

CPM Project  
Hope and Healing:  
Process Improvement

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Connie Maxwell Orphanage, now known as Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries (CMCM), welcomed her first child into care on May 22, 1892. High standards for providing the best care were expected at Connie Maxwell's inception and remain to this day. J.C. Maxwell, major donor and biological father of Connie Maxwell, said of the institution, "Though if the Baptist do not keep up said Orphanage in more business-like and liberal manner than they sustain their pastors, churches, and University the will would probably be revoked." (Jamison, A.T., *Thirty Years of Connie Maxwell History*, pp. 8-9). This passion for excellence continues to be at the helm of Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries today.

Through the years, Connie Maxwell has received abundant resources to provide the best care for each child. These resources are but not limited to: monetary support toward staffing, property, upkeep, clothing, food and support through volunteer time (activities, tutoring, work projects). It has been Connie Maxwell's goal to use these resources to best provide holistic services, optimal care and optimal opportunity for "hope and healing" for each child.

### **The Problem Statement**

The focus of this project is the use of scheduling resources. How can Connie Maxwell use the scheduling resources to provide the best care for each child? Currently, there is no standard process of assessing the type and amount of activities that are needed daily for the children/each child. Pre COVID-19, staff met once a month to formally announce and plug-in their upcoming activities for the children on the calendar. Ten to twenty staff typically would sit in this monthly meeting and provide input from a minimum of 25 or more people. I decided to investigate the activities schedule and how it can be optimized to provide the most effective, individualized care for each child. With this project research, a formal process will be proposed

to vet the type and amount of activities provided per age group by procedurally taking into account what is a healthy and productive activity quality and quantity level for each child.

The purpose of Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries is "to make a child's brightest futures possible again. The kids who come to Connie Maxwell are in the midst of the most painful and confusing times of their lives through no fault of their own-and out of that comes a lack of hope, trust, and faith. We work to restore their faith in family, themselves and in God and all that He can do to make their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for their futures possible again." Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries' mission is "to restore the faith, family and future of vulnerable children and families through Christian services that emphasize ministry and healing." ([www.conniemaxwell.com](http://www.conniemaxwell.com))

I wish to identify more efficient and effective ways to communicate and address a child's activity scheduling needs while taking into account the amount of time in a given day for sleep, rest, education, free play, structured play and the effects of trauma, mental health conditions and developmental levels. The goal of this project is to gather information to determine a recommended schedule to meet the holistic need of each child and to determine the best process to create this daily schedule. Having a schedule sensitive to the needs of each child, would wholeheartedly be in line with Connie Maxwell's rich history and current mission to provide "hope" and "healing." Even too much of a "good thing" can be detrimental. Balance is paramount.

"In an article for *Everyday Health*, Family physician Dr. George Shannon observes that 'There's definitely less informal play these days.' Pushing your kids to get involved in extracurricular activities too soon or to take on too much could have negative consequences. Overcommitted children feel heightened levels of stress, become overly impatient, and feel constant pressure to outperform their last achievement.

According to Dr. Shannon, children respond to pressure differently from adults. He says: 'When our plates are too full, we might be short-tempered; we feel rushed. I've seen some kids who are tremendous over-achievers. Some kids can handle it and others can't.' It helps to remember that your children are also trying to make friends and fit in at school and in the community. That alone can prove stressful for some children. Children who take on too much, too soon can become anxious, fatigued (the type of fatigue that goes on for hours or days), easily irritated and depressed." (*Noodlepros.com*, 1/22/2018)

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected to help determine and create the best process for placing activities on the Connie Maxwell Student Activities Calendar. The process is determined by taking into account a child's need for sleep, rest, education, free play, structured play and the effects of trauma, mental health conditions, age, and developmental level. It will also take into account their likes and dislikes. Staff information was collected via *SurveyMonkey* from key staff members in regard to the Student Activities Calendar. The *SurveyMonkey* Schedule Survey was sent out to the following staff: House Parents (Cottage Parents), Homemaking Assistants, Program Support Staff, Family Service Workers, Team Leaders, Campus Administrator, Director of Education, Director of Nursing, Director of Volunteer Services, Work Set Coordinator, Director of Enrichment, Pastor, Director of Oasis, and Director of Equestrian. Paper surveys were given to children in the oldest seven cottages. A cottage in this paper is a home that has up to eight children and one to two House Parents (Cottage Parents). Depending on the usage of the word "cottage", it is the physical structure or the group of people that live within the structure. For example, Self Cottage is the physical building where older elementary/younger middle school age girls and their Cottage Parents eat, sleep, and relax. These children who filled out the Schedule Survey range from older elementary through high school students living

on the Greenwood Residential Campus. This included four cottages of girls and three cottages of boys for a total of seven cottages.



(Stahn Cottage)



(Self Cottage)



(Newell-Smith Cottage)

The staff survey contained 18 questions and the child survey contained 19 questions.

Wording was slightly different for the staff and children surveys and covered a range of topics including sleep, study needs, activities, and the use of volunteers.

**Here is a sampling of questions:**

**Staff: "How much sleep do your students need on average?"**

**Child: "How many hours of sleep do you need on average per night?"**

**Staff: "What is the latest on a school night that your cottage should complete a scheduled activity?"**

**Child: "What is the latest on a school night that you/your cottage should complete a scheduled activity?"**

**Staff: "How much time on average do your students need to study and complete homework on weekdays to be successful?"**

**Child: "How much time on average do you need to study and complete homework on weekdays to be successful?"**

**Staff: "How much scheduled activity (such as gym activities, work set, ABC (Adventure Based Counseling) Ropes Course, equestrian, etc.) should your students have Monday-Thursday assuming school is in session?" Do not include tutoring.**

**Child: "How much scheduled activity (such as gym activities, work set, ABC (Adventure Based Counseling) Ropes Course, equestrian, etc.) should you have on a weekday assuming school is in session? Do not include homework/study time."**

**Staff: "In what area would volunteers be beneficial for the students and the cottage?"**

**Child: "In what area would volunteers be beneficial for you?"**

**Staff: "In what areas would volunteers NOT be useful?"**

**Child: "In what ways would volunteers NOT be beneficial to you? What have volunteers done or provided that you didn't like?"**

**Staff: "What would be a beneficial schedule for Saturdays and what activities would you recommend? You can answer "no activities" or the amount of time and type of activities."**

**Child: “What would be a beneficial schedule for Saturdays and what activities would you recommend? (You can include “no activities” or the amount of time and type of activities.)”**

Data collected from students and staff were compared to healthy recommendations from published literature sources. Once a healthy scheduling of time/activities is determined based on resources and surveys, I will then make a recommendation on a process for staff to follow when adding activities to The Student Activities Calendar. Individualizing student needs, giving flexibility, choice, and children and staff having influence on what goes into the schedule will be paramount.

A few things to consider are time, present needs and history. Children ages 3-6 typically need 10-12 hours of sleep per night, 7-12 year olds need 10-11 hours of sleep per night (even up to 12 hours/night) and 13-18 years olds need 8-9 hours of sleep per night. “Sleep needs to remain vital to health and the well-being for teenagers as when they are younger. It turns out that many teenagers actually need more sleep than previous years. However, for many teenagers said pressures conspire against getting the proper amount and quality of sleep.” (*wedmd.com*). An often overlooked need for children in the past years has been “free play.” This is a time when they can use their imagination, draw, color, paint, play make-believe, running and playing outside, or just reading a book for fun. Dr. Peter Gray reports that without free play emotional development is harmed and more depression, anxiety and impulse control is experienced by the child (*American Journal of Play, Peter Gray, 2011, verywellfamily.com*). It is important to note that relationships, opportunities to give back (help others, create, plant, care for animals), choice, and a sense for accomplishment all help a child develop in a healthy way. It is also helpful to children who have had trauma. In fact, activities and daily routines that are planned well, with flexibility and choice, provide optimal opportunity for creating what

is called a “Therapeutic Milieu.” This safe, secure environment provides opportunity for growth and healing. (Holden, M. J., et al, *TCI Activity Guide: Residential Child Care Project*, Cornell University, p. A. 11. Holden, M.J, *Children and Residential Experiences*, Edition 2, CWLA Press, 2009, pp. 50-51).

### **Data Analysis**

Based on Staff Surveys from the two youngest cottages, staff recommended no more than one hour of structured activity on a school day (Monday-Thursday) with staff recommending that the cottage complete structured activity by 5 pm on these school days. Several suggested that at least one afternoon of “free play” be left in the schedule. They recommend no volunteers come during the school week unless they are tutors. Staff also emphasize that the tutors need to be known and trusted adults who come regularly. Staff feels it beneficial for there to be less than one hour of church activity on Wednesdays or it would be even more ideal for the youngest children to have a church activity on Sunday afternoon instead of Wednesday due to the tight schedule on school days with tutoring, dinner, baths, devotions/reading, and bedtime routine. Staff recommends two hours of Saturday enrichment activity (cottages may opt out if they want to relax or participate in another activity) and two hours of Sunday church activity are recommended.

Based on Staff and Child Surveys from the older elementary/younger middle school cottages (Self and Ouzts Cottages) and published information, approximately one hour of structured activity on a school day (Monday-Thursday) is recommended. It is recommended that they complete structured activity by 6:30 pm/7 pm at the latest on school nights. One afternoon of “free play” would be beneficial on one of these school days. Staff recommend up



to one hour of church activity on Wednesday. Two hours of Saturday enrichment activity (cottages may opt out if they want to relax or to participate in another activity). Staff recommends 2-3 hours of Sunday Church activity for this age group. Child surveys list similar times.

Based on Staff and Child Surveys from the Newell-Smith and Robert Black Cottages and published information, it recommended that there be a maximum of 1-2 hours of structured activity on a school day (Monday-Thursday) being completed by 7 pm at the latest. Both cottages typically consist of older middle school and younger high school students. At least one afternoon of “free play” can still be left in the schedule. Up to one hour of church activity on Wednesday is recommended. Two hours of Saturday enrichment activity (cottages or individuals may opt out if they want to sleep in or relax or participate in another activity) and 2-3 hours Sunday Church activity are recommended.

The above recommendations are the same for our oldest three cottages which are usually made up of 10th -12th graders. Those who live in the three oldest cottages are at the age they can have a job outside of Connie Maxwell campus if they desire and meet requirements. Their hours in outside employment depend on what the employer can offer and what the child can handle based on his/her school work load.

There will be exceptions to the above to provide flexibility and choice for the cottage parent and child. Children who are age 13 and above are able to have a work-set. On the work-set children work, learn skills, build confidence and accomplishment and earn some greatly anticipated spending money (or money for savings). Rotating work-set and gym activities and

not having them both on a school day Monday-Thursday can help take the pressure off of both the child and staff.

It is good to note that often children are involved in extracurricular activities outside of Connie Maxwell. In a typical year several children participate in school sports, cheer, music, clubs, community theatre, and dance to name a few. As with families, the team staff and cottages when they are able, enjoy supporting their cottage brothers or sisters at these events. There are three service delivery teams on the Greenwood Residential Campus. There are three residential cottages on each team. The Jamison Team includes Stahn, Self and Newell-Smith Cottages. The Murdoch Team includes Knowles, Ouzts and Robert Black Cottages. The Smith Team includes White Moorhead, Turner, and Hamilton Cottages. Each team is composed of House Parents, Family Service Workers, a Home Making Assistant, and a Team Leader.

### **Implementation Plan**

The most challenging part of completing this goal is for this student to communicate clearly the need for Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries to have a clear process for vetting activity resources before placing them on the Student Activities Calendar. There will need to be a "buy in" from staff that we will adhere to the limiting of activities or increasing activities as for the best interest of the child/children. All the while we need to maintain activities that will help children have fun, develop, give back, and grow in positive ways. The key people who will have to buy into the plan are those who attend the Calendar Meeting and their supervisors.

### **Process**

The Team Leaders (with ongoing input from the Cottage Parent, Family Service Worker, and child) will monitor the amount of activity and type of activity to be placed on the Student

Activities Calendar, carefully noting age and factors such as ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit- Hyperactivity Disorder) which can be adversely affected by too much or too long activity. This will involve intentional planning and the four C's that are being emphasized in the Connie Maxwell Children's Ministries' ten-year strategic plan: communication, collaboration, continuity, and cooperation. Staff will need to communicate needs, concerns, and activities. They must also coordinate so as not to have too many or too little activities so that the agency can provide the best continuity of care. This will be done once a month as scheduled formally and in between as needed. There should be no extra cost involved in this process. Potential obstacles will be staff understanding the need to monitor the amount of activities and hurt feelings if their or their team's suggestion cannot be part of the Student Activity Calendar. A way to overcome this is continued communication, understanding, flexibility and compromise where appropriate.



(Sam M. Smith Activities Center-Named after former Connie Maxwell President and Alumni. Sam Smith was admitted to the care of Connie Maxwell Orphanage on November 24, 1915. He was nearly 10 when he entered first grade)

Amounts of scheduled activity on a typical school night (Monday-Thursday) for our youngest cottages should not exceed 1 hour and be completed by 5 pm.

Amounts of scheduled activity on a typical school night (Monday-Thursday) for our older elementary/younger middle school cottages (Self and Ouzts Cottages) should be approximately 1 hour of scheduled activity concluding by 6:30-7 pm at the latest.

Amounts of scheduled activity on a typical school night (Monday-Thursday) for our older middle school through high school should range between 1-2 hours. Noting that many middle and high school students are involved in extracurricular activities and that is based on their developmental level and ability to handle the extra activities. Our Juniors and Seniors have an opportunity to hold jobs in the community. Flexibility and choice are very important options to meet individual needs and desires of each child.

Some of the many activities are but not limited to: gym, playground, tennis, equestrian, Church Activities, field sports, hunting, fishing, Adventure Based Counseling (hands on group building activity that challenges by choice and provides opportunities for success/includes high and low rope elements), petting/feeding the animals, hiking, bike riding, outdoor basketball, swimming, picnicking/grilling.



(Connie Maxwell Playground)



(It is easy to understand why Connie Maxwell has so many children who excel in athletics, especially basketball. Each cottage is equipped with its own basketball goal and a “team” ready and willing to play. Connie Maxwell also has its competitive basketball season. Pictured on page 12 is our Beginner League Team getting ready for the “Big Game.”)



(Always a Summer Time Favorite-Swimming!)



(All Smiles and ready for the Equestrian Competition)

### **Evaluation Method**

This new process of vetting activities prior to placing on the Student Activities Calendar will be evaluated bi-annually using *SurveyMonkey* and hard copy surveys. The same staff group and age group of children will be surveyed.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

Connie Maxwell has a rich history of providing opportunities for a child to heal, learn, and foster healthy relationships. Structure and routine have played a vital role in this healing and learning journey. Stories of hope and resilience are told in Connie Maxwell alumni Gene Bishop's book *If Being Raised In An Orphanage was so Bad...Why Did I Like It So Good*. After the trauma associated with the death of her mother, the death of her Grandmother, and the shifting from family member to family member, Norma Dean Padgett Mahaffey was placed at Connie Maxwell Orphanage. During her time at Connie Maxwell, she experienced loving relationships, jobs to create opportunities for accomplishment, and time to help others. She

incorporated excellence in her life as she completed high school, nursing school, married, and raised her family. She states, “Connie Maxwell’s commitment is and has been to take the child, nurture the child, and offer hope and a support system that will bring healing. The good role models and the family atmosphere provided at Connie Maxwell have proven successful in restoring broken lives. I know; I have been there.” (Bishop, G., *If Being Raised In An Orphanage was so Bad...Why Did I Like It So Good*. pp. 131-151).

Kadarron Anderson, Connie Maxwell Alumnus, says “Without Connie Maxwell I wouldn’t be the person that I am today. I wouldn’t have worked as hard as I did in school. I wouldn’t have put the extra work in athletics. I wouldn’t have been able to have seen the world. Connie Maxwell provided a better life for us.” (3x All American Linebacker and 2x Team Captain, 2010 Palmetto Patriot Award Winner, attended Furman on full scholarship, Furman University alumnus, professional athlete (New Orleans Saints, Tennessee Titan, helped start and played on a team in Italy). He credits his early morning chores, routine, opportunities to play sports as part of what gave him a better life (conniemaxwellstory.com-My Connie Maxwell Story-Kadarron Anderson). Connie Maxwell Children’s Ministries continues to develop and change to better meet the needs of children and to give them a better life.

## References

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Jamison, A.T., *Thirty Years of Connie Maxwell History*, L.H. Jenkins, Inc., 1922.

Keith-Lucas, A., *Hope and Healing: The First Hundred Years of Connie Maxwell History*. Wooten Printing Co., 1991.

[www.Noodlepros.com](http://www.Noodlepros.com)

[www.wedmd.com](http://www.wedmd.com)



(Neb Cline Family Services Center formerly known as the Eastern Star Building. Built in 1932, it was renovated in 1999 and named in honor of alumnus and benefactor, Neb Cline. Allen P. Wood, alumnus and former resident of this home, donated his architectural skills for this renovation.)