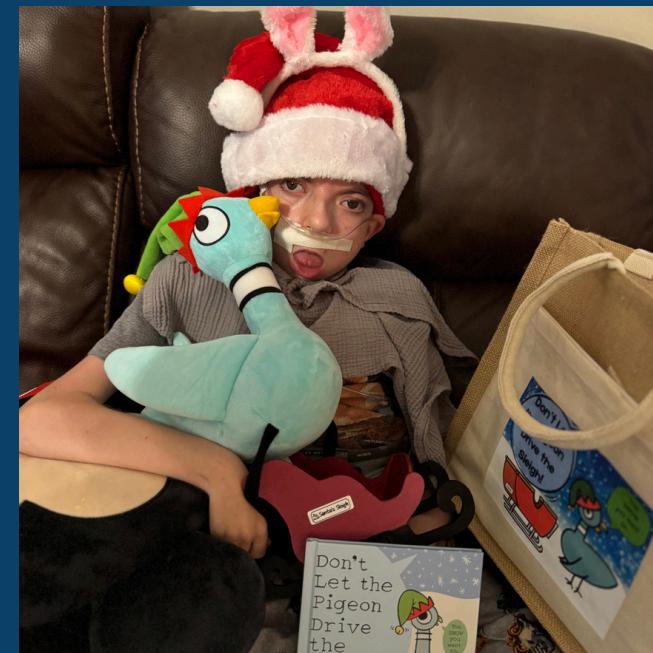
2nd Annual Adaptive Toy Project Brings Christmas Joy to FOTB Families



This December, Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs celebrated our 2nd Annual Adaptive Toy Project, a beautiful collaboration that brought holiday joy and meaningful play to children across our community.

In partnership with therapist Pete Cappell, Josiah Brunsen's Robotics class at Maryville Christian School, and the wonderful team at "My Buddy's Books," we worked to ensure that every child received a gift designed just for them.

Our Community Event Coordinator, Katie Ellis, partnered with service providers to identify children who would benefit from toys customized with adaptive switches and modifications giving them the chance to play just like their peers. Katie also worked closely with Book Buddies to create 10 customized Book Bags, each filled with sensory-friendly toys, developmental tools, and a book-themed collection of activities to support milestones and spark imagination. These thoughtful gifts brought smiles, connection, and accessible play to families who often face barriers during the holiday season. Thank you to Walmart, Pete Cappell, Jeremiah Brunsen and his students along with "My Buddy's Books" for helping make this Christmas joy possible. Your support ensured that every child feels included, celebrated, and able to experience the magic of the season.



**DONATE
NOW**

Would you like to be a "friend" to Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs? It's EASY! Just visit our website www.helpingbabies.org and click on the volunteer/give tab at the top of the page. You can make a big difference in the life of Tennessee's babies!

“The Best” Family Christmas Event Ever!

This year’s Annual FOTB Family Christmas Event looked a little different than usual. With construction underway at Rio Revolution Church, our traditional Christmas movie night had to be reimagined, but that didn’t stop the celebration. Thanks to the generosity of Everett Hills Baptist Church, who graciously hosted us in early December, we enjoyed one of our most memorable Christmas gatherings yet.

In partnership with Broadway Center for the Arts, families were treated to a special “Theater My Way” Sensory Friendly performance of the beloved holiday play *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. Sensory-friendly performances are thoughtfully adapted to create a welcoming environment for individuals with sensory sensitivities. This includes softer lighting and sound, a relaxed atmosphere where movement and vocalizations are welcomed, and an overall environment designed to reduce sensory overload so every child can enjoy the magic of live theater comfortably.



The celebration didn’t end there. Families enjoyed sensory-friendly visits with Santa, festive crafts, a special Christmas gift, handmade items from Reba Herzfeld and the Tellico Village Kiwanis Club, and of course, juice and cookies to round out the holiday cheer. Laughter filled the halls, siblings played together, and parents shared in the joy of a space where everyone felt included and celebrated. This event remains one of our favorite traditions each year. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsor Concord Farragut Sertoma Club, Everett Hills Baptist Church for hosting us, the Tellico Village Kiwanis club, our volunteers, and to Broadway Center for the Arts for helping make this year’s celebration truly unforgettable.





To see highlight reels from our events and keep up with all of our happenings, scan the QR code and like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Please tell your friends too!



Christmas Never Ends!

Partnership to Spread Even More Joy!



This season, Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs was delighted to partner with Christmas Never Ends, an enchanting drive-thru light show nestled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. Families experienced the magic of Christmas from the comfort of their vehicles as they traveled through a dazzling wonderland of sparkling lights and animated displays. Thanks to this special partnership, all FOTB families received a discount code

to enjoy the attraction at a reduced rate, making the holiday season a little brighter and more accessible. The discount is available through February 15, giving families plenty of time to enjoy the glow of this beautiful experience. We are grateful to Christmas Never Ends for helping us spread joy, wonder, and connection throughout the holiday season.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

As we move into 2026, Friends of Tennessee's Babies with Special Needs extends our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated leaders who guide and strengthen our work. Their service ensures that families across Tennessee receive the support, connection, and hope they deserve.

This year, we honor those rotating off the Board of Directors, Suzanne Bond and Monica McCamy. We thank them for their years of commitment and leadership. We are also pleased to welcome Sherri Murphy and David Holmes as new members of the Board, and we look forward to the insight and energy they will bring.

We also extend our appreciation to the members rotating off the Advisory Council: Mary and Dan Holbrook, Stuart and Mary Bailey Oakes. Their guidance has been invaluable. We are delighted to welcome Suzanne Bond to the Advisory Council as she continues her service to FOTB in this new role. To all who have served, and to those who continue to lead, thank you for helping us carry forward 30 years of compassion, community, and care for Tennessee's tiniest warriors.



March 28th, 2026- Springbrook Park

BUTTERFLY RUN

Because Babies Can't Wait!



Lace up your running, or walking, shoes! It's almost time for the Annual Butterfly Run to benefit FOTB, one of our most beloved family events and fundraisers of the year. We are busy gearing up for this event and need your help! We are securing sponsors for this big day. If you know of an individual or a business/organization who would want to be part of this special day, please let us know. Just reach out to Executive Director Robin Hamrick and we can get all of the exciting opportunities to them!

Also, mark your calendars to join us on March 28 at Springbrook Park for a morning filled with movement, community, and celebration. Registration is open at <https://runsignup.com/Race/TN/Alcoa/TheButterflyRun1> so be sure to sign up for the 3K Run or the 1-mile Celebration Walk. Families can also enjoy a variety of fun activities at Butterfly Cove, making this a joyful day for participants of all ages and abilities. We can't wait to see you there as we run, walk, and celebrate together for a great cause.

What a Gift!

Thank you to Spike McCamy for representing FOTB at the presentation of this generous gift from the Knoxville Chairman's Club. We are so thankful for their generous donation. This gift will go directly to help us purchase adaptive equipment for babies in need. Thank you, Knoxville Chairman's Club for being a friend!

