

ON THE COVER

KIDS OF GROWTH

Impacting Youth and Families Through Food and Love



**AMY FARLETT,
DNP, FNP-C**

6 YEARS

NURSE
PRACTITIONER

FAMILY PRACTICE
ASSOCIATES -
SODDY-DAISY

“Help and love thy neighbor” are words nearly everyone has heard, passed down through the generations as a way to build each other up in life. But turning those words into action – in the toughest of situations – sometimes takes a person with something a little extra special in their heart.

Amy Farlett, a family nurse practitioner with CHI Memorial Family Practice Associates- Soddy-Daisy, first felt that calling to serve others in high school.

“I’ve always been interested in serving my community,” Farlett says. “It all comes from my faith and being raised in faith.”

Fast-forward to 2012 when Farlett was working at CHI Memorial Community Health in Chattanooga’s Westside. She wanted to know how to be more helpful and asked the community’s families what they needed. The resounding answer: a kids’ program.

“My goal was to partner with families and parents to provide an opportunity to promote growth spiritually, physically, and emotionally,” Farlett says.

At that moment, she could never have dreamed about where the new children’s ministry would take her and the kids who so desperately needed help.

While working with the children’s ministry, some of the families went through hardships and heartache. Farlett, who was entrenched in the culture of the neighborhood and its needs, was





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What:

Kids of Growth

Description:

"We are working to develop consistent relationships with families in Chattanooga's Westside to cultivate growth in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man."

When:

Every Thursday

For more information:

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presented with an opportunity to provide care for some children. While working full-time in health care and helping run the children's ministry, she now had the added responsibility and weight of caring for kids at her home as a guardian.

"I don't believe in coincidence," Farlett says. "This was a turn of events that I believe was ordained by the Lord, and we said 'yes' to it. I didn't set out for this to happen, and I didn't plan this, but I believe the Lord did."

Farlett continues her work with the ministry in the Westside. The children's ministry transitioned into a program called "Kids of Growth", where about 30 children from kindergarten to 18-years-old meet once a week for Bible study, and arts and crafts. They also work in a community garden where they till the land for food and sell the vegetables at local churches and markets.

"Growing food gives you a different connection to it," Farlett says. "To see it start from a seed to become a plant that you can use to eat or give to someone else has been a neat process to watch kids learn."

More than 200 children have come through "Kids of Growth" in the past decade as families move in and out of the neighborhood. Farlett believes that God may call us to things that are outside of

our comfort zone, things we may not feel "good enough" to do.

"You might think that you're not the right person to work in the inner city or with children, or you don't have the right skill set," she says. "I even felt that same way in some situations, but we make time for what's important to us. There's always an excuse if you don't want to do something, and for me, my faith remains my big driving force in my decision making."

It's a trait Farlett continues to bring to her work at CHI Memorial, as she challenges herself to connect with patients regardless of their stage of life or stage of health.

"Empathy is something I've continued to learn, especially working in primary care," she says.

"Primary care is a relationship; I go through ups and downs with my patients and hope to provide excellent care to them. But my patients also go through my life journey with me. We care about each other. Primary care is a mutual relationship, and I hope to meet each patient where they are."