Rita Boydston joined the Tennessee Craniofacial Center in December 2011 as the coordinator. She received her BSN from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and she is also a Certified Case Manager. Her years of experience include work in the Burn Unit, surgery, home health, insurance, case management, and clinical documentation improvement.

Rita lives with her husband George on a farm in Ider, Alabama. They have two children, Brad and Emily. In her down time she enjoys running and recently completed her first half-marathon. She also enjoys gardening, reading, and cooking.

“The past three months have been a whirlwind of learning new processes, craniofacial treatments and timelines. Amidst all the activity of the learning curve is the core of it all…the kids and their families. These kids are our kids, our neighbors, and our friends. I have witnessed what it means for families to know they have the support of the CFA during the stressful, trying times and through the journey of their child’s treatment. I have also seen first hand how the physicians of the team work, unselfishly sharing their time and expertise not for recognition, but because they care. I am proud and grateful to be a part of the TCC and CFA.”

TCC Director “Mrs. Rita”

Fun Facts

There have been many famous people that were born with cleft lips and palates but they did not let it stop them from doing great things!

Here are a few:

Peyton Manning (NFL Football player)
Jesse Jackson (American civil rights activist and Minister)
Carmit Bachar (Dancer, singer, actress)
Tom Brokaw (Television journalist)
Morgan Freeman (Actor)
Dylan McDermot (Actor)
Tad Lincoln (President’s son)
King Tut (Egyptian Pharaoh)
CFA 2ND ANNUAL MOTHER’S RETREAT

On Saturday, November 12, 2011 the CFA hosted our 2nd annual Mother’s Retreat at the Chattanoogan Hotel. Thanks to a generous donation from Stryker, the CFA was able to unite these special moms who share a common bond of having children born with craniofacial differences and provide them with a day of education and fun.

We were so lucky to have Rose Hutton, M.S. CC-A and Terrilyn Hollings Ladd, M.S. CCC-SLP from the Hamilton County School System and Claire Overmyer from Children’s Hospital at Erlanger Speech Department to lead our morning session. They discussed the speech and hearing services offered by the local school district and provided much needed information on the assessment process and eligibility of school aged children for Hamilton County Special Education Services.

After lunch Karen S. Glen, director of STARS (Students Taking a Right Stand) led a very helpful and informative presentation on social issues in the school system. Ms. Glen discussed such topics as the difference between bullying and conflict and how parents and teachers can help guide their children through these situations.

Following the educational presentations, the CFA moms gathered at Ignis Glass for an afternoon of fun and relaxation. Renowned glass artist Christopher Mosey and his staff assisted each mom in creating their own heirloom glass ornament. While working on their unique ornaments, the mothers continued to bond by sharing stories of their children’s accomplishments and gaining hope and inspiration from one another’s experiences.

The CFA would like to express our gratitude to all of our sponsors, guest speakers, participants and supporters who made this day possible.

“ROCK CITY” CHRISTMAS

On Sunday, December 4, 2011 Erlanger Auxiliary sponsored the annual CFA Christmas Party at Rock City Enchanted Garden of Lights. We played host for 350 guests in a special evening touring the beautifully lit gardens at Rock City. The CFA children were delighted to see their old friends, and Mrs. Donna Henderson joined us at the registration table to give hugs and remind everyone to join her for "Dreams Can Come True" weekend family camp in May.

The evening was full of laughter and excitement for our CFA families. Everyone was amazed by the spectacular lighting display which ranged from glittering snowflakes to a life-sized lighted gingerbread house. And of course a visit to Santa was a highlight for everyone.

The CFA wishes to thank Erlanger Auxiliary for their continued support in making this magical evening come true for so many CFA children and their families.
KATHRYN EXCELS

Kathryn was born with craniosynostosis and diagnosed with crouzon syndrome at the age of three. Crouzon is a genetic disorder characterized by the premature fusion of certain skull bones. This early fusion prevents the skull from growing normally and affects the shape of the head and face. After several surgeries in Kansas we decided we needed to try and find other resources to help with our daughter’s birth defect.

On one of Kathryn’s visits to her geneticist in Kansas City we met another family whose daughter was born with crouzon and was the same age as Kathryn. Our families joined forces to seek help for our daughters in relentless hours of research at the Wichita Public Library. We discovered that we only lived sixty miles apart so we decided to meet to share our discovery about the Tennessee Craniofacial Center (TCC). The other family shared their positive experience of traveling to the TCC with their daughter. Our family decided that we too would visit the Tennessee Craniofacial Center. After our first appointment, we walked away feeling like we had just met an amazing team of professionals that were going to be able to bring new life and hope for our daughter Kathryn.

In the summer of 1997, Kathryn had a total vault surgery by Dr. Sargent and Dr. Tim Strait. This surgery changed her life forever. Three months later, Kathryn started her first day of preschool on track with her friends. Today Kathryn is an energetic 15 year old and a sophomore at Nickerson High School in Nickerson, Kansas. She currently serves as the president of her class and maintains a 4.0 GPA. She participates in volleyball and softball and is a member of the Spanish Club, Leadership Academy, SAVE/SADD, FCCLA, and Drama Club at her high school. Outside of school she is the vice-president of her 4-H Club, participates in youth group activities, rides four wheelers, hangs out with her friends on the week-ends and enjoys helping out on the family farm. Today she lives a normal life thanks to the talent of Dr. Sargent and the TCC team of specialists and a guardian angel.

Fat and Judy Henke
Children born with cleft palate or with cleft lip and palate will typically have speech problems at some point in their lives. Over half of these children will need speech therapy; however, most will develop normal speech by the age of 5. There are a few different problems that these children may face. One is a delay in speech sound development or speech errors related to clefting. These errors are called compensatory errors and they are caused by the attempts to adjust for nasal air loss. They can cause speech sound distortions such as “slushy” or “mushy” sounds if the child’s teeth are not lined up correctly, or mispronunciation of certain letters due to using the larynx or walls of the throat to talk rather than the lips and tongue. Another problem children with a cleft palate may face is Velopharyngeal Dysfunction (VPD). VPD happens when the opening between the mouth and nose (the velopharyngeal valve) is not closed properly. This causes too much air to leak out of the nose during speech and causes it to sound distorted. The third problem that may arise is hearing loss caused by fluid build up in the middle ear and infections. Hearing is such an important part of speech development so hearing problems and ear health should be closely monitored.

There are several solutions to these cleft related speech problems. The simplest one is to get your child regular ear and hearing exams. These are part of an annual Cleft Clinic visit but keep in mind that your child may require extra visits and more care such as ear tubes or hearing aids if fluid build up and infections are a problem. If you are dealing with VPD your child may have to have “Speech Surgery” to correct it. Surgery is a big decision and should be discussed thoroughly with your doctor to determine if it is a necessary intervention. The third solution for speech development is speech therapy. Speech therapy is very important tool for any child who has speech errors because it helps the child learn how to use his/her tongue and lips correctly for speech. At the CFA’s Mother Retreat in November 2011, a major concern for the mothers was how to get their child the speech therapy that he/she needed. If your child needs speech therapy they may be covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and can receive special education classes as early as 3 years of age. You need to speak with the principal of your child's school to set up an evaluation and IEP meeting. For more information about the issues associated with clefting and the tools to overcome them, or to obtain a copy of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Notice of Procedural Safeguards, please contact the Tennessee Craniofacial Center at 423-778-9192.
RALPH DECICCO - BOARD MEMBER

I have been on the CFA Board of directors for 7 years and currently serve as the Chairman of the Nominating Committee. I graduated with a BS in Economics from Villanova University, then furthered my education at Fairleigh Dickinson University Graduate School. I worked for Ford Motor Company for 16 years as their Financial and Marketing Executive and then as the Vice President of Retail Sales and a Corporate Officer at Maytag Corporation for 22 years. I have tried to stay actively involved in my community by joining and contributing to many different organizations such as the Craniofacial Foundation of America, the “Friends of Hamilton” community organization, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Ralph.

TERRY SMYTH - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“It may look like a small step you are taking today, but each small step contributes to a great future!”

Terry.
Mission:
CFA is a non-profit organization that supports the work of the Tennessee Craniofacial Center (TCC) at Children’s Hospital at Erlanger. The CFA is dedicated to helping individuals with facial differences lead normal lives through education and emotional support. The CFA provides financial assistance for non-medical needs to patients traveling to the TCC for evaluation and treatment, financial support for the Center’s International Medical Program, and medical assistance as approved by the Foundation’s Executive Committee. The CFA programs are made possible through private donations and fundraising.

How You Can Help!
* Celebrate a birthday, anniversary or other milestone by naming CFA as your charity of choice
* Sponsor a family to attend “Dreams Can Come True” family camp
* Start a “Bear Hugs” program at your local school or organization
* Check to see if your employer offers a matching funds program
* Join the Parent to Parent Network
* Name CFA in your estate planning

Please call to discuss the possibilities ...
(423) 778-9176 or 800-418-3223.

Children’s Services:
Tennessee Craniofacial Center - (423) 778-9192 or rita.boydston@erlanger.org
TN Children’s Special Services - http://health.state.tn.us/MCH/css.htm
GA Children’s Medical Services - http://health.state.ga.us/programs/cms/

Better Tomorrows is a newsletter distributed to the patients, families, and supporters of the CFA. If you have a story you would like to share, send your story and photos to terry.smyth@erlanger.org

Sign up for the E-Newsletter
one face at a time
Restoring Hope

Craniofacial Foundation of America
975 East Third Street
Chattanooga, TN 37403

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