

Breckenridge Village of Tyler Video Transcript

SP7 Studios Presents

[Music begins] Breckenridge Village of Tyler logo appears on black background. Outdoor scene appears.

Linda Taylor >> This wonderful place called Breckenridge Village was born from the cry of a mother's heart. That mother was Jean Breckenridge. She had a son Jimmy who was born with Down's Syndrome and she wanted to be sure that he was always taken care of. And shortly after that Mr. Breckenridge, her husband, died and Robert Jr., only six months apart. And this only fueled Mrs. Jean's passion that there had to be a place. So she started going out in the community to the churches in different places and asking for help, and said "will you help me build this place?"

And no matter how many times people told her "I'm so sorry, but I can't help you" she kept asking and one day there was a meeting in Tyler of pastors and community leaders and at that meeting Dr. David Dykes, Pastor of Green Acres Baptist Church, was there and sitting at his table was Kevin C. Dinnin, President and CEO of BCFS.

Dr. David O. Dykes >> I was there at the very beginning with Jean Breckenridge and Kevin Dinnin. And I can remember riding over those fields in my little Nissan car with a dream for a place where people with disabilities could find love and acceptance.

Linda Taylor >> Kevin caught that mother's heart. That vision that she had and he went back to the BGCT Convention, and he told them we need to build a place like this and I want to commit to be a part of it. He also that day by circumstance, which we know is never circumstance, he ran into the leader of TBM, Texas Baptist men retiree builders, and they said we'll come and help you build this place. So in the fall of 1997 the hammers started, the lumber came, the tents went up and simultaneously they built six homes, a Vocational Center, and Admin building. On April the fourth of 1998, on Jimmy's birthday, they cut the ribbon and opened up Breckenridge Village.

Mrs. Jean had the privilege of living 15 years right here on this property to see that Jimmy was happy, that he was safe, that he loved it, and he'd look out his window and he said there's Mama's house. This is Jimmy's home.

Muriel Van Wave >> I think one of the keys to our choice in terms of choosing Breckenridge was that the Christian values here leads to a culture of compassion and dignity and it just cannot be beat. It's just one of a kind.

Tim Van Wave >> It's really nice you know, if it's raining a staff member will walk Dayne out to the car with an umbrella. If it's hot they're brought from like the greenhouse, they're brought in an air-conditioned van back and forth. I mean, there's just there's no detail that BVT has left out and really caring for our son and the other people that are here as well.

Steven Campbell >> BVT's worked really hard at providing a compassionate caring place for residents when their families can no longer provide that care. We've had families move to us from New Jersey, from Tennessee, from Colorado, across the state of Texas because they know that BVT can be that place to step in and provide that love and care for them when they're no longer around.

Laura Hughes >> I think that any parent who has a child with a disability when you realize that this child is going to outlive you in all likelihood, you start to think about who is gonna step in my shoes if I get sick, if I pass away, and there is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child.

And that's kind of what I kept going back to. It's more than one person that puts into the development of a person, and because this is a village and there are other people here and it's a community, it's not one person that you're relying on to do everything. You have a group of people that come together to help each other. And that's something that's very rare and special and that's why we're here.

Gloria Holland >> Upon graduation from school Kristi was actually at home and she would oftentimes when I would come home from work let me know that she was frustrated. And she was saying I need my own place, and it was very hurtful to me because I didn't have a place for her. And when I found BVT she actually started going to the day program and she loved going. And I remember Kristi saying to me "I want to stay. I don't want to go home every day."

It was what I had prayed for, and I knew then that this was going to be the place that Kristi would stay forever. And what made it so wonderful in the day program she already knew everybody. And I was worried about she won't know who she's staying with, but she had already made friends and she knew everybody, all the staff, so she was ready to stay. And she said "This is my home now."

Robin Tillman >> I've seen residents who were very shy being able to step out of their comfort zones and participate in community functions, or go to a dance, or even sing out loud in front of a crowd of people when they were never able to think about doing that.

Sharon Freeman >> The improvement, the growth, the development of our nephew is miraculous. He was very... did not like to be in the social scene. He is such a different person. He communicates. He emails us daily with his every move, you know, all his activities, all his needs. We didn't even know he typed. And he communicates, he laughs, he has fun, and maybe one of the most important things he has friends. He has people that love him. He's safe, and we know he'll be taken care of forever after us.

Tom Freeman >> He never really had friends at all. He was a bullied in school, for example, when he went to school, public school, but here he knows he has friends and he has become a lot more verbal, a lot more vocal. He has a great sense of humor which is coming out and he lost about a hundred pounds. He was way overweight when he got here. With the nutrition and with the exercise he is really trimmed down.

Sharon Freeman >> Going to church for him is a very important part of his life, and it is something that we know will be guaranteed here. It being a faith-based organization, a community, we know that this is the place Brian needs to be and that's why we choose to make sure this is intact forever for him.

April Lanier >> I think everything here runs as smoothly as it does because you can pray for each other, you can pray for the residents, you can pray for other staff. Without God I don't think things would run as smoothly as they do.

Susan Smith >> I don't think people realize what a blessing this type of place is, unless you have been in the spot of parents or a family who have a special needs someone, you don't realize what a blessing until you get out there and begin to realize what's gonna happen to my child. You know when they're little and they're young and they're at home and everything kind of moves along, but then one day, if

things happen in the order you expect them to, once I'm gone, once Gary is gone who's taking care of Drew? Well then you don't want that to be a responsibility if there is another sibling in the family. You want them to be able to live their lives, even though they probably would be more than happy to take on that responsibility, but you also want your special needs person to be able to live their own life as well.

And to have a place like this where they can come and live their life and be watched over, provided for, and taken care of is a blessing beyond anything that I could ever begin to describe. I'm just so thankful. I thank the Lord every day that there's a Breckenridge Village there for Drew and for all the other ones that are out there and I know the need is so large.

Steven Campbell >> I think in a society as a whole oftentimes is reluctant or hesitant to provide chances to people with intellectual disabilities. At BVT we embrace a culture in an environment where our residents can be themselves. We give them a chance. We give them opportunities to succeed. Through those opportunities the stereotypes are demolished. They go into a community setting and they are able to interact and show people true love; a love that I think Christ would want us all to have.

Shelia Hill >> I feel that this is heaven on earth to each individual that is here. If they know that they're unique and special in their own way and they can be who they are, express who they are, without anybody telling them that they're any different.

Lane Cagle >> The best part about working with people with IDD is a love that they bring. I mean, the depth of it is just larger because there's really no fear.

There's no apprehensiveness. It's just you're a person who I care about and I'm gonna show you every day.

Brenda Peebles >> I came in 2004 and I don't know if I can ever leave it. And I'm going to have to one day because I'm getting old. It's been the most wonderful experience I've ever had in my life.

I've worked for the city of Van for 31 years and nowhere would ever take the place of BVT.

Nancy Fagan >> Breckenridge Village has so many activities that they do. One thing, of course, that I noticed right off was the Horticulture Center, the green house.

When we did a visit, my husband Todd, Connor, and I came up for a visit and we went in the chapel and saw some activities going on in the chapel. We saw the physical exercise room that was associated with the chapel. Visited the classrooms and you know it was just the activities. There were residents that were working on crafts in one of the rooms. Then we walked out to the candle making area and they were busy working on candles. It's important for us that Connor is in an environment where he can grow, because the other thing that was really important for us is Connor's social life. We wanted to bring Connor to a place where he could meet a lot of new friends and that is exactly what has happened since we've been here. Connor has met a lot of friends since you've been here right? Yeah. Yeah, so and that is really really important to me. His social life is one of my top priorities, along there with the safety aspect. The safety aspect and his social life is incredibly important for me.

Steven Campbell >> The neat thing about BVT is we don't we don't just want to impact the lives of people right here on campus. We want to impact the Tyler community, as well as outside of Tyler. We spent a lot of time and energy in seeing how we can improve the lives of others through serving at

Meals on Wheels or going to Jesus Closet or going to Cornerstone. Just engaging with people there and also providing a valuable service to those who are less fortunate than us. It's neat to see how our residents with disabilities can impact the lives of other people. They don't feel sorry for themselves. They don't sit here all day in a room and and just sulk. They don't sit here and feel sorry for themselves.

They get out there and they provide a service. They give back. Their life has a meaning and therefore they give meaning to other people.

Laura Hughes >> When we were looking for a program for Jill, or place for Jill, we looked at a lot of places and you know we said we felt like we found a diamond when we found Breckenridge. It was a diamond in a field of stones and we're just really grateful that we found it and we were able to come here and Jill's able to be here.

Dr. David Dykes >> One of the best-kept secrets in all of the state of Texas is Breckenridge Village of Tyler, a place where people show Christ's love to God's "forever children" and they add a tremendous dynamic to East Texas. They not only are people who live here, but they are people who work and produce things and have skills and visit so many places. They make a great impact on the East Texas community.

Linda Taylor >> The pieces of the puzzle that God put together to form this wonderful place is the reason that it's different from any other place that you might go, because God had his hand in every piece of it.

Steven Campbell >> What an incredible story BVT has played in the lives of so many people over the years.

If you've had any part of writing that story, thank you! BVT is what it is today because of the residents, staff, and generous donors who have supported our mission over the years.

But our story isn't over! In many ways it's just begun, and we would love to have you be a part of the next chapter. I hope you've been encouraged by what God is doing right here at BVT, so come by and see us or visit our website to find out how you can become involved in the incredible work at Breckenridge Village of Tyler.

[Music plays] Breckenridge Village of Tyler logo appears on black background.