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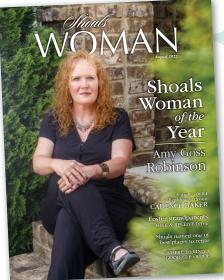


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ON the COVER



Photograph by Dan Busey

We all encounter hurdles in our lives.

Some come at an early age and others at a later age.

Some seem to come one right after another.

That may have been how Amy Goss Robinson felt when she was 36 years old. It was then when she discovered a lump in her breast that changed her world and eventually the world for others.

That lump set off a chain of events that led to the adoption of three children and finding "the love of her life."

It wasn't easy, though.

One hurdle after another presented itself, and Amy cleared it like a champ.

Her can-do attitude and persistence should inspire others to believe anything is possible. It's that attitude which led to her being named the 2022 Shoals Woman of the Vear

"Amy Goss Robinson is a remarkable woman and a true example for all women," wrote a person who nominated her. "She is an exceptional example of courage, passion and determination for doing the right thing no matter how long it takes."

Each year, the selection process is just as difficult as the year before when nominations are whittled down to the final five. It becomes obvious how many wonderful, strong women we have living right here in the Shoals. They go beyond the responsibilities implied in their career title or business name.

We are proud and humbled to again share with you the profiles of five of the finest, not just the finalists, who embody a giving and generous character which makes the Shoals the best place to live.

All of these women have had to endure challenges of one type or another, but they all persevered and have made their mark.

We are so happy to be able to gather and shine a huge spotlight on these incredible women of the Shoals.

They all have worked so hard to lift others up.

Now, it's our turn to lift them up.



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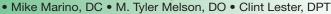
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L to R: Stacey Moore, MSN, CRNP; Danielle Elliott, MSN, CRNP;

Ashley Frederick, MSN, CRNP, NP-C; Emily Russell, DNP, FNP-C

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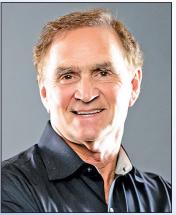
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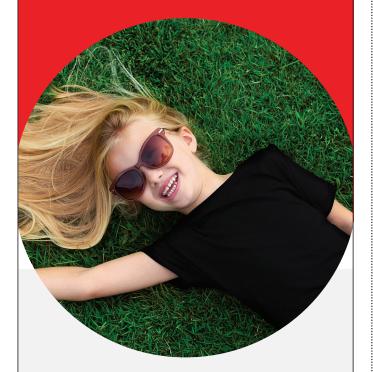
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November 11 - 13, 2022 Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm Sunday 1 & 6:30pm (Recommended for ages 7 & up)

Inspired by the beloved films, the romantic and adventure-filled new musical ANASTASIA is on a journey to Huntsville at last! From the Tony Award®-winning creators of the Broadway classic Ragtime, this dazzling show transports us from the twilight of the Russian Empire to the euphoria of Paris in the 1920s, as a brave young woman sets out to discover the mystery of her past. Pursued by a ruthless Soviet officer determined to silence her, Anya enlists the aid of a dashing conman and a lovable ex-aristocrat. Together, they embark on an epic adventure to help her find home, love, and family.



February 17 - 19, 2023 Friday 8pm, Saturday 2 & 8pm Sunday 1 & 6:30pm (Recommended for ages 10 & up)

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AMY GOSS ROBINSON never met a hurdle too high

by KEVIN TAYLOR Photos by DAN BUSEY

When Amy Goss Robinson got the phone call to learn she had been named a finalist for Shoals Woman of the Year, she thought someone was pranking her.

It took a few minutes of conversation to learn that it was not a prank.

She, indeed, had been nominated and named a finalist.

Amy may feel like she's being punked again when she learns that she has been named the 2022 Shoals Woman of the Year.

Why her?

Everyone has challenges in life.

The Sheffield native left the area and obtained her doctorate in physical therapy at the University of South Carolina before returning home in 2011 to provide physical therapy here.

Two years later, her world was turned upside down. She was diagnosed with an aggressive breast cancer which resulted in the removal of her breasts.

Amy was just 36 and single when she found the lump in her breast.

While she was being treated for the cancer, she sought out local support groups pertaining to breast cancer patients and found nothing. So, rather than throw up her hands and accept it, she helped found and develop her own breast cancer support group right here in the Shoals.

So, the Breast cancer Recovery and Awareness Together (BRAT) Pack was formed with the help of Dr. Patrick Daugherty in 2014.

"I wanted to speak to the group to teach women how to property stretch and strengthen their body after surviving it," she said. "Then I started to reach out to surgeons and speak to groups and help implement physical therapy plans for breast cancer survivors."

A handful of breast cancer survivors have since grown into a group of almost 150 members.

Amy wanted children, but the chemotherapy took away her chances of having them naturally.

Following the surgery to remove her breasts, she began to investigate the possibility of becoming a foster mother.

After becoming a foster parent, she had several children stay with her on a short-term basis.

Several months after becoming a foster parent, her first possible long-term child came into her home in April 2018.

2022 SHOALS WOMAN OF THE YEAR Amy Goss Robinson



He had a rare blood disorder which meant lots of trips to see doctors. He had already been in a foster home, but his medical needs were just too much for his previous foster parents to handle.

About seven months later his twin sister and older sister were reunited with their brother in Amy's home, where they remain.

Amy learned what true love was all about having those three children.

But that wasn't the only love she would learn to cherish.

Not long after finishing breast cancer treatment, Amy met Chad Robinson.

"I had no hair; he met me at my worst and supported me all the way through and has been wonderful with the children," she said. "Without him there's no way I could have managed and taken on a sibling group of three."

Amy and Chad were engaged.

But then there was another hurdle.

Amy and Chad wanted to adopt the three children, but that wasn't possible under the parameters of the law in Alabama.

So, the couple agreed to put the wedding on hold so Amy could adopt the children.

Three years later, the children were adopted.

But Chad could not adopt the children until the couple had been married at least a year, according to state law.

Once the year was over, Chad filed to adopt the children.

Insert another hurdle here in the form of COVID-19.

The court system ended up grinding to a near halt, which meant the adoption process was going to be delayed. On March 24 of this year the three children became Robinsons.

Amy met hurdle after hurdle along the adoption route. She could have just thrown her hands up and quit, but that wasn't an option.

"My drive comes from being a redhead," she said with a laugh. "My stubbornness, when I see something wrong with the system I can't rest unless I open my mouth or try to do something to fix things that I see that need to be fixed.

"When it came to the breast cancer situation, there were no services for women like me, so the need was there so the BRAT Pack was formed. Then being a foster parent – just be a foster parent and see first-hand where there are changes which need to be made to the system."

After shaking off the disbelief that she had been named a Shoals Woman of the Year finalist, Amy looked to the future and what it would mean personally to her if she was named Shoals Woman of the Year.

"I stopped and realized what an honor it would be to have that kind of platform for people to listen to what means so much to me," she said. "Like maybe someone would listen and help change the child welfare law or the treatment of foster parents and maybe expand the reach of my breast cancer organization beyond the Shoals area and do more than what we do in this small community."

Put a hurdle in front of Amy, and chances are, she's going to clear it by a mile.

Shoals Woman of the Year 2022 Finalist: DR. ANDREA HUNT



DR. ANDREA HUNT creates avenues to help students

by KEVIN TAYLOR Photos by DAN BUSEY

Dr. Andrea Hunt sees herself as a creative person.

She thinks outside of the box to address problems, and she's doing it for thousands of young adults on any given day at the University of North Alabama.

Andrea is an associate professor of sociology at the university and founding director of the Mitchell-West Center for Social Inclusion.

"I would characterize myself more of a creator than a fixer," she said. "When you are creating something, you really have to think about what's the need and how you create things that are going to address those needs.

"I like to create and work with other people – building relationships with people whether it's people in the community, students, parents, or faculty and staff. You really can't access what needs to address if you don't have that relationship. So, spending time building those relationships are important."

The Mitchell-West Center for Social Inclusion, which was founded in 2019, helps to fill gaps for students at the university.

The gaps are everchanging, too.

"We have a lot of students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged; we have increasing regional and ethnic diversity on campus; 25% of our students are first-generation students; we have increasing number of students who have educational accommodations whether its through a documented disability or a mental health need; we have an increasing number of students identifying as LGBTQ, and we have an increasing number of international students," she said. "We have offices that support those needs. It also helps us to start building bridges between our campus and the community at large."

Every day it's something new for Andrea, which is something she embraces with a lot of enthusiasm.

"It's been a lot of fun, especially when I think about my background in sociology, the things I've been passionate about and learning about other people and supporting needs," she said.

Just as there are good situations for the students at UNA, there are the bad.

"It's tough though," she added. "It's tough to see students struggling.

"I think there's often times the assumption that if students are in college then they are not dealing with these other life issues. That's not necessarily the case. We have students who are dealing with things at home, we have students that are struggling financially that may not have housing or access to food and maybe dealing with mental health issues. It is difficult seeing all of those needs, but at the same time being able to support students and get them connected with resources and being able to create an environment where students feel like it's going to be their home for the next couple of years is fulfilling."

Being a finalist for Shoals Woman of the Year, Andrea said she still hasn't let it all sink in just yet.

"There's a lot of amazing women in this community, many of whom I look up to, many of whom I work with or are running organizations that I volunteer with or am on the board with, so there's a lot of models in this community for being a woman that is engaged, a woman that is relational, a woman that is wanting to step into leadership. There's lots of models for that, so I think if I were named Shoals Woman of the Year would give me some validation.

"When you think about it, everybody has their own struggle to get where they are at. No path is easy. It can look like it is from the outside, but everybody has bumps along the way. Even in your 40s you still wonder if you are doing what you're supposed to be doing or living out your purpose. Having some of that acknowledgement does give you some sense of 'OK, maybe I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing."



Shoals Woman of the Year 2022 Finalist: DR. JACQUELINE PARSONS



DR. JACQUELINE PARSONS "is truly a genuine public servant"

by KEVIN TAYLOR Photos by DAN BUSEY

When Dr. Jacqueline Parsons graduated from high school, college was not going to be the next step.

Her father passed away when she was 16 years old and was at the hospital when she was serving as a nurse's aide.

While in the hospital, her father said that computers were going to be the next big thing and her future may be better if she began to study them.

"He said, 'I tell you what, whoever learns to run a computer, they are going to be a smart person,'" she recalled. "That always stayed with me."

A friend of Jacqueline's, who lived next door, had been gone much of the day one day. When she asked her friend where she had been, she told Jacqueline that she had earned a grant to pay for tuition and books so she could attend college.

She coaxed Jacqueline to go with her to apply for the same grant. Her friend chose to pursue nursing, and Jacqueline, remembering what her father told her, decided to pursue data processing.

After getting a job in data processing, Jacqueline began to have a family.

By the time her children were 5 years old, she went back to school to pursue nursing.

She breezed through the academic end of the program and was accepted to nursing school.

The only problem was that Jacqueline had a weak stomach

and couldn't handle the sight of blood.

She knew she wouldn't make it as a nurse and jumped back into college to pursue a degree in education at 35 years old.

Jacqueline was a teacher's aide before she became a nurse's aide in school. There, she met a special young man who would be considered special needs today. He also happened to be a younger brother of a classmate of hers during her senior year.

She and the little boy formed a special bond, which eventually led her to education.

Fast forward to today, and Jacqueline has a doctorate in education and is a vice principal at Red Bay High School.

Special needs children continue to have a special place in her heart.

"They can have a clean slate every day," she said. "They're forgiving and they don't have any preconceived ideas about you. Their sense of who you are is different from how someone else sees you."

Before ascending to an administrative role within the school, Jacqueline taught several years, and she always kept an eye on the special needs children within the school.

Even today, she'll take time out of her day to swing by a classroom to check on a special needs child.

It is obvious children at Red Bay and her community, in general, are her passion.

In addition to being an educator,

she has been a sparkplug in the school system to work to improve the system in various ways.

She has written and received several grants to make improvements to the school and for the children from outdoor coverings and new playground equipment to upgrades on the baseball field.

"When you grow, you try to find your place to know what you're supposed to be doing, and as you get older you ask yourself that more," she said. "You want to know what you were created for. ... I am still trying to figure that out, but I know to help others."

And when she does help others, it's never a shallow effort.

A recent senior at Red Bay was about to become the first person in his family to graduate from high school. His family didn't have much money, so affording a nice shirt and tie for special occasions during his senior year was difficult.

Jacqueline didn't bat an eye and took it upon herself to make that senior feel just as special as his classmates.

She bought a nice shirt and tie for graduation and then took him all over the school to take photos of him to celebrate the milestone in his young life.

"[She] is the kind of person who gives to give ... she is never too busy to help others," one person wrote in their nomination letter for Jacqueline. "[She] is truly a genuine public servant."



Shoals Woman of the Year 2022 Finalist: TRICIA LEWIS



TRICIA LEWIS rolls up her sleeves to help others

by KEVIN TAYLOR Photos by DAN BUSEY

Tricia Lewis knows all too well the importance of civic organizations in any given community.

She has been a member of some type of civic organization dating back to her days in high school, and she's still going strong with the Rotary Club today.

She said being a spouse in a civic organization may be the best part.

"That's the fun way to be part of a club. I got to do all the behindthe-scenes things without having to attend all the meetings," she said with a laugh.

All the behind-the-scenes work is what makes Tricia stand out.

Being active in a civic organization is more than just showing up for a meeting.

It's work. Hard work. And Tricia has never shied away

from rolling up her sleeves. "People are seeing how

important civic organizations are to your community, and it's something we all need to work at rebuilding," she said. "[Civic organizations] are the backbones of a community. When you need something, you can go to your civic club, and they'll help you find the way to make it happen."

Tricia became active with the local Rotary club in 2010.

"I love Rotary. It's an awesome organization," she said.

A year later her husband Harold helped to found the Shoals Scholar Dollars scholarship program. "I couldn't help but to jump in with both feet," she said.

Most of the work Tricia did through the Rotary Club was to work behind the scenes for the various fundraising events for Shoals Scholar Dollars from the annual Dragon Boat Races to the end of the year banquet.

During COVID the Rotary Club, like most civic organizations, came to a halt. Meetings were held virtually, but there were no live fundraising or community projects the club could perform during the pandemic.

"I was so afraid that Rotary would start slipping in helping the community, so I contacted Florence Mayor Andy Betterton and asked if there was a project the Rotary Club could help with. He said he would think on it."

A few months passed and in April of 2021, Betterton called Tricia and asked to see if Rotary still needed a project.

Florence was void of a playground for special needs children for a number of years, so it was proposed that a park needed to be built inside McFarland Park.

The initial cost of the work would be \$252,000.

Tricia didn't bat an eye and said the Rotary Club would help.

The proposed STAR Play at McFarland Park struck a personal chord with her.

Her grandson Jacob is autistic and loves to go to the park.

She said that the park and the children's museum are his two favorite places.

The mayor asked if the Rotary Club would go in for half of the cost, and Lewis said yes without hesitation.

"We took on the project and used the initial plans and enhanced them by putting a fence around the park and a track where the kids could run," she said. "All of the equipment is wheelchair accessible and can handle the weight of a child and an adult."

There also is a pod at the park, which Tricia says looks like a spaceship.

"Autistic children have sensory issues, so they can go inside where it's quiet," she added. "It calms their nerves, and they can get back out and play."

Jacob couldn't wait for the park to be complete.

One day, Jacob asked Tricia if he could try it all out. No one was around, so she told her grandson to have fun.

"He tried out everything!," she said. "I asked him, 'what do you think?' He said it was awesome and had the biggest grin on his face. He loves that park!

"The park is the most amazing place to go, sit and watch. You'll see regular kids come over and help the others, which is amazing. If adults could go and do what these kids go and do in the park, we'd be in a much better place."



Shoals Woman of the Year 2022 Finalist: CINDY YOUNG



cindy young finds ways to uplift a person

by KEVIN TAYLOR Photos by DAN BUSEY

Those who attend Church of the Highlands in Florence can count on three things.

No matter how hot, how cold, how snowy or how stormy, Cindy Young will be working parking duty in front of the fountain and giving members and visitors a warm welcoming smile to go along with waves using her Mickey Mouse gloves.

Those who may not be fully awake yet or are just in a sour mood, can't help but cheer up when they see Cindy with her gloves on directing people to a parking spot.

"While I wave in cars and smile at our families coming in, I have to focus on making sure the traffic keeps moving," she said. "Many of my church family members tell me what a difference I make by being there on Sunday mornings and how it blesses them. What they don't realize is how much it blesses me and how much it fills my heart and in many ways that's what fuels me to be able to do my volunteer work at the Help Center."

When Cindy moved to Florence more than four years ago, she began to volunteer at the Help Center.

She had worked at food pantries in Huntsville prior to moving to Florence and said she found her purpose and passion volunteering there.

"I quickly saw there was a lot

that could be done to improve the food service area of the pantry. The experience from Huntsville, we took it from there and began doing more and doing better by offering food more frequently, and it just kinda grew from there," she said.

When she began volunteering at the Help Center, eligible families could get a food box once every 60 days. Now, they get a large box of food every 30 days. If it's a larger family, it will get a food bag and if there are children, they will get goody bags for them.

Any given month the Help Center will assist between 800 to 900 families across the Shoals area, Young said.

Cindy said she was "dragged kicking and screaming to her first food pantry" in Huntsville, and it was just a few weeks later that she felt that the food pantry was her calling.

"This was my ministry, my passion, my purpose and I just began working with a couple food pantries four days a week learning everything I could and how they operated," she said.

Now, her volunteer work at the Help Center has become a fulltime job for her. She spends every waking moment at the center, but doesn't seem to get burned out.

"I've never felt the desire or need to walk away from it," she said. "I'm still just as passionate about it now as the first day that I did it."

She's never had second thoughts about what she's volunteered to do.

She didn't have them when she got an email from a cousin of hers more than 10 years ago, either, when she learned that her cousin's brother was in desperate need of a kidney transplant.

She chose to be his donor.

Within a few months of the tests and exams, he had a healthy kidney.

"We had known for years it was coming for him. It wasn't a sudden thing," she said. "I was healthy and strong."

She was a lifesaver then and, in essence, she and the volunteers at the Help Center are lifesavers every 30 days.

"I don't really look at as me being a lifesaver. I know he would not be alive right now had I not donated my kidney, but I don't miss it. It just didn't impact how I live my life, but it certainly impacted how he lives his life right now.

"The satisfaction and joy that fills my heart when I know I can feed families – I don't ever think about not being there. I don't ever think about it being lifesaving for families. They are my purpose for getting up and doing it all over again day in and day out."





Who has these traits, characteristics or spirit for the woman you nominate:

Public Service (made outstanding contributions by participating in or implementing community and public service projects, such as volunteering), Safety/ Heroism (demonstrates good judgement/courage in an emergency), Human Relations (makes contributions toward enhancing the quality and morale of the workplace or creating a better public image-such as positive personal interaction with employees/ volunteers, public awareness, or collaboration between different agencies), The Spirit of the Shoals (mentors others in the pursuit of excellence).

If you know someone who was nominated, they are eligible to be nominated again. Don't just say your nominee is outstanding - prove it!

We hope you will use this form to get your nomination ready for 2023. An online form is available, starting March 1, 2023, at https://www.timesdaily.com/site/shoals_woman_of_the_year_nomination_form.html. Please complete each line on the form. **Please attach a nomination letter.** All nominations must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. May 24, 2023. Please contact Renita Jimmar (Renita.Jimmar@timesdaily.com) or Mara Beth Cravens (MaraBeth.Cravens@timesdaily.com) if you have any questions.

Phone Number:	Nominee Employer:
	Your Evening Number:
Submitter email:	
Submitting organization or person:	
I certify the information provided is correct	
Please tell us about the accomplishments	s, community or church involvement and details.

For more information on Shoals Woman of the Year nominations or the event, please contact Mara Beth Cravens at 256-740-5811 or marabeth.cravens@timesdaily.com. TimesDaily accepts nominations starting March 1st. Deadline is 5:00 p.m. May 24, 2023. Nominations can be made by email to swoynominations@timesdaily.com or mail nominations to: TimesDaily, Attn. Shoals Woman of the Year, 219 W. Tennessee Street, Florence, AL 35630.



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A shot to fulfill her **lifelong dream**

by ALYSSA SUTHERLAND Photos by IDOL/ABC PHOTOS

CADENCE BAKER

Almost one year ago, a local teen began a life-changing journey when she auditioned for "American Idol" from the comfort of her dad's living room. Cadence Baker went on to sing live for the judges – who loved her voice and her family's music legacy – and made it to the season's live shows.

Although she was not named America's favorite singer, she is a superstar in the Shoals. Since her start on the show, she has released a single, "Peter Pan," and performed at countless events and venues around the Shoals. Ahead of the anniversary of her adventure on "American Idol," we wanted to reminisce on her journey and what it took to get to the live shows.

"I grew up in a house full of music," said Cadence Baker, an area teenager who received a ticket to Hollywood during this season's American Idol auditions.

With Gary Baker legendary songwriter made famous with songs like "I Swear" — as a grandfather, and a father, Shane Baker, who is a singer, songwriter, and musician who was once part of a Christian rock band (for which his eldest daughter was named), it is no wonder Baker remembers growing up in an artistic household with music all around her, nor is it surprising that she developed her

own artistic and musical prowess at a young age.

When Baker was just four years old, she remembers sitting at the family piano picking out notes.

"That was when my dad found out I had perfect pitch," she said.

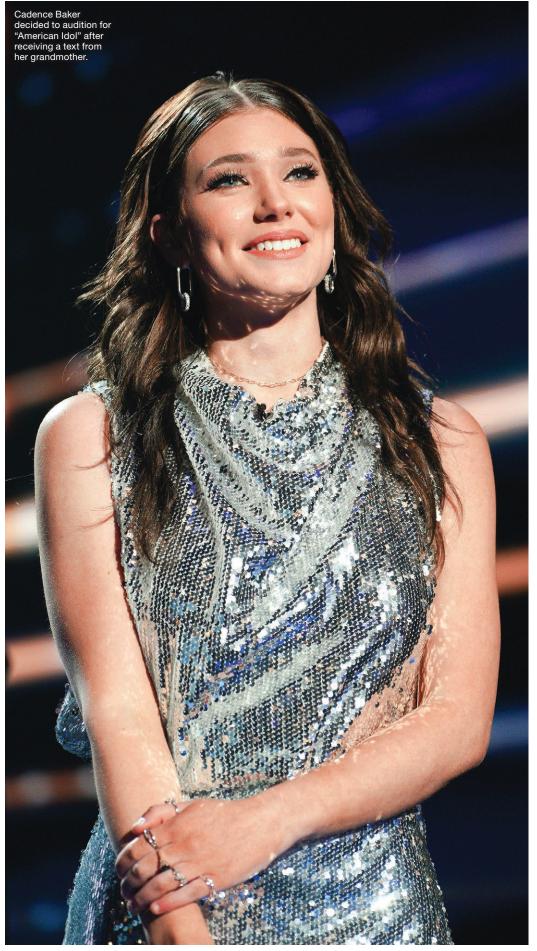
Then, when she was around 12, Baker said she began songwriting, and at 14, she wrote the first song she took to her parents and told them she wanted to record.

"It was called 'The Play'," Baker recalled. "Actually, we are going to go back now, record vocals, and release it."

According to Baker, music is a way for her to express how she is feeling without having to come out and say it, and it has always played an important role in her life.







Now, after a successful round of auditions with American Idol, Baker is getting her first shot at making that dream her reality.

Baker said she decided to audition for the contest after her grandmother texted her a link to sign up for them.

"I ignored her message at first," she said. "But then, my phone kept sending me reminders about her text over and over, and it felt like a sign."

Baker, who was 18 at the time, said she filled out the form for Idol Across America, the virtual audition step where hopeful contestants are told whether they get to sing in front of the judges or not.

Her first audition took place from the living room of her dad's house, where they created a setup and prepared in case producers wanted to hear a second song.

However, it did not take long for Baker and her father to hear that she was moving on to the next round.

"When they told me I was going to sing for the judges, I screamed and cried," said Baker.

Then, she started to prepare. Baker said that she originally intended to sing "Billy Jean" by Michael Jackson while playing the song on piano, but as the audition in Nashville, Tennessee, drew near, she felt doubt creep in about her musical choice.

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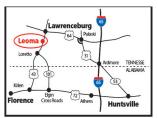


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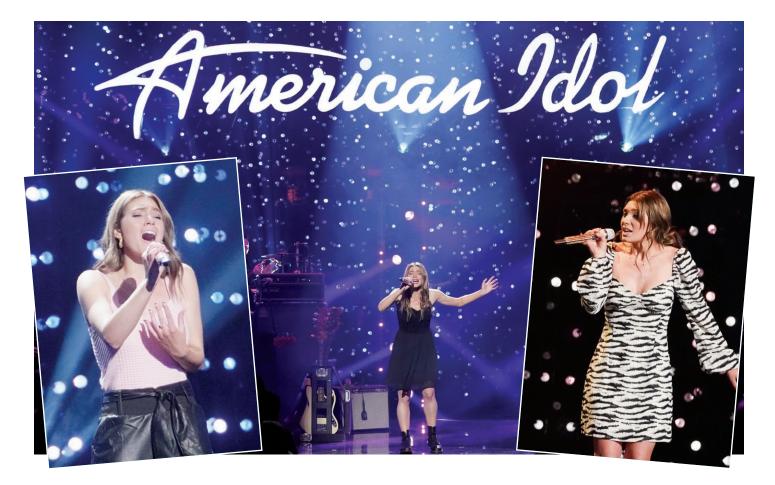
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When her dad noticed that something was wrong a couple of nights before the audition, they sat down together to figure out what she could perform instead.

"I had performed the Whitney Houston song for a school performance, and he suggested I try that," she said. "I started to work on it on the piano, but it didn't have the sound I wanted, so I asked if you (her dad) could play it on guitar."

Baker said her dad, who plays somewhat by ear, spent about an hour listening and learning the notes before playing it for her. When he did, it was exactly the sound Baked wanted.

"It had a smokey jazz feel — sassy and fun," she said. "I told him that I did not think it would feel the same if someone else played it, because he and I have a connection whenever we play music together, and we can kind of feel where we are going musically, so he came with me to play."

Although Baker cannot describe many specifics of her American Idol journey thus far, she did say that the feeling when she received her ticket to Hollywood was like nothing else she had ever experienced.

"I had every emotion in my body," she said. "I wanted to cry, to laugh — everything!"

She also confirmed that the best part of the competition thus far has been the people. According to Baker, it is amazing to spend time with people who have experienced the same



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things that she has, and share her passion for music.

Meeting fellow Alabamian, Tristen Gressett, is one of her favorite moments so far.

Additionally, Baker said that she loves knowing everyone involved with the competition has her best interests in mind.

"If they want you to sing something, it is because they know what sound is going to work for you," she said. "They want to see you thrive."

And for Baker, the support of friends and family — those who most want to see her thrive ---has been the force that keeps her encouraged.

"I could not do this without support - I would probably break down," she said. "It means the world to have everyone support me and seeing them happy makes me happy. It is awesome."





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Cadence Baker keeps the family's musical legacy going

The Baker family has a long history with music in the Shoals. While Cadence Baker grabbed worldwide attention this year when she made it to the live shows of "American Idol," her father and grandfather, Shane and Gary Baker, have each played their own role in their family's musical legacy. We caught up with them to hear about the history and future of music in the Baker family.

QRA

How would you describe your family's relationship to music?

Gary Baker: It has meant a lot to us, that is for sure. It has opened a lot of avenues and doors for all of us, and I am proud of that and of being the one to start it. It was a tough journey at times, but as I get a little older, I realize more and more its importance to our family, and the way we can use it to give back to our community. To hear Lionel Richey say "what a legacy" was amazing. I do not think that often about all that I have done in the business, so that was incredible.

How did you get your start in the music industry?

Shane Baker: Because my dad was a musician and was always recording and playing stuff, I just grew up around it. I would sit in bars and watch him rehearse with the band, and I fell in love with watching these guys get together and create music with their instruments. I started playing guitar, and from that moment on there was a connection with music and a want to share it with people. That urge is still strong.

What does it mean to you to know your son and granddaughter have both followed in your footsteps?

Gary Baker: It blows my mind, and it makes me proud. Shane can really play — he has come so far. I remember I used to think I needed to show him what he needed to learn and how things should be done, and suddenly, he is showing me. For a dad, that is the best thing ever. I am really proud of him. I have always known Cadence has a great voice and a great personality to go along with it. I am so proud of her for what she is doing — she deserves to go far in the business. Her younger sister, Sophia, sings beautifully, too, and has such a bright future.

When did you realize that Cadence had so much musical talent?

Shane Baker: She was singing with me at the piano when she was around four years old, and I remember thinking, this girl can pick out any note I play for her and match them all. She was always coming up with her own melodies as I was writing songs. One specific time, I heard this haunting melody on top of what I was playing, and I was blown away. That was recorded, luckily, and I still listen to it sometimes.

Gary Baker: I used to try to drag her away from the tune, but it was not possible. She could also harmonize to anything I sang.



What did it mean to you to share the stage with Cadence during her audition?

Shane Baker: I finally sat down and watched the audition the other day, and I told her it was the highlight of my musical career — being there and experiencing that with her and seeing her soar. As a father, you could not be prouder to see your children do something so amazing.

What do you think about Cadence's journey on "American Idol"?

Gary Baker: She learned a lot out there auditioning. She faced new experiences and a lot of critiquing. A lot has happened to her since last November, and she is figuring it out step by step.

What do you think is next for Cadence?

Shane Baker: I am so excited for her to get to do what she loves to do — to be able to do what you love in life is invaluable. She also just released one of the songs she wrote, and it is on iTunes and Spotify. Gary Baker, center, with his wife Amanda walks the red carpet at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame 2020 Induction Banquet. He was inducted into the Hall in 2020. [Photo by Matt McKean]

> Cadance Baker sings while her father Shane Baker played guitar during her "American Idol" audition in Nashville, Tennessee. [American Idol/ ABC photos]







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Shoals named one of best places to retire

by ALYSSA SUTHERLAND Photos by DAN BUSEY & KEVIN TAYLOR

Did you know that Florence and the Shoals have been included in Southern Living's lists of best places to live in the South many years in a row?

For the last two years, the community has even been included in their list of best places for a dreamy retirement in the South.

We agree – there is no better place in the South than the Shoals – so before you make plans for a tropical retirement, check out why spending your golden years along the Singing River is the best choice.





Low cost of living

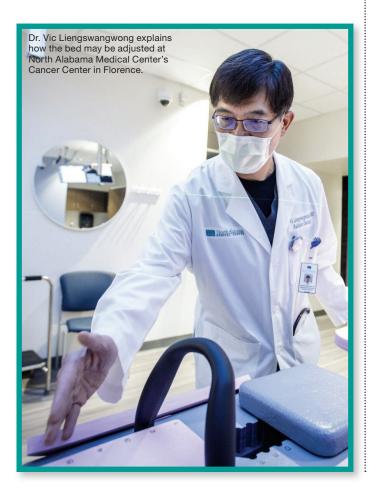
In today's economy, a reduced cost of living is cause for celebration, and that is exactly what you can expect in the Shoals. Florence has a favorable tax rate, and additionally, the average home value is under \$200,000, making it easier to achieve home ownership or upgrade (and downsize) to a spot with a front porch where you can spend your days swapping stories and sipping sweet tea. The bottom line? If you want to make the most of your retirement savings, life in the Shoals will help you get the most bang for your buck.

Medical Care

The Shoals is home to a plethora of health care including state of the art hospital facilities, sports medicine specialists, and even the new North Alabama Cancer Center. No matter what your needs may be, you are sure to find a doctor in the Shoals to provide your care.

Recreation

With the Tennessee River running through the center of the Shoals, you have every opportunity to spend time along and on the water. If that is the kind of adventure you love, hop on your boat to take a sunset cruise, spend the day fishing, or float down the creek in a kayak. With plenty of waterfront park access, you can enjoy the waterways of the Shoals







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as frequently as you want.

If you prefer drier forms of recreation, play a round of golf at one of the areas courses -Blackberry Trail and the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at the Shoals are two of the most popular. You might also enjoy taking a walk or hike at one of the area's many parks, trail systems, or nature preserves, like the Shoal Creek Preserve, the TVA Trails, or Deibert Park.

The Florence Senior Center also offers plenty of recreation opportunities for retirees through "The Club," including outings and travel that provide the chance to make new friends for your future adventures.

Arts and Entertainment

With the musical history of the Shoals, it is no wonder there are

opportunities to enjoy the arts on a weekly basis. Check out a play or concert at the Shoals Theater, tour Fame Studios, catch local acts performing in spots like Swampers, or enjoy the Shoals Symphony's next performance.

The Shoals also hosts many annual festivals celebrating the rich culture that gave it the nickname the Renaissance City. From the Renaissance Faire to the Helen Keller Festival



and Handy Week, there is no shortage of opportunities to take in the history and culture of the area, and you can even catch local artisans and musicians at First Fridays, a celebration of the Shoals that takes place in downtown Florence the first Friday of the month, April-December.

Proximation

Because of its centralized location, the Shoals area can give you the chance to experience professional sports, big city shopping, and stadium concerts with just a few hours in the car. An hour from Huntsville and two from both Birmingham and Nashville, experiencing a big city is all in a day trip. Looking for a quick weekend away? You will only be three hours from Chattanooga and Memphis and five from Atlanta.

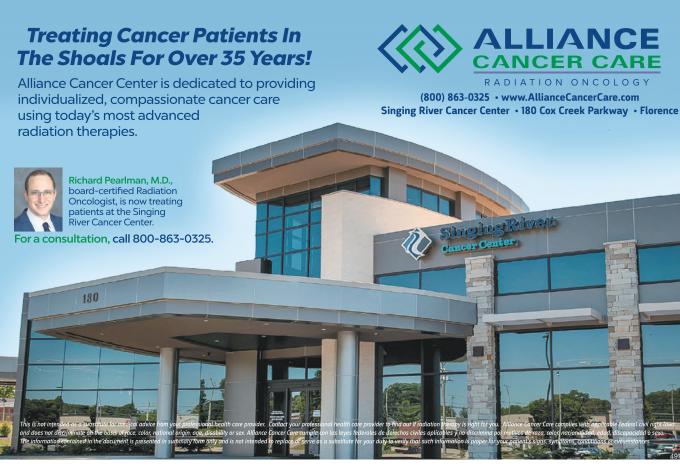
Life in the Shoals

All in all, retiring in the Shoals offers a robust but laidback lifestyle. Catch your favorite sporting event at the University of Alabama, enjoy Florence's picturesque and extremely walkable downtown, visit the many museums like Pope's Tavern, Frank Llovd Wright's Rosenbaum House, or the Indian Mound Museum, walk the Old Railroad Bridge at sunset, take in

a concert, or just enjoy a taste of Alabama along the Tennessee River. With unique dining and shopping opportunities galore, you will never run out of things to do.

The Shoals offers big city opportunities in a small town with a leisurely pace of life perfect for retirement. As you plan for your future, consider whether where you are now is the right place to retire.





Foster grandparents give & receive love

Dorothy Bynum, affectionately known as "Granny Dot", volunteers for the Foster Grandparent Program, a program that allows adults over 55 years of age to provide care and mentorship to children and youth across a wide range of community organizations, including schools.

When Dorothy Bynum considers all the reasons she volunteers for the Foster Grandparent Program, a program that allows adults over 55 years of age to provide care and mentorship to children and youth across a wide range of community organizations, including schools, one sticks out above the rest — her own grandparents.

"I remember my own grandmother and grandfather always gave back to the community," she recalls. "We were a very close-knit family, but I especially remember them saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' The way they formed their village really instilled that idea in me — that is why I go to school every day." And after 11 years of volunteering for the program, Bynum has become a staple of that village for countless children in her community.

Bynum, who is fondly called "Granny Dot" by her foster grandchildren, cannot even begin to estimate how many children she has worked with during her time with the program, but she knows that many of the children whose lives she has touched are now well into their teenage years — some are even in college.

"They grow up and change so much, I can hardly recognize them," she said. "Even some of the little ones — I see so many of them that I start to know faces and not



by ALYSSA SUTHERLAND Photos by DAN BUSEY names, but they all still know me."

In fact, Bynum, who considers each child she meets through the program one of her own, is often approached by her former foster grandchildren, and she loves to keep up with them and hear about their successes.

"Anytime they see me at Walmart, they yell 'hello,' and one of my children is at church with me — she was baptized last week," she said. "The other day at the mall, a young man named Jamie came up to me — I did not even recognize him — and he said, 'Granny Dot, I was at Sheffield, and you were my foster grandparent in Ms. Livingston's class!'

"He is playing basketball and is in his senior year now. I just could not believe it. It



makes me glad that I have been able to be around and help them out."

Bynum emphatically emphasized that she does not know what she would do if she was not a foster grandparent, and did not have all her foster grandchildren around. They help her, too. "When I retired, I

thought to myself, 'Oh,

Lord, I have got to find something to do! This is getting to me just being at home, watching television, and doing the same thing over and over,'" she said.

"Just sitting around at home depressed me. I told my niece I was tired of sitting around the house.

"She looked around and

found this program, and I have been doing it ever since. I love it."

According to Bynum, she works about five hours each weekday, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., stuffing folders with homework while teachers teach; helping with math and reading; coloring, and playing with the children.

Currently, she is a foster grandparent for kindergarteners at Leighton Elementary School.

"They study first, and then we play and do crafts — it is very rewarding to see them learn," she said. "They just soak up knowledge. They are so smart — we even have one little boy who is reading on a thirdgrade level already. I leave when they are about to take a nap, and they will ask me what I am

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going home to do — I tell them I am going home to take my nap, too."

Bynum said the children love it when she gets to play games with them, and they especially love coloring together. But she lets the children know she does have limits.

"I am not going on the swings or slide at recess," she said with a laugh. "And the one thing I told them I cannot do is get down on the floor to play, because I will not get back up. I told them I would be down there rolling around on the floor all night.

"It made them laugh, and they told me they would not leave me down there — they said they would help me up."

Although they may not be helping Bynum up from the floor, her foster grandchildren and their families have helped her through some difficult times.

When she had a triple bypass and had to go to rehab, a lot of the children came to visit. Anytime she misses a day, they all ask their teacher to check in and make sure that she is OK. After a recent eye surgery, they even made her a card and signed their names.

"Some of their parents and guardians even check in on me sometimes," she said. "They want to know how I think their children are, and how they are doing in school, but they also make sure that I am doing alright. They tell me their children talk about me all the time, and I tell them I love their babies like they are mine. I make sure they know that."

According to Calandra Fuqua, whose daughter, Justaxia Stober, was one of Bynum's foster grandchildren last year, Bynum blessed their lives in a special way.

"Granny Dot was a God-sent angel," Fuqua said. "We lost my mom, Justaxia's grandmother, last year in February. Granny Dot helped to bridge that gap. Justaxia's six and in the first grade now, but she speaks of Granny Dot every day, and she loves to see her."

Bynum remembers that Justaxia called her "Grandmother" instead of Granny Dot. She is one of the children who runs up to give her hugs now that she is not in the class Bynum works with she even told Bynum she wanted to come back to kindergarten and spend time with her.

For Bynum, the chance to make a life-long impact is the best part of what she does, and she hopes that the children she works with all feel inspired and empowered to grow up and make something of themselves.

But for now, she enjoys doing what she can to fulfill her grandparent role by spoiling them as much as she can.

"For Christmas, I gave them each a book, a package of number cards, some candy canes and M&Ms," she said. "The girls got scrunchies for their hair, and the boys each got a yo-yo."

She affirmed that her foster grandchildren spoil her, too, with sweet gifts straight from the heart.

"You ought to see my fridge," she exclaimed. "I have all their artwork from when they draw me pictures or give a project to me. I have pictures all over my wall, too. I look at them and remember them all so little and wonder about where they are now."

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by ALYSSA SUTHERLAND Photos by DAN BUSEY

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Owner: John Cartwright

Cup *of* **Choice:** House Special: This is a latte with honey, vanilla, and cinnamon that is smooth and flavorful.

Turbo Coffee • 312 E. Tennessee St., Florence

Hours: 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday – Friday; 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday

Owner: Reese Shirey

Cup of Choice: Cinnamon Toast Crunch Latte: The inspiration is the cereal – we try to emulate that with a few lattes. This one has maple syrup with oatmilk and cinnamon to replicate that Cinnamon Toast Crunch flavor.



All the Best • 128 E. Tennessee St., Florence

Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday – Friday; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday

Owner: Kristy Bevis

Cup of **Choice:** Domestique Coffee out of Birmingham: We serve a drip coffee and cold brew, so it is good grab and go coffee. The blend is a medium roast, single origin Bolivian roast. It is not too strong and not to acidic. It has nutty, chocolaty flavors.





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Owners: UNA Dining

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Dandelion & Co. • 108 E. Tuscaloosa St., Florence

Hours: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday - Friday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday & Sunday Owners: Kristin O'Kain and Michael Johnson

Cup of **Choice:** Purple Haze: It is a latte, so it is espresso based and available hot or iced. It features a combo of lavender and white mocha.







The Coffee Place 1562 Florence Blvd., Florence; 710 E 6th St., Suite B, Muscle Shoals

Hours: 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Wednesday; 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday-Friday; 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday

Owner: Morgan Ouellette

Cup *of* **Choice:** Iced mocha with peanut butter cold foam: It is a cold treat with a salty, sweet combination.

Sugarbakers • 144 N. Wood Ave., Florence

Hours: 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday – Friday; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday Owners: Don Czermak

Cup of **Choice:** Salted Caramel Latte: It is sweet without being too sweet with a touch of salt to mellow the sweetness.







The Rock 310 • 310 N. Montgomery Ave., Sheffield

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Owner: Laquita Logan

Cup of **Choice:** White Chocolate Latte: It is very good, nice, and mellow – no bitter taste, just a smooth coffee. We also feature a seasonal monthly special, and that is always popular. Currently, it is the Love Me Not frappe: it is made with chocolate chip cookie dough flavoring, mini chocolate chips, drizzled with strawberry syrup, and topped with sweetheart candies.





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PANDEMIC delays runner's goal by a year

by ALYSSA SUTHERLAND

After her first marathon, Sandy Lynch set a goal to run 50 marathons by her 50th year — a feat she almost completed before the pandemic temporarily stalled her plans.

"50 by 50 was my goal from the very start," she said. "Then COVID hit and all of the races my 50th year were canceled, so I finished my 51st year instead."

Lynch said that after her first marathon, she became addicted to the way she felt after she completed the race.

"I thought to myself, 'I just did that; I just ran a marathon,'" she said. "I was so excited, and from then on, I decided I wanted to keep doing more."

According to Lynch, her foray into the world of running did not begin until she attended college at the University of North Alabama in 1988 and registered for a walk-jogrun class. She said she enjoyed it immediately, and stuck with it until one day, during a semester in which she was in ROTC, the instructors who were taking a longer run asked her to go with them.

"At that time, I only had white Keds," she said. "I thought my life was going to end right then and there, but I also loved it so much that I started training and running a lot more."

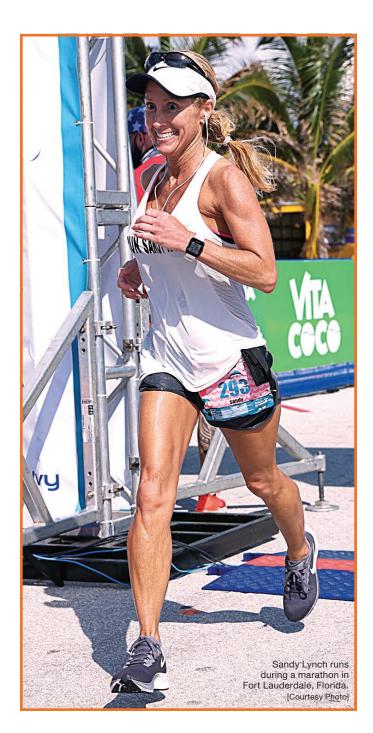
Despite beginning her running career during college, Lynch said it was later that she began running marathons her first was the Saint Jude Memphis Marathon in December 2007. From there, she said she developed the marathon mindset, which she believes is about 80% to 90% of completing a marathon.

"You absolutely have to have the mindset, because running 26.2 miles is not something you can wake up and decide you're going to complete today, on a whim," Lynch said.

"It must be broken down into smaller pieces, or you will get totally overwhelmed. Once I set my mind to do it, I am going to do it even if I have to crawl across that finish line."

Lynch said that most runners "hit the wall" at some point during every race. For her, the wall comes close to mile 17 in every race she runs.

"A lot of people hit the wall somewhere between 10 and 20 miles," she said. "I must remind myself why I am doing it that I cannot quit and I have put too much time, effort and training into this moment. It takes a lot of determination and



perseverance to do this."

The race that sticks out to Lynch as requiring the most perseverance is the Boston Marathon, which she has completed eight times. On one of those occasions, she ran the race despite an injury she had been struggling with, but she did not do it alone.

"Two of my friends were injured as well, and all of us had been going to physical therapy," she remembered. "I was determined to get it done. We all decided to run the race together, and we did — we started and finished together."

According to Lynch, although it was physically the most difficult race she has run, it was also fun because she ran it with her friends. Additionally, the Boston Marathon is one of her favorites to complete, partially because of the qualification required to run it.

"The camaraderie with the other 40,000 runners is incredible," she said. "You have to qualify to run in this one with a previous race time, so not just anyone can go out and say, 'Hey, I'm going to do this," she said.

"It is very rewarding to

know that everyone who is running the race has worked just as hard as you have to get there."

But even though the Boston Marathon is Lynch's favorite, the New York City Marathon is the one she remembers as being the most fun. She said the atmosphere of the city was intoxicating, as were the festivities at the



Sandy Lynch poses with her various medals from marathons. [Courtesy Photo]

start and finish lines. She also happened to run her fastest marathon in New York City — she completed 26.2 miles in three hours and 12 minutes.

Although she does not currently have another large-scale marathon goal set, Lynch does intend to continue running at least one marathon per year. She generally runs at least 40 miles per week on her own. She does not intend to give it up, because for her, running is about a lot more than the race.

"I love the way running makes me feel," she said. "It is such a great time to clear my head, think about any issues I am having, and work things out. I talk to God, and I pray. And other than the mental part, it lets me get away with eating so many sweets."



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How to improve the flavor profile of grilled foods

Many people insist grilling has no peers when it comes to cooking methods. Part of the allure of grilling is undoubtedly the chance to spend time outdoors in warm weather, which is when many people do the bulk of their cooking over an open flame. But grilling also produces unique flavors that simply can't be replicated.

It might be impossible to match the flavor of foods cooked over an open flame, but that doesn't mean those flavors can't be augmented. Grillmasters can try these strategies to improve the flavor profile of their favorite grilled dishes.

• Add some wood. Wood is often utilized to add some extra flavor when smoking foods, but it also can add flavor when grilling in a more traditional way. Wood chips can be soaked in water or even wine or beer so they don't burn so quickly that the flavor gains are negligible. Wood chunks or logs will burn slower than chips, so there's no need to soak them. Wood imparts a unique flavor to grilled foods, making meals even more delicious.

• Apply a dry rub to the food. Dry rubs are made from dry ingredients like herbs and spices. Dry rubs don't penetrate the meat too deeply, which means they don't need much time to add flavor. That's ideal

for people who decide to grill at the last minute and want to add flavor even if they don't have the time to marinate their meat.

• Bring meat to room temperature prior to putting it on the grill. Meat that goes directly from the refrigerator to the grill is likely to cook unevenly, which can affect the overall flavor of the meal. But this issue is easily overcome by taking the meat out of the fridge about 20 to 30 minutes before putting it on the grill. Doing so lets the meat reach room temperature and increases the likelihood it will cook evenly.

 Season your vegetables, too. Meat and other proteins might garner the bulk of the grilling attention, but vegetables are worthy additions to any grill grate. Grilled vegetables can be made even more flavorful with some light seasoning with a little kosher salt and/ or black pepper before placing them on the grill. As the vegetables cook, they will absorb the salt, which adds to their flavor profile. Dried herbs also can be used to season grilled vegetables for even more flavor. Grilled foods are incredibly flavorful. That flavor profile can be even better when grillmasters employ a few simple techniques.

Enjoy stuffed burgers this barbecue season

Barbecue season is here. People will be bonding in the backyard over hamburgers and hot dogs. Backyard barbecue season begins in spring and continues through summer and, where the weather allows, into fall. Barbecues are a perfect summertime soiree, as they're usually laid back affairs and make use of the pleasant weather.

Giving your party what they want is good hosting, but you can still try your hand at a little experimentation when serving burgers at your next backyard barbecue.

The following recipe for "Herb Cheese-Stuffed Garlic Burgers" from Andrew Schloss' and David Joachim's "Mastering the Grill" provides the best of both worlds.

Herb Cheese-Stuffed Garlic Burgers makes 6 servings

- 2 pounds ground beef chuck, 85% lean
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons herbed garlic cream cheese, such as Boursin
- 6 hamburger buns, split Oil for coating grill grate

THE GRILL

Gas: Direct heat, medium-high 425 F to 450 F; clean, oiled grate

Charcoal: Direct heat, light ash; 12-by-12-inch charcoal bed (about 3 dozen coals); clean, oiled grate on lowest setting

Wood: Direct heat, light ash; 12-by-12-inch bed, 3 to 4 inches deep; clean, oiled grate set 2 inches above the fire

1. Heat the grill as directed.

2. Using your hands, mix the beef, garlic, salt, and pepper in a bowl until well blended; do not overmix. Using a light touch, form into 12 patties no more than 1/2-inch thick.

3. Put a portion (about 1 1/2 teaspoons) of cream cheese in the center of each of the 6 patties; top with the remaining patties and press together, taking care to seal the edges well. Refrigerate the burgers until the grill is ready.

4. Brush the grill grate and coat it with oil. Put the burgers on the grill, cover and cook for 9 minutes, flipping after 5 minutes, for mediumdone (150 F, slightly pink). Add a minute per side for well-done (160 F).

5. To toast the buns, put them cut-sides down directly over the fire for the last minute of cooking.

6. If serving the burgers directly from the grill, serve on the buns. If the burgers will sit, even for a few minutes, keep the buns and burgers separate until just before eating.

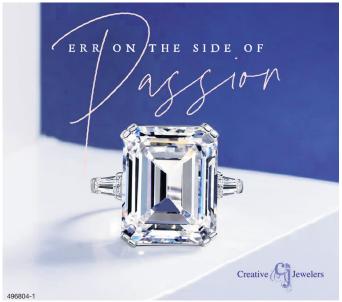




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Tacos with Grilled Steak and Veggies prep time: 5 minutes cook time: 14 minutes serves 6

- 2 10.5-oz. packages of Mann's Southwest Chipotle Nourish Bowl
- 4 beef flat iron steaks (about 7 ounces each) Juice of 2 limes

Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste

- package whole wheat tortillas
- 1 avocado, sliced

Chipotle Mayonnaise

1/2 cup mayonnaise Juice of 1/2 lime 1 to 2 teaspoons adobo sauce (the sauce that canned chipotle peppers are packed in)

Directions:

1. Prepare the Nourish Bowl according to package instructions. Squeeze lime juice over the vegetables and season with a bit of salt and pepper. Toss to combine then set aside.

2. Season steaks with salt and pepper. Place on grill and cook with the lid closed for 10 to 14 minutes over medium-heat for medium to medium-rare doneness, turning occasionally. Allow to rest off the grill for 5 minutes, then carve into slices

3. To make the mayonnaise, place all ingredients into a small mixing bowl and stir well to combine.

4. Place tortillas on grill and cook until warm and slightly charred.

5. To assemble the tacos, place a couple slices of grilled steak on the bottom. Add vegetables and top with a slice of avocado. Drizzle the top with chipotle mayonnaise.

Tips for better BREAKFAST

Breakfast long has been touted as the most important meal of the day. After a good night's rest, breakfast refuels the body and energizes it for the day ahead.

Hectic mornings compel many people to skip breakfast. That's especially so for parents who are pulled in multiple directions each morning. There are many ways to streamline breakfast and still get to school or work on time. The following are some tips to save time and enjoy healthy homemade breakfasts each morning.

• Put your slow cooker to work. Slow cookers are not just for dinner. Use them to cook a variety of breakfast foods, including oatmeal, eggs or grits. Simply mix up your ingredients, set on low and let the breakfast cook itself overnight.

• Mix up your macros. Macronutrient is the scientific term for proteins, fats and carbohydrates. Nutritionists suggest mixing macronutrients in meals to get the most benefits from well-rounded meals. Aim for 20 grams of protein, 15 to 20 grams of fat and about 50 grams of carbs, with at least five grams of fiber.



• Develop a custom granola. Oats, nuts, dried fruits ... mix it all up to make a signature granola blend. It's easy to eat dry or with milk and make a quick, healthy breakfast.

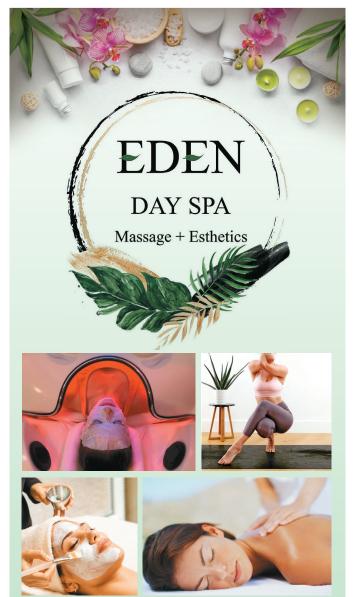
• Embrace the nocook oatmeal method. Master the art of making overnight oats, which don't require any cooking. Simply layer oats, Greek yogurt, applesauce (or other fruit purees), cinnamon, and almond milk in a mason jar. Place it in the refrigerator overnight. The oats will get tender without cooking and the meal will be ready in the morning.

• Build a smoothie. Do prep work for healthy vegetable- and fruit-rich smoothies by chopping and preparing all ingredients the night before. Simply blend with protein powder or oats in the morning with ice.

• Consider breakfast burritos. Pre-scramble eggs with diced peppers and onions and store in containers in the refrigerator. In the morning, place the mixture onto a tortilla, top with cheese and heat in a skillet or in the microwave.

Even individuals whose mornings are especially hectic can find ways to enjoy a healthy breakfast every day.





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Prepare meals together as a family

Families that want to spend more time together can find a fun way to do just that by working together on something they already do each day. Cooking meals together as a family can add some fun to a task that's already a part of many families' daily routines.

Children can learn quite a bit from cooking, as preparing recipes can reinforce school lessons. Family cooking nights also pose a great opportunity to create lasting memories. Various sources indicate that children are more likely to remember experiences from their youth rather than the presents they receive. Some of those cherished experiences can be enjoyed in the kitchen alongside mom and dad.

In addition to creating lasting, fun memories, cooking together as a family may make children less likely to complain about foods since they have lent a hand in their creation. Furthermore, cooking together fosters a special feeling of unity and may establish a nopressure, safe space for conversation.

With so many benefits, families may be wondering how they can foster and improve time spent together in the kitchen. Here are some ways to do so.

• Organize ageappropriate tasks. Little hands can only handle so much. A toddler can pour and stir ingredients, while an older child or teenager may be be ready to chop ingredients or sauté at the stove.

• Expect some mess. Parents and other adults should go into any meal creation process with children expecting things to get a tad messy. It may be possible to minimize messes by setting up workstations covered by plastic tablecloths which can be folded up and shaken into the trash. Encourage children to sit down so they don't inadvertently spread any messes to another part of the house.



• Begin with simple recipes. An initial foray into family cooking should involve a recipe that's easy to prepare and perhaps doesn't require too many ingredients. Build on each success after that, growing bolder with each subsequent recipe.

• Make it a multigenerational experience. For many families, Sunday was the opportunity to gather at grandma's house after religious worship or to check in and spend time together. Rekindle this tradition by hosting weekly or monthly family meals where everyone gets to take part in bringing the meal to the table. This is an ideal opportunity for grandparents to pass down family recipes and regale grandchildren with funny stories and memories.

• Plan for things to take a little extra time. Preparation time is likely to take a bit longer when multiple hands are stirring the pot. Families can slow down and employ some patience. Adults should resist the urge to take over when children may not be doing things the right way. If meals need to be on the table at certain times, start an hour or two earlier than you otherwise would to account for some confusion and even a potential restart.

• Eliminate as many distractions as possible. The kitchen may be the heart of the home, but it can be dangerous to be around knives and other cooking utensils and instruments. Distractions like televisions or phones can draw attention away and potentially lead to injuries from pots boiling over or children getting too close to hot flames.





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2005 SHERRY FOWLER

Fowler was chosen for her work with the North Alabama Head Injury Foundation. Her daughter, Mary Darlene, sustained a debilitating head injury in 1986 when she was struck by an intoxicated driver. Fowler was advised to place her daughter in a nursing facility. She refused. She received the training necessary to care for her 19-year-old daughter at home. Fowler continued working with the foundation after her daughter's death in 2005.

2006 NATALIE GORDON

Gordon was 24 years old when she battled cancer and underwent a life-saving surgery: the removal of her left arm and shoulder. She was mother to a 7-monthold and a 3-year-old and Gordon and said she was not prepared to lose parts of her body. More importantly, however, she said she was not prepared for her children to lose their mother. She said the surgery was traumatic and depressing, but Gordon adjusted and became an inspiration to others. She vowed not to let her loss stop her.



2007 KAY PARKER

Parker and a friend, Sharon Scogin, developed the idea for The Healing Place after Parker saw a television report about a grief support center in Portland. She believed a similar center was greatly needed in the Shoals. The Healing Place became a haven where adults and children learn to work through their grief after a loved one's death. Parker's goal was to give people a place to be heard and to learn healing thoughts, including learning how to cherish memories and keep them from being debilitating.



2008 BETTY BURDINE

Burdine has spent her life helping people, first as a nurse, then as coordinator of the Lifewise Seniors program for Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital in Florence. She didn't stop there, but volunteered in several community endeavors. She helped raise money for the American Heart Association and was instrumental in procuring the monument for Lillian Diebert in Diebert Park in Florence. Burdine's caring nature extended to Lillian Diebert, who she would look in on before Diebert's death in 2011.





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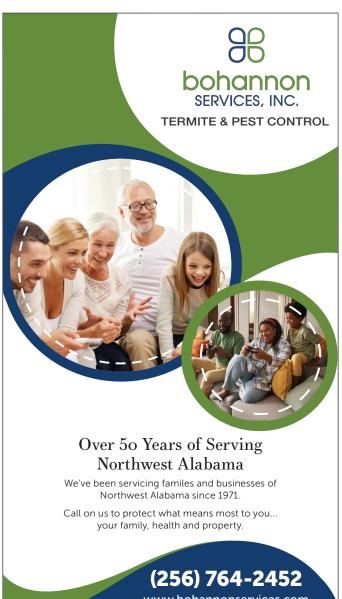




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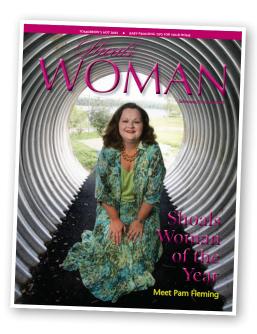


2009 FELICE GREEN

Green retired from the University of North Alabama in 2003 but didn't sit still. She has a special love for children and will don costumes to read to children at various outlets across the Shoals. Green also expressed her love of art and dance and became a member of the Poza Dance Troupe while remaining active in Delta Sigma Theta sorority, which she helped charter at UNA. She is a known organizer of events during the W.C. Handy Music Festival including the ABCs of Blues & Jazz. She is a volunteer with the Salvation Army and St. Vincent De Paul Society at Our Lady of the Shoals Catholic Church in Tuscumbia.

2010 PAM FLEMING

Fleming's outgoing personality helped her carry on a tradition she first learned from her parents: help people in need. She was honored for her work in helping to create the boundless playground at Riverfront Park in Sheffield. The playground is play-friendly to any child, regardless of his or her abilities, with a sandbox that wheelchair-bound children can roll up to and play in. Fleming also was instrumental in getting a new home for the Ealy family when their daughter, Shanteki, was diagnosed with leukemia and was told she could not return to her home because of its condition.

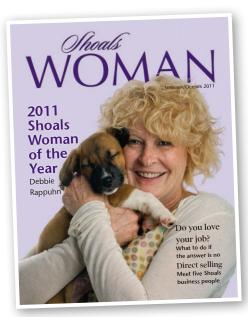


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2011 DEBBIE RAPPUHN

Rappuhn took her daughter to the Florence-Lauderdale Animal Shelter for a school project but soon returned to offer her services as a volunteer. She painted and scrubbed and initiated improvements that included a cat habitat room, a puppy room and a laundry room with a sink for bathing animals. She was appalled at the number of animals euthanized and dedicated countless days to finding homes for those unwanted pets – event if it meant sending them to other shelters and homes across the country.



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2012 ELBA BARNES

Barnes needed to care for her ailing parents and moved from Birmingham to Florence to be near them. She soon realized there was an important gap in available services in the area: there was no place where adults like her parents could go for social interaction, exercise and art activities. Such a place would also offer respite for caregivers. Barnes brought an idea for an adult day care to Westminster Presbyterian Church. In July 2009, Westminster Interfaith Caring Place opened, initially as a Sunday-only program. By November, it was offering a mid-week break so caregivers could go Christmas shopping. Eventually the nonprofit center would operate Monday through Friday.

2013 SARAH JENNIFER THOMPSON

After Thompson's sister, Sidney, died in January 2006, Thompson honored her sister's memory and founded Sidney's Safe! Foundation. It was a place where other women could learn how to stand strong against domestic abuse and how to seek recovery from addiction. The foundation has branched out to help children, too. It is an outreach that provides hundreds of bags of food a week to local schoolchildren who otherwise would go hungry.





2014 SUSIE MARTIN

Susie Martin was only required to spend four hours a month with the girl who became her "little" at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Shoals, but she and 13-year-old Sabrina Carles are together every weekend, all weekend. The program allows Sabrina to be Martin's Little until she is 15, but Martin jokes she will keep her until Sabrina gets married.



2015 ANGIE HAMILTON

Angie Hamilton presented the idea for a one-stop center that could streamline help for victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse and physical abuse, and elder abuse – cases she saw regularly as an assistant district attorney in Lauderdale County. The idea was immediately well received, and One Place of the Shoals was born.

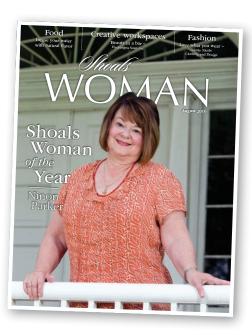






2016 NINON PARKER

Ninon Parker grew up on the front lines of celebrating the history of the Shoals, including as a member of Ivy Green's first cast of "The Miracle Worker" – the stage play that celebrates the awakening of Helen Keller to the world around her. Parker's community involvement is one of historical preservation and business promotion that keeps the Shoals a vital place that recognizes its important past, as well as its exciting future.





2017 MERCY WINTERS

A member of the Salvation Army Women's auxiliary, Mercy Winters was instrumental in bringing the successful Empty Bowl Luncheon to the Shoals as a fundraiser for the Salvation Army each year. She is hands-on in her volunteer work, not only in helping to plan the luncheon each year, but leading her "clay mates" group to meet at her and her husband's ceramic business to make the bowls that are featured at the luncheon. She has even gotten her neighborhood involved in community charity work by organizing an Iron Bowl event that benefits a different charity each year.



2018 JESSICA DAVENPORT

Jessica Davenport's children, Kruz and Paizlee, were born with Schimke Immuno-Osseous Dysplasia, or SIOD. In simple, dire terms, the children have a rare form of dwarfism that brings with it renal failure and a weakened immune system. It's also fatal, with a life expectancy of 9 to 11 years. Instead of falling apart, Davenport founded Kruzn for a Kure Foundation and has raised the \$1 million needed to get the attention of wealthy philanthropists who can raise the \$6 million needed to kick researchers into finding a cure for the rare disease. In the 12 months since Davenport received the Shoals Woman of the Year award, she and her husband Kyle have moved to California where Kruz has not only received his mother's stem cells, but one of her kidneys as well. Paizlee is being prepped to receive the same from her father. Keep abreast on these remarkable children and their parents through Jessica Davenport's Facebook page or the Kruzn for a Kure Foundation Facebook page.





2019 GINGER WILLINGHAM

Ginger Willlingham has always had a heart for service, and in 2014 learned there were children in the community whose only opportunities to eat were at school. After much prayer and discussion, she was inspired to establish Isaiah's Call, named for Isaiah 58 in the Bible. She and a bevy of volunteers pack food bags with enough food for the children and their families to have during the weekend. They started with seven families at one school and now serve more than 200 families at schools in Colbert and Lauderdale counties, as well as Safeplace, a local shelter for women and men and their children who are fleeing domestic violence.





2020 MARY DAY SMITH

Mary Day Smith was on active duty for the Alabama National Guard on Helton Drive when fellow Korean War veteran Ralph Dula visited her there and became her mentor. He recruited her to join the American Legion. When Smith joined the Legion there were a lot of guys, but slowly she worked her way up and became the first female commander for this area. Smith became heavily involved with programs all over north Alabama. "When there's a crisis in your life, its easy to dream about a rescue that immediately rushes to your side, determined to clear the crisis and put you and your family back into a good place" and that is what Smith has a hand in doing. She doesn't seek thanks for anything but she claims that she sees the thanks come to her in unexpected places. Smith believes in the Legion slogan "Veterans Still Serving."

2021 PAM CLEPPER STUMPE

When you look up the word selfless in the dictionary, there very likely may be a photo of Pam Clepper Stumpe next to the definition. The consensus opinion of her is that when she gives of herself, all worries can be thrown out the window. When she and her husband relocated to the Shoals, the couple soon became active in the community, including the Colbert County Sheriff's FAME Girls Ranch. Clepper's work with the ranch has varied over the years. She and the "posse" went through house parent training so they could spend the night at the ranch and give those house parents already at the ranch some much-needed time off. She also organized the group to bring meals to the ranch to help the house parents. Some of those within her posse were teachers, so they chipped in and helped to tutor the girls. By the fall, Pam's Posse was 25 members strong, and they helped to kick off the inaugural FAME Ranch Round-Up, which has gone on to become a huge event for the ranch. So why does she go that extra mile? "I just enjoy seeing someone succeed and find within themselves all the good that they are and what they can be," she said. "If I can help just a little bit in helping them get there, then that just brings joy. I love to lift people up and make them see what they can do better. Or what's inside them that they don't even know they have."







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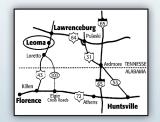
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