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MARCH 2023

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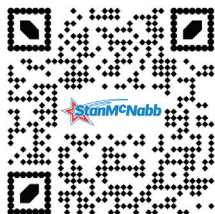
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The women of Tullahoma

The foundation of centuries and centuries

THE TEST of history has proven that women have been foundational, like a sturdy rock that can withstand a storm. They overcame obstacles century after century, constantly adapting to the needs of the world while — for many years — receiving little to no recognition. Eventually, they protested and made political maneuvers to earn the right to vote and catch up to other American citizens. They were not the first or last group of people to have to fight for rights, but they won nevertheless.

When I think of women, I think of bravery, determination, compassion, comfort, and strength. I could list a million different words to describe the power women have and deserve, but they all mean the same thing: a role model.

Because of women, we have many things that make our lives better.

Because of them, we have experienced the first fire escapes, bullet-proof fiber, word processing technology, and the first computer algorithm, to name a few.

Another thing that has made my life better is the opportunity to create this magazine in your hands. Women write our stories, conduct our interviews, take our photos, edit our words, proof our words, design our pages, and manage the complex process of getting an idea on paper and mailed to your home. If you're like me, this is a blessing that I never knew I needed but am forever indebted for having.

This issue celebrates women in our community. We are thankful and appreciate everything you do to make our lives better, our homes safer, and our world brighter.

Thank you. GN


Wesley Bryant,
MANAGING EDITOR

From our readers



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CHAPTER 1 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local positive news you may have missed.

- 14** Martin named director at Partners for Healing
- 18** Cannon makes connections at Motlow
- 22** Deanna Thomas teaches 'love thy neighbor'

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◀ Emilie Martin



▲ Emilie Martin

Martin named director at Partners for Healing

Emilie Martin takes on the new position with new hopes.

By Kali Bates // Photography by Summer Breeze

HELPING OTHERS has always been the ultimate goal for Emilie Martin. As a child, she was drawn to her aunt, an emergency room doctor. She spent time watching medical videos knowing that someday she wanted to be right in the middle of the medical field, helping those in need. While her journey has led her in many different directions, it has also taught her the importance of the destination. As legendary basketball player Jamal Jackson said, “Sometimes it’s more about the journey than the destination.”

HER AUNT INFLUENCED MARTIN’S LOVE OF MEDICINE.

“I wanted to be a doctor,” she said. “My aunt is an emergency room doctor. It’s a fascination for me. I like medicine and just the human body in general. I knew I didn’t want to do something where it was black and white all day.”

Working toward her degree in biology at East Tennessee State University, Martin said she shadowed in various medical situations that left her questioning her journey of becoming a doctor. Unsure of her destination, she interned at Partners for Healing in Tullahoma. A light bulb of sorts went off for Martin. It was a light that showed an area of medicine that Martin began to feel passionate about — public health.

“I saw a population that fell between the cracks,” she explained. “I saw a population with no insurance and nothing to turn to. I saw people my age and their

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“My grandmother and mother are strong women who have blazed a trail for me. I have never felt limited in what I could do, but it’s because I was watching these women ahead of me.”

-Emilie Martin



parents. It was a big eye-opener and left me saying there was a little more to this. This is where I began to dive into public health.”

While her path changed somewhat, her passion for medicine and helping others grew. She would take that passion and leap into pursuing a master’s degree in public health while continuing to work in the medical field.

She would find herself again back at Partner’s to work on a project for her master’s degree. This time, she began to understand more and more that Partners was her destination.

“I’m super passionate about this population,” said Martin. “There’s so much more Partners for Healing can do. The clinic is in a steady place and has been around for a long time. But there are great things coming on the horizon that I think will be great for our future.”

One thing on the horizon is Martin becoming the new director for Partners for Healing. While not ex-

pected, Martin said taking the position was a major achievement in a journey that she has been pursuing since childhood.

Taking the position of director at just 24 years old, Martin knows that she has begun a new journey that will challenge her. However, she feels she has been raised for this moment and plans to show her staff, patients, and community how ready she is.

“This is where my heart is,” said Martin. “It’s gonna be tough, and it’s going to be hard, and it’s going to challenge me, but I do not doubt that I can do it. The women in my life are the reason I’m here. My grandmother and mother are strong women who have blazed a trail for me. I have never felt limited in what I could do, but it’s because I was watching these women ahead of me. I watched them be proud and successful and just take on the world. I hope to emulate them as I follow in their footsteps.” **GN**

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◀
Brenda
Cannon

Cannon makes connections at Motlow

Brenda Cannon, the executive director of community relations, provides opportunities.

By Kali Bates // Photo submitted by Brenda Cannon

IMPECTFUL, IMPECCABLE, and unforgettable. These three words describe the multi-faceted trailblazer we all know as Brenda Cannon. Since childhood, Cannon has been destined for greatness. She was destined to showcase her talent for enriching those around her with words, songs, and knowledge.

A Franklin County native, Cannon grew up looking to pursue a career in the arts.

“I had dreams of singing and acting as a child,” she said. “I left Winchester, and my goal was to be some great actor or actress. I

knew I wanted to do something in speech because I loved public speaking. However, when I got to [Tennessee State University], I realized that everybody in that division was good, and I wasn’t half as good as I thought. College puts a different twist on everything for you; it puts everyone on a level playing field.”

But that realization would only make Cannon more determined to find a place where she could showcase her strengths.

“I knew I had those skills and decided to package them and transfer them out of the theater into an area where I could

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“When I think about the things that have happened in my life and the people who have come into my life, I pray that I have been as kind, influential, and impactful in other people’s lives as some people have been in my life.”

-Brenda Cannon

thrive. If you swim upstream with your talents and skills, you can have a successful life and career. I harnessed all those things and shifted to communications, where I thrived. Still to this day, I love it.”

Her journey would take her to Motlow College, where she has worked for over 30 years. Currently serving as the executive director of community relations, Cannon said her job is a dream come true.

“It’s been like a dream because this was always my goal,” said Cannon. “Working in public relations was my professional goal. I love the connections, the people, and the opportunities it provides. I have the opportunity to interface with people on every level.”

She added that she is grateful for support from her peers and the connections she has made with college students.

“It’s amazing the people you see, and they tell you about how you have helped them. Parents have also told me how I have impacted their child’s life. While I may not remember every encounter or instance, knowing that I helped brings me joy. I know I was doing what I was supposed to while doing it.”

She also credits her mother, Mildred Cannon, and grandmother, Mary Blackwell, for who she is today.

“My mother was my role model,” said Cannon. “I grew up in a house of women. I lived with my mother and my grandmother. Those women taught us to be women. They were not formally educated or had college degrees, but they made sure all of us did. They got up every day going to jobs that paid minimum wage so we wouldn’t have to do that. They taught us to love ourselves, our families, and God.”

With the hope to always be impactful to those she encounters, Cannon said service is the price we all pay for the gift of life.

“When I think about the things that have happened in my life and the people who have come into my life, I pray that I have been as kind, influential, and impactful in other people’s lives as some people have been in my life,” she said. “Something that I believe and use often is that service is the rent we pay for the gift of life. We can’t pay for life even if we have billions of dollars. But I get up every day, serving, hoping to earn the blessings I have been given in this life.” **GN**



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◀ Julia Ann Hensley,
Kelly Orr,
Deanna Thomas,
Toby Guinn

Deanna Thomas teaches 'love thy neighbor'

Tullahoma teacher leaves a lasting impact.

By Kali Bates // Photos submitted by Kelly Orr

IF YOU ever want to see what sunshine looks like when encased in human form, look no further than Tullahoma resident Deanna Thomas. Her smile warms everyone who receives it, and her bubbly personality and kind words will hit you at your very core. It will remind you that there are good people in this world, and Thomas is at the top of the list.

She seeks no recognition of reward for her actions but simply to know that she has left those she has come in contact with better than she found them. Thomas's love of helping and hopeful personality is something she said comes from her parents.

"They were both children of the depression and blue-collar workers," she said. "Life was difficult at times, but they just chose to be upbeat, and I have followed

their example. My faith is also something that brings me hope and joy. God is a God of second chances. And so I just have joy."

Thomas has moved throughout life as a teacher and substitute coordinator for the Tullahoma City Schools. She has acted as a caregiver for her parents, a mother to three, and a servant in the church. She has worked happily and diligently to spread love and kindness where she finds it lacking.

Thomas's daughter, Kelly Orr, said her mother has always been a stickler for doing the right thing and helping others.

"When I was a brownie in Girl Scouts, I needed to fulfill a badge requirement," explained Orr. "I went to a neighbor's house and swept off the sidewalk. When I finished, she met me at her front door to thank me with cash. I was ecstatic and ran

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BREAKFAST

Queen City Platter - \$10.50

Two fresh eggs cooked to order with toast and your choice of Applewood smoke bacon, Tennessee Pride sausage or grilled ham.

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Egg and Cheese - \$ 7.50 - Egg, Meat and Cheese - \$10.50

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SIDE DISHES

Side of Applewood Smoked Bacon (3) - \$4.00

Side of Tennessee Pride Sausage - \$4.00

Made from scratch Buttermilk Pancakes (3) \$9.00

Fresh Fruit Cup - \$5.50

Toast (choice of white or wheat bread) - \$3.00

Basket of Chips - \$3.00

COLD SANDWICHES

All sandwiches are served with kettle chips and pickle spear on your choice of white or wheat bread.

Aunt ME's Chicken Salad - \$11.50

In-house made creamy, white meat chicken salad with chopped celery, onions, pecans, Granny Smith apples and sliced grapes, blended with Hellmann's mayonnaise, served with leaf lettuce and sliced tomato.

Granddaddy's Pimento Cheese - \$9.00

A generous serving of our family recipe of shredded cheeses, Hellmann's mayonnaise and diced pimentos. For a true Granddaddy experience, try it grilled or with bacon for an additional \$1.50.

Robert's Classic Club Sandwich - \$14.00

The Classic Club on toasted bread with in-house cut honey ham and turkey, crisp bacon, and American cheese dressed with Hellmann's mayonnaise, leaf lettuce and sliced tomato.

Gigi's BLT - \$12.00

Freshly cooked bacon and American Cheese dressed with leaf lettuce, sliced tomato and Hellmann's mayonnaise served on your choice of toasted bread.

1/2 Sandwich and Soup Combination - \$9.00

Any of our cold sandwich options or grilled cheese served with your choice of a cup of our homemade soups.

HOT SANDWICHES

All sandwiches are served with kettle chips and pickle spear on your choice of white or wheat bread.

Our Famous Pot Roast French Dip - \$14.00

Shredded chuck roast slow cooked with peppercornis, seasoning and garlic topped with melted Swiss on a toasted sandwich roll served with a side of au jus.

Trent's Turkey Bacon Ranch - \$13.00

Deli-sliced turkey and bacon with double cheese grilled with the zest of ranch dressing.

Madison's Grilled Cheese - \$9.00

When nothing else will do, a combination of Swiss, American and cheddar cheeses grilled on your choice of bread with a hint of Hellmann's mayonnaise

Add Applewood smoked bacon, ham or avocado to any sandwich - \$3.00

SOUPS & SALADS

Maggie's Cream of Tomato Soup - Cup: \$4.00/\$5.50

The classic comfort food favorite, rich and creamy, wonderful with a grilled cheese!

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J.C.'s Cheesy Potato Soup - Cup: \$4.00/\$5.50

Creamy and smooth, potato based and extra cheesy with hints of bacon, carrot and onion, topped with shredded cheddar cheese, bacon bits, and chives.

French Onion Soup - \$5.50

Hearty and flavorful beef broth with grilled onions poured over a large toasted crouton, topped with melted Swiss cheese.

Nanny Graham's Chicken Salad Plate - \$12.00

A scoop of our in-house made chicken salad made with all white meat chicken salad, celery, onion, Granny Smith apples, grapes and pecans, blended with Hellmann's mayonnaise, served on a bed of lettuce with seasonal fresh fruit.

Caroline's Blackened Chicken Caesar - \$11.50

Grilled Blackened Chicken on a bed of spring mix tossed with in-house made Caesar dressing and fresh croutons.

Mary Grace's Strawberry Poppysed Salad - \$10.50

Spring mix topped with candied almonds, and sliced strawberries. Served with in-house made creamy poppyseed dressing. Top any salad with grilled chicken - \$2.00

KIDS

Pancake Plate - \$5.50

One large Buttermilk pancake served with choice of Applewood smoked bacon or Tennessee Pride sausage.

Egg Plate - \$5.50

One egg cooked to order with choice of Applewood smoked bacon or Tennessee Pride sausage.

Clay's PB & Jelly or PB & Banana - \$6.50

A classic combination of smooth peanut butter and strawberry preserves. The beloved Depression era favorite of smooth peanut butter and freshly sliced banana on white bread. Try it Elvis' way -- grilled!

BEVERAGES

Bottomless Fountain Beverages - \$3.00

Sundrop, RC Cola, Sunkist, 7up, Sweet and Unsweet Tea, Orange Juice, Chocolate Milk

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Orange Juice - \$3.50

Chocolate Milk - \$3.00

SINGLE SERVE BEVERAGES

Served Ice Cold in Longneck Bottles - \$3.00

Sundrop, Stewart's Root Beer, Stewart's Orange Cream Soda, and RC Cola

Sundrop in Ice Cold Cans - \$1.50

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Cherry Sundrop served over our exclusively made Cherry Sundrop Gelato, with chopped cherries topped with fresh whipped cream and a maraschino cherry.

RC Cola Float - \$5.50

Fountain Royal Crown Colas served over vanilla ice cream topped with fresh whipped cream and garnished with a mini chocolate Moon Pie.

Stewart's Root Beer Float - \$5.50

Stewart's Root Beer served over vanilla ice cream topped with fresh whipped cream.

Sunkist Orange Soda Float - \$5.50

Fountain Sunkist Orange soda served over our exclusively made Sunkist Gelato topped with fresh whipped cream and a gummy candy orange slice.

Milkshakes and Malts - \$5.50

All of our milkshakes and malts are made to order by hand. Your choice of chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry blended with whole milk and topped with fresh whipped cream and a maraschino cherry.

Ice Cream Sundaes - \$6.50

Your choice of 2 scoops of chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry ice cream, covered in your choice of chocolate syrup, caramel syrup, strawberry or pineapple puree, topped with fresh whipped cream and a maraschino cherry.

Single Scoop Legacy Creamery Gelato - \$3.50 (Each topping: .50¢)

Single Scoop Ice Cream - \$3.00 (Each topping: .50¢)

Classic Banana Split - \$8.00

One scoop each of chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry ice cream, topped with chocolate sauce, strawberry and pineapple purees, nestled in a fresh banana topped with whipped cream, diced peanuts and a maraschino cherry.

Miss Daisy's Blondie Sundae - \$8.00

Daisy King's beloved Blonde Brownie recipe, a tollhouse base with chocolate chips and pecans served with vanilla ice cream and smothered in caramel sauce.

Sundrop Cake - \$5.50

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*“For me, to make an impact
would be to make a
positive difference.
I think that’s my purpose.”*

-Deanna Thomas



home to show my mom. My mother took that opportunity to teach me the true meaning of ‘help thy neighbor’ and quickly sent me back to return the money. I learned, that day, that an act of kindness does not nor should not need something in return.”

Orr added that she also has learned from her mother the quality of being positive. A quality that she, too, now carries with her.

“For as long as I can remember, my mom has always put others before herself. She’s not only a ‘cup half full’ kind of person, but she lives her life as if her cup runneth over. She is the most positive, thoughtful, and quietly generous individual I know, and I feel beyond blessed not only to have her in my life but to have her as a mother and a role model.”

Thomas said she has also enjoyed the role of a grandmother or “Nan,” as her grandchildren know her. She is also a member of King’s Cross Church. As a member of the church’s welcoming committee, she strives to treat each person that walks through the door with kindness.

“I remember times when I felt invisible,” explained Thomas. “When I would go somewhere, it didn’t seem

to matter if I was there. I don’t want anyone walking through those doors to feel like that. If I can make anybody feel welcome, that’s my aim.”

Long-time friend and church member Cherie Olive said Thomas encompasses her faith through her welcoming nature.

“Deanna is the definition of joy,” she said. “She arrives with a smile and is so warm and welcoming. She is quick to lend a hand to help and doesn’t mind if the job she is asked to do is somewhat unique. She is also gracious when she encounters a bump in the road. You can tell she spends quality time investing in her relationship with God.”

Thomas said she hopes her impact on those she has been blessed to interact with is that of making a positive impact in their lives.

“For me, to make an impact would be to make a positive difference,” she said. “I think that’s my purpose. I think we all need a purpose. People have been good to me, and I want to pass that on. I’m big on being kind and being able to pay it forward. If I can be an example of that, or help my grandchildren do that, then that’s what I’m going to do.” **GN**

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GOOD NEWS

CHAPTER 2 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local people or businesses you need to know about.

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Answering the call to **HELP OTHERS**



▲ Cindy Kinney

Good Samaritan director finds joy in serving the community

By Kali Bates
Photography by Brooke Snyder

THE BIBLICAL passage of Luke 10: 25-37 tells us the parable of the good Samaritan. Jesus shares the story of a Samaritan who passes a man on the road who has been beaten and robbed. Taking pity upon him, the man assists the injured man and ensures his safety and recovery. At no point in the story does Jesus speak about the Samaritan asking for payment or recognition for his deeds. The good Samaritan is satisfied that he has helped someone who needs it. In Jesus telling the story, he instructs us all to go forth and do likewise.

For over 50 years, the Good Samaritan of Tullahoma has followed that biblical parable and worked to help those in need. Formally known as The School Guidance Council, the council was started by a group of caring people concerned for the less fortunate. Chartered in 1985 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, they became a centralized location to assist those in the community in crises.

Today, Cindy Kinney stands at the helm of the organization as the director. Since 2017, she has worked to further the organization's mission of helping and finding new ways to assist those in need.

A CALL OF THE HEART

When she and her husband relocated to Tullahoma, Kinney sought a sign. She wanted to do something positive in the community and sought ways to help. Kinney would become an elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Tullahoma. Then she would become aware of an opening for the director's position at Good Samaritan of Tullahoma. Seeing it as a sign, she interviewed for the job.

"We had one of our monthly meetings at the church, and it was brought to my attention that the director was going to leave, and they were doing a job search. And it hit me, and I said, 'I think I'm going to try this,'" explained Kinney.

That interview led to her being hired for the position of director. Excited with the opportunity to help in a community that she now called home, Kinney knew that the job would offer its challenges.



"I didn't know how much of a challenge it was going to be, but it is what you put into it," she explained. "If you see things that need to be done, then you do it. And then that leads to something else, and then it grows. Every year, there's been a lot of growth for me."

Kinney said most of her staff also started when she took the position. She added that they have helped each other grow individually and as a team.

"My assistant started a month before me, [and] then the thrift store manager was hired," she said. "Our team has grown, and we have an amazing group working with us. We just gel, and it's wonderful."

FRUITS OF LABOR

Having helped hundreds in the area, Kinney said it never gets old knowing that you are helping make someone's life better.

"This past Thanksgiving, we did our annual food boxes and helped St. Barnabas

"Our team has grown, and we have an amazing group working with us. We just gel, and it's wonderful." - Cindy Kinney

“I’m glad to be a woman in this day and age where I can help and do positive things.”

- Cindy Kinney

[Episcopal Church] distribute them,” she explained. “Most of those who received the boxes are food clients of ours. To have them come in and almost in tears when they get a nice box of food for Thanksgiving makes your heart feel so good. We’re so grateful to be able to help them.”

She added that every donation received has significant meaning and could mean changing the life of the person who receives it.

“We are grateful for every kind of donation, whether monetary, food, clothing, or other items,” she said. “These donations reach people who may be experiencing challenging times, and these donations could be

the very thing that helps them get through it. We also work to make relationships throughout the community. I work to be a good steward of what we need for our ministry, but if I have extra, I will share with another agency or food bank that may need it.”

Kinney said she is grateful for the call to be of service through Good Samaritan. She hopes to continue that service through the organization and wherever possible.

“I think God had a plan, and it took me a while to realize what he wanted me to do,” she said. “I’m glad I have been able to impact the community positively. I’m glad to be a woman in this day and age where I can help and do positive things.” GN





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Laken Grizzard's
actions allow her
to lead others.

Louder than words

By Kali Bates
Photography by
Brooke Snyder

LAKEN GRIZZARD is a quiet soul. While she might not be brimming with constant conversation, when she does speak, it is filled with meaning, purpose, and the best of intentions. Her kind and dimpled smile lets you know that Grizzard loves more through action than with words. Her careful intention is visible in all that she does. Her roles as a mother, niece, sister, friend, teacher, soccer coach, and softball player are a testament to just how much of a good human Grizzard is and strives to be.

Raised Right

Purpose, accountability, and punctuality were among the many things that Grizzard said were expected in the household where her grandparents raised her and her brother, Cassius Barnes.

“I grew up in a military household,” she explained. “My grandparents raised us. They instilled in us to do our best and never quit. While it was strict, I think it was what helped us to be successful in athletics. We had that mentality from an early age.”

She also credits her aunt and uncle, Kristen and Billy Barnes, for being motivational in her life and offering continued support.

“My aunt and uncle are big-time motivators for me,” she said. “They have helped and continue to help me with so much. I appreciate all their love and support.”

Sports Then & Now

Throughout her life, Grizzard has been active and excelled in several sports, including track, softball, and soccer. Softball and soccer would be two that would follow her into her adult life and become part of her daily life.



“My grandparents raised us. They instilled in us to do our best and never quit.”

- LAKEN GRIZZARD

Today, Grizzard actively participates in adult league softball. At the top of the list of her favorite sports, she said she loves being a part of a team and staying active.

"I play with a women's travel team and a co-ed softball team," she explained. "I enjoy playing with both. We recently made a big trip to play in what is called the Challenge Cup. You are chosen [from other teams in your] state to compete against [teams from] other states. You could consider it like the Olympics of softball."

When Grizzard is not playing softball, she is helping young women grow in the game of soccer as the assistant coach for the Tullahoma High School (THS) girls' soccer team. Current head coach Richie Chadwick recruited Grizzard. Grizzard, who also played for Chadwick during high school, said it's great to be back on the field and helping young girls compete and succeed.

"I have coached softball, but taking on soccer was something I didn't think I'd ever be approached about," she said. "But I enjoy it. It's great to see players grow in the sport. I can be tough, but I want them to grow as players and competitors. It will help them both in the game and life."

Grizzard added that she is glad to be there for her players on and off the field.

"I think I bring a different side because none of them are usually used to having a female coach," she said. "It's sometimes easier for them to talk to me about things and see another side of coaching. I'm glad I can be there for whatever they need."

THS sophomore player and student Greyson Bolle said Grizzard constantly challenges players to be their best.

"She wants us to be the best players we can be," she said. "She knows we have it in us, even when we don't think we do. She is always rooting for us; even if she's yelling, we know that she loves us and wants us to succeed."

"I just hope they know they can do anything they set their minds to."

- LAKEN GRIZZARD

In the Classroom

Grizzard is also impacting lives in the classroom. She works as an assistant at East Lincoln Elementary. Helping with students placed in RTI (Response to Intervention), Grizzard said she enjoys seeing students grow in their learning.


"It's rewarding to see the excitement on a student's face when learning to read. And to know you were able to help them get to that point is a great feeling," she said.

She added that she looks forward to growing in her career as an educator and seeing where that path takes her.

Grizzard understands the importance of making a positive impact as a mother, coach, and educator. She hopes she is sewing the seeds of positivity and determination in her daughter, her students, and her players.

"I just hope they know they can do anything they set their minds to," she said. "My go-to quote is 'fall down seven times and stand up eight.' It will take work, and you have to want it, but they can do it and have my support and belief in them." **GN**





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HOMMA

JUST OVER 100 years ago, women finally received what other Americans, but not all, already had — the right to vote. Now, we have the opportunity to lift up and celebrate the groundbreaking women around us during Women’s History Month. From teachers, activists, scientists, athletes, doctors, entrepreneurs, and more — women bring with them ambition, intelligence, creativity, and resilience that will be essential for our future. Their presence in the workforce and leadership can also provide chances for other motivated individuals to rise

up into positions they may not otherwise have access to.

We must celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of these incredible women in order to build a better future. It’s important to remember that empowerment is a collective effort that starts with us. Let us use this moment in history as an opportunity to honor women for their strength, bravery, and determination — for without them, the world would be far less vibrant. We can draw strength from one another and continue to make progress toward a better Tullahoma because of these women. **GN**

When a WORD makes all the difference

DR. CATHERINE STEPHENS
ACHIEVES DREAMS THROUGH AN
ORDINARY WORD

*By Kali Bates
Photography by Brooke Snyder*

WORDS ARE just words until life gives them meaning. For Tullahoma City Schools Superintendent Dr. Catherine Stephens, the word “ready” had meant a great deal for the long-time educator. The word’s meaning would set in motion a change for Stephens and her family, along with the opportunity to further share her love of education with the educators and students of Tullahoma.

No matter how tedious school might have seemed, most of us had a favorite teacher during our academic tenure — a teacher that made a difference, sparked a love, or completely changed how we thought about ourselves and our impact on the world around us.

Mr. Leamon was such for Stephens. According to Stephens, the middle school pre-algebra teacher sparked a love of herself and learning that is still burning bright.

“I was at a point where I didn’t see my potential and worth the way he did,” she explained. “He got to know me and evoked an awareness in me that I am smart, capable, and can accomplish anything I put my mind to. I recognized through him that a teacher has an amazing opportunity to change and impact a life for good and permanence. Until then, I didn’t necessarily see my potential and worth, and his interest and teaching style made a difference. I knew then I was going to be a teacher. He knows where I am today, and he knows I am a superintendent. We still keep in touch.”

After graduating from Virginia Tech, she landed a job teaching fifth grade students in Virginia Beach. That first teaching job would bring out something in Stephens that would further prepare her for the journey ahead.



Dr. Catherine Stephens

“The school’s principal, Mr. Oglesby, told me I should be a principal,” said Stephens. “He said that people follow you, and they listen to you. It’s how you communicate, and I see leadership potential.”

Mr. Oglesby’s words would resurface upon moving to Texas with her husband. She would see new meaning and purpose in his words. Her journey would then ready her to take on the role of principal.

“I realized a principal sets the tone and establishes a healthy feeling that permeates the school,” she explained. “If the principal is focused on students, gets to know them, and demonstrates genuine care for them, they feel seen and valued. Additionally, real success happens when the principal loves and nurtures the teachers and staff members so that they feel a crucial part of the team, which continues onto the students.”

As principal, she saw a school’s work in a different light. Her lens and perspective changed moving from the classroom to this role. She enjoyed being out front greeting students every day. She loved going into classrooms and helping both teachers and students. Whether she was aware of it or not, her time as principal was also readying her for her next chapter.

A move to Tennessee found her returning to her teaching roots but in a different way. After teaching at Middle Tennessee State University, she felt the call to return to a school leadership role in primary and secondary education. She served as an assistant principal at Bellwood Elementary, as principal at Northfield Elementary, and opened a brand new school, Scales Elementary, as principal in Murfreesboro City Schools. Following this, she became an assistant superintendent with the Franklin Special School District, overseeing teaching and learning. Soon, she would take the next big step in her journey; becoming a superintendent.

As an assistant superintendent for six years, Stephens heard about a superintendent position opening with Tullahoma City Schools (TCS). Colleague and friend Dr. Dan Lawson was retiring. Completely content with her life and career, Stephens suddenly felt a tug at her soul.

“My heart pulled,” she said. “It was a pull similar to what I had felt when I was [a] principal, [and] similar to what I had felt when I was an assistant principal. But I loved my life and what I was doing, so I ignored the pull and stayed put. A superintendent was named. In September 2019, a change was made, and my heart pulled again. I decided to pray over it.”

Each year, Stephens has a word for the entire year. For 2022, her word has been “joy,” which she loves. These words give meaning and purpose as she navigates each new year. In 2019, her word was “ready.”

“I didn’t like it, but I made a bracelet that spelled out the word trying to embrace it,” she laughed.

In December 2019, Stephens participated in a mock interview at an event for prospective superintendents across the state. She was asked two crucial questions: Why wasn’t she a superintendent already, and did she know about the current open positions across the state?

“I told them I was aware of openings, and there was one place pulling on my heart,” she explained. “At the end of the interview, one of the gentlemen changed everything when he said, ‘Dr. Stephens, I want you to listen to me for a minute,’ and he slowly said, ‘You are ready!’”

In that instant, the unfavorable word she had been given for the year suddenly had a profound meaning — one that would change her life entirely.

“I got into my car and burst into tears,” Stephens said. “I called my husband and told him we had to go to Tul-

“

FROM TEACHER
TO PRINCIPAL
TO SUPERIN-
TENDENT, MY
CLASSROOM
HAS JUST
GROWN.

– Dr. Catherine Stephens

lahoma. This is what I’m supposed to do, and it’s exactly where I’m supposed to be. I went through the process, and now I am here. It has been remarkable.”

Now, as the TCS superintendent, Stephens said she finds joy in immersing herself in every aspect of the district.

“I go to as many events as possible. I love visiting schools routinely and engaging with students, teachers, and staff,” she said. “From teacher to principal to superintendent, my classroom has just grown. If someone asks, I love being in the classroom, being a guest speaker, or reading aloud to students. I truly enjoy engaging with students and teachers; it is a joy.”

Of the impact she has made on those she’s led or taught, Stephens said that while she hopes she has left a lasting impact, the reality is they have genuinely impacted her.

“My assistant will tell you; she knows when I’ve been to a school,” she said. “I walk higher when I return. They are my love. They impact me far greater than I impact them, and that, for me, is a life well lived.” **GN**





Taking on her DREAMS

BOHANNON-IYAMA STRIVES FOR
SUCCESS IN LIFE AND CAREER

By Kali Bates

Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

IT'S NO secret that the medical profession is grueling: long hours, little sleep, rigid hierarchies, and steep learning curves, but Heather Bohannon-Iyama, FNP-C (Family Nurse Practitioner-Certified), knows differently. Taking strength from within and those around her, she knows that diamonds always come from pressure. That phrase has proven true for Bohannon-Iyama, as she owns the local practice, Renew You Wellness and Aesthetics. Through her hard work, determination, and care for her patients, she has shown that achieving your dreams is possible if you stick with them.

Nurturing beginnings

Growing up, Bohannon-Iyama saw firsthand how medicine could change lives. Her mother was a chief example of how nurturing and knowledge could provide the best care.

“My mother worked in home health care as a nurse,” she said. “Seeing her care for her patients is what got me started. She would go above and beyond for her patients. She is also a very nurturing person outside her job, so watching her and being a part of that nurturing has helped me with those I care for.”

Initially, Bohannon-Iyama's path was heading in a different direction; however, she found her way back to medicine and has not looked back since.



Heather Bohannon-Iyama

“

IT HAS BEEN
REWARDING TO
SERVE PEOPLE
THAT NEED
THE CARE AS
OPPOSED TO
PEOPLE WHO
HAVE A LOT OF
RESOURCES AND
PRIVILEGES AT
THEIR HANDS.

- Heather Bohannon-Iyama

“Entering college, I initially was pursuing another major, but my path ended up pursuing a degree in medicine, and I have enjoyed it,” she said.

Since 1994, Bohannon-Iyama has made her way up the ranks in the hospital. For almost two decades, she worked for Southern Hills Hospital in Nashville, earning a name for herself through diligence and strength of knowledge in each area she served.

“I’ve worked in the [emergency room] and was the director of cardiology. I’ve been in a mainstream hospital for years.

A new path and a leap of faith

Practically raising her son at Southern Hills, Bohannon-Iyama had a strong connection with the hospital. However, as much as she loved her job, she felt it was time to take a new path. That new path would find her looking toward Tullahoma and taking on primary care.

“I wanted something different,” she said. “I never really thought I would do primary care because I am a more clinical person. But one day, I knew I needed a change from the

emergency room setting. I was looking for jobs and had seen someone selling a practice. So I gathered some money and bought a practice located in Tullahoma. It was a leap of faith both financially and career-wise, but it was worth it in the end.”

For the past four years, Bohannon-Iyama has been the proud owner of the family practice, Renew You Wellness and Aesthetics. Bohannon-Iyama, an FNP-C, said she and her staff provide a variety of aesthetic solutions, which include Botox, weight loss, B12 lipotropic injections, cosmetic fillers, and personal care.

She hopes to educate locals that you don’t have to venture out of town to find great care.

“A lot of people feel like they have to go to the city to get a certain type of care, but they don’t,” she explained. “You have providers that come to the smaller towns. While we are a primary care office, we also offer aesthetic solutions that patients can take advantage of right here in Tullahoma.”

Bohannon-Iyama added that each day in Tullahoma has been worth the leap of faith she made four years ago.

“I enjoy primary care,” she said. “It has been rewarding to serve people that need the care as opposed to people who have a lot of resources and privileges at their hands. And I think I was able to bring a little different culture. Even though I’m still a smaller practice and a lot may not know I’m here, I’m still making a difference and working to show the people of Tullahoma I am here to help.”

Straightening crowns

As a female who came up through the grueling ranks of the medical field, Bohannon-Iyama wants to lift up other females and show them that they can do hard things, too.

“I want them to know that the possibilities are out there. We have to help and support each other whenever and wherever we can,” she said. **GN**





The Bohannon-Sykes, FNPC
Nurse Practitioner

Serving God by **SERVING OTHERS**

SERNOBIA MCGEE STRIVES TO
HELP IN ALL THAT SHE DOES.

By Kali Bates

Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

THERE ARE times in our lives when things seem dark, the possible seems impossible, and surrender seems the only option. But there is also hope if one looks for the light. Sernobia McGee always looks for the light, and as often as she can, she tries to be the light herself. Many around town know McGee for many different things. McGee is the youngest of seven children, the mother of Alexandria and Ariel, and grandmother to Jeremiah, Jace, JaRiah, and Jr, whom she affectionately calls her “4G Squad.” She is also the director of admissions at Vanderbilt Tullahoma-Harton, an 11-year breast cancer survivor, a talented singer, an ordained minister, a former

city alderman, and a continuous doer of good things. McGee has a heart for many things and tries to do as much as she can for all she loves.

Three dollars and a prayer

Single mothers are among the many things that McGee has a heart for. As a single mother herself, she knows of the struggles they face day in and day out. In that struggle, McGee remembers a dark time when she received hope through God’s grace.

“I remember one day in particular,” she explained. “It was a Wednesday, and I got paid on Friday. I worked in a local factory, earning only \$7.25 an hour while raising two kids. I only had \$3.87 to feed my chil-



Sernobia McGee

dren until payday. I went to Save-A-Lot and bought two boxes of beef-flavored rice, a can of beef stew, a pack of brown gravy mix to make the beef stew thicker, and a bag of brown 'n serve rolls. All of that came to \$3.62. That meal helped us get through until Friday when I got paid. It also became their favorite meal, which they still serve their children. I didn't share that story with them until they were adults. They were my children, and my job was to care for them. It was also that day I asked God to turn my situation around. And if I could, I would find a way to help other single parents."

True to her word, she has worked to share with others the grace she received. McGee has coordinated countless back-to-school supply drives and coat drives for the winter months. She also sponsors children from the schools she attended each year to receive a yearbook.

"It's a big deal in school to receive a yearbook. You never want to see a child just sitting over to the side without a yearbook to be signed by friends," she said.

McGee also founded and created the Facebook group "You've Been Crowned." The group works to encourage, uplift, and empower women through good deeds and kind words. Starting with just a handful of followers, the group now reaches thousands worldwide.

"'You've Been Crowned' is the Facebook group God gave me," she explained. "The vision came during the quarantine. He gave me step-by-step instructions to create the page. Now, I have almost 4000 members [from] all over the world. We just encourage and empower all women. I had no idea how it takes the world by force, but

“

THE BIBLE TELLS
US THAT THE
POWER OF LIFE
OR DEATH LIES
IN OUR TONGUE.
SO WE MUST
SPEAK KINDLY
TO PEOPLE
BECAUSE
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KNOW WHAT
THEY'RE GOING
THROUGH.

– Sernobia McGee

it has resonated with so many women, and it's a blessing to support other women battling things."

A lady of firsts

Whether she realizes it or not, McGee is blazing a trail for women of color in Tullahoma. She is the first African American female ever appointed as a Tullahoma alderman. McGee is the first African Amer-

ican female to serve as chaplain under the ordinance of the Tullahoma Police Department. Ordained in 2001, she also was the first female to get ordained in the Elk River District Association for Missionary Baptist Churches. Her time as an alderman allowed her to further her work in the community, which she said she valued.

"It was so rewarding," said McGee. "There were times it was challenging, but I learned so much. And I've always been a people person, so it gave me the platform to meet people I wouldn't have otherwise met. I enjoyed my time serving as an alderman."

McGee added that serving as an alderman brought out something greater in herself.

"Growing up, I never saw myself working in that capacity," she said. "My dream as a little girl was to be a Solid Gold Dancer and marry Erik Estrada. While serving, I never considered myself a politician. Most politicians advance their platform at the expense of the people; I wanted to advance the people at the expense of the platform."

Just the beginning

McGee is just getting started in her work in the community of Tullahoma. She has many plans for improving and doing good in her hometown. Doing good daily, McGee said that she hopes to leave a positive impact in whatever she does.

"The Bible tells us that the power of life or death lies in our tongue," she said. "So we must speak kindly to people because we never know what they're going through. What you say and how you say it does matter. I want my life to speak of my faith and heart for people." GN






Spread Love

Spoon-licking favorite
has its own day.

By Tina Neeley

MARCH 1 is National Peanut Butter Lover's Day — a day to celebrate the rich, gooey goodness of a pantry staple. What better way to start the day than with a batch of special pancakes? Then, keep up the momentum at lunch with Elvis' favorite midnight snack and an extra pie to share with a friend or neighbor. Don't forget to lick the spoon! 



Peanut Butter Pie

Submitted by Helen Cook

- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 1/2 c. peanut butter
- 3 pkgs. vanilla pudding, 4 oz.
- 1 3/4 c. milk
- 1 baked pie crust or graham cracker crust
- 1 tub of whipped topping

In a large bowl, mix powdered sugar and peanut butter until real fine. Put half of mixture into crust. In a separate bowl, mix vanilla pudding with milk. Pour into crust. Place remainder of peanut butter mixture on top of pudding, holding aside a quarter cup of mixture. Cover pie with whipped topping. Sprinkle remaining peanut butter mixture on top of pie. Keeps well in refrigerator.

Peanut Butter Pancakes

Submitted by Margie Drake

- 1/2 c. peanut butter, smooth
- 1/2 c. light brown corn syrup
- 2 c. pancake mix

In a small mixing bowl, combine peanut butter and corn syrup. Prepare pancake mix in a medium mixing bowl, according to the package's directions. Add peanut butter mixture. Cook according to the package's directions.

Fried Peanut Butter and Banana Sandwich

Submitted by Fannie Thorpe

- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 3/4 c. peanut butter
- 3 T. honey
- 1 1/2 t. + 1 T. ground cinnamon
- 2-3 ripe bananas
- 8 slices white bread
- 1/4 c. sugar

In a frying pan, melt 3 tablespoons of butter. Make sure the butter does not burn. In a small bowl, combine peanut butter, honey, and 1 1/2 teaspoons of cinnamon. Slice the bananas into quarters and add to 4 slices of bread. Spread peanut butter mixture over bananas and bread then top with remaining 4 pieces of bread. Spread the remaining butter onto both sides of the sandwiches. Grill each side in the frying pan until each side is golden. For topping, combine sugar and 1 tablespoon cinnamon in a shallow plate. Coat the grilled sandwiches with the sugar mixture. Cut diagonally and serve hot.





▲ Dorothy Wilson and Kali Bates



Carrying the torch for Mimi

By Kali Bates // Photo provided by Kali Bates

IT'S THE curse of getting older — you know — being told that we are acting like our parents by taking on their traits, actions, and beliefs. And it's true. Now, at 39, I find it happening to me, except I don't take after my parents. I am slowly evolving into who was the matriarch of our family for over 70 years — my grandmother.

Affectionately known as Mimi, Dorothy Wilson was one of the kindest and most pleasing people ever. She called us “babe” and constantly fretted about one of us getting hurt. She was always cooking, and everything she made was delicious, even if she didn't think so. Most of my childhood was spent helping her break beans, make biscuits, or watch the “Andy Griffith Show” with her and my grandfather.

However, there was another side to her that few got to see. Mimi could be a firecracker and was a stickler for presentation. You didn't present things or yourself any old way. You were clean and dressed, and the house also needed to be clean. She educated herself constantly. She wasn't going to discuss anything without studying up on it first. She wanted things done a certain way, and that was the deal. She worked unbelievably hard to make her household what it was, and she wasn't going to have anyone tell her how to run it — not even her husband of 72 years, whom she adored.

She also was fervent in her faith. Both she and my grandfather were devout Christians who served in the Methodist Church as Sunday school teachers and

helped in many other areas of the church. She knew the Bible by heart and read it every single day.

While proud to be Christians, my grandparents' faith was an action or way of being. It wasn't just about scripture, dressing up on Sundays, or believing in God. It was about acting out their faith wherever they went and in whatever they did.

Now that she is gone, I find myself acting a lot like her. I can be a firecracker. I worry too much about my children, try to cook, educate myself, and, most importantly, move in my faith. While I miss her terribly, I think about all that she left for me in my heart. Both she and my grandfather left me with faith.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

It can't always be seen or even felt immediately when we put our faith in action. Doing the right thing or helping can take days, weeks, or even years to see fruition. There is also the chance that we may never see our good deeds make the change we had hoped for. But if we have faith, we know it will all work out for good, whether we see it or not. My grandmother was proof of this. Her faith lives on through Joan, Sherry, Keri, myself, and all of the lives she touched.

Mimi taught me that the word of God is essential, but it is also vital to carry it out through our actions and words. Our faith is affirmed in how we treat others and walk through life. So, I'm good with being told I'm just like my Mimi; I hope I can do her justice. **GN**





Good Times

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

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PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY TULLAHOMA
HIGH SCHOOL SINGERS

◀ Susannah Womack, Peyton Fritz,
and Samuel Womack

Growing IN SUPPORT

Local networking organization branches into neighboring counties

By Kali Bates // Photos retrieved from Beauties in Business Facebook Page



▲ Laura Knight and Tashonna Starr

A CROSS THE area, women meet each month to lift each other, support each other, share ideas, and give advice. With gatherings now taking place in Winchester, Tullahoma, and Manchester, the meetings are held by the grass-roots organization “Beauties in Business.”

The local networking group began with locals Laura Knight and Cassie Fulmer six years ago. The two friends decided to create an atmosphere where women could come and be supported and grow from that support. Initially, meetings have been held on the first Tuesday of each month at Camino Real in Winchester. With women coming from all over the area to attend the Winchester meetings, Fulmer said it was the next step to extend the organization and meetings to Manchester and Tullahoma.

“With our Winchester location, it was crazy how many people were coming from Tullahoma, Shelbyville, Manchester, and everywhere in between. We are now blessed to have some ladies going to multiple Beauties’ events every month,” she said.

Both Knight and Fulmer said the meetings follow the same formats and offer the same support and growth.



▲ Kristal Walker, Pamela Barnes, Navi Blundell, Kirsten Johnson, Martina Caudill, TaShonna Starr, Jenny Pettay, Lisa Wikoff, Laura Knight, Lis Mason, Lyndsey Bender, Linda Conklin, Chelsea Greenway, Teri Romano, Trisha Fritz, Savannah Romero, and Meg Glenn

“We knew there was something magical about this triangle we have with Winchester, Manchester, and Tullahoma,” said Knight. “And if you could build a community of those women, that’s something special. We realized that these women were driving from Manchester and Tullahoma. We must expand and make this a little more doable for the mom who must drop off at soccer, catch the meeting, and get back.”

Meetings in Tullahoma are held on the third Monday of each month at Casa Mexico Restaurant. Both Fulmer and Knight said Beauties’ member, Tashonna Starr, has been tremendous in the success of the Tullahoma meetings.

“She is great,” said Fulmer. “She is our Beauties’ recruiter. We will be sitting with a group of 30 or more women, and when we ask who recommended them to attend a meeting, almost everyone says Tashonna. She is our go-to girl.”

Manchester meetings occur on the second Thursday of every month at Jefferson’s. Knight said Manchester meetings have been successful, thanks to local business owner and member Brooke Gipson.

“She is a rockstar,” said Knight. “She has got the ball rolling in Manchester.”

Knight added that they now offer monthly “pop-up” events at each location. They are not official meetings but opportunities for members who might not be able to attend evening meetings to have a chance to come out and have some much-needed support and fun.

“We do at least one pop-up each month,” she said. “The pop-ups are at different times of day in different locations. Sometimes we meet for lunch, happy hour, and even a fun activity such as group yoga or painting. These are great for members who can’t make the evening meetings. They don’t follow the meeting agenda

but offer all the benefits of coming together and sharing.”

Grateful for the group’s success thus far, both Knight and Fulmer are excited about what the future holds for the group.

“We knew we wanted a safe, laid-back place for women to come and gather that’s going to benefit them professionally but also be a heck of a lot of fun socially. We’ve just done these things over the last six years, and it’s taken on a life of its own, and we are so excited to see where it goes,” said Knight.

To learn more about upcoming meetings and events and to connect with others, follow the group’s Facebook at Beauties in Business Networking Communities, and Instagram at @Beautiesinbiz. GN



▲ Tisha Fritz, Savannah Romero, and Pamela Barnes

COMMUNITY EVENTS



▲ Parker Epley
with the Grinch
Benjamin Gibson

Breakfast with the Claus

Photos submitted by Tullahoma High School Singers

Santa fans of all ages had breakfast with the big guy at the annual Breakfast with Santa at the First United Methodist Church. Patrons also enjoyed performances by the Tullahoma High School Singers and photos with Santa.



◀ Dr. Catherine
Stephens



▲ Lisa Maurer,
Melissa Hinds



◀ Tullahoma High School Chamber and Concert Choir Students with Santa



▶ Jessica and Elizabeth Womack

▶ Abby Kate Wood, Elizabeth Womack



▲ Hannah Warta, JosEllen Turrentine, Jason Quick, Luke Yates



◀ Susannah Womack, Peyton Fritz, Samuel Womack



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EVENTS CALENDAR

February 16

**8:00 am Open Air Theology
Conference 2023**
Covenant Reformed
Baptist Church
305 S. Anderson St.,
Tullahoma

Featuring the hosts of
the Open Air Theology
Podcast: Jeff Rice,
Haps Addison, and
Braden Patterson, along
with special guests
Dr. James White,
Anthony Mathenia,
Brandon Scalf, John
Crawford, Kevin Hay,
and Claude Ramsey.

February 17

**6:00 pm Jay Dee at Common
John Brewing Co.**
Common John
Brewing Company
210 Woodbury Hwy.,
Manchester

Live music with Jay
Dee at CJBC! Enjoy a
free show, craft beer,
and food. All ages are
welcome.

**7:00 pm Singing with
Prophets of Song**
The Church of Jesus
Christ Tullahoma
519 E. Moore St.,
Tullahoma

February 18

**7:00 pm The Ultimate Oldies
'70s and '80s
Rock-N-Roll Show**
South Jackson Civic Center
and Mitchell Museum
404 S. Jackson St.,
Tullahoma

March 5

12:00 pm I Love Manchester
Manchester/Coffee
County Conference
Center
147 Hospitality Blvd.,
Manchester

Join us for an afternoon
of shopping with local
vendors, get your spring
pictures taken, and stop
by your favorite local food
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win some great prizes.



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March 10

6:00 pm Party with The Differents Duo at Whiskey Trail!

Whiskey Trail BBQ & Steakhouse
413 Wilson Ave.,
Tullahoma

Joe and Michael are back in regular rotation at the ONLY place we play, Whiskey Trail! Looking forward to seeing all our friends. See ya there!

March 11

9:00 am Greenway of Manchester

Manchester/Coffee County Conference Center
147 Hospitality Blvd.,
Manchester

The cost is \$35 per person, and registration can be completed online through the link below, or physical forms can be picked up at our front desk! Early registers will receive a shirt and a Common John drink coupon. For more info, call (931) 728-0273

April 15

9:30 am TEDxTullahoma

South Jackson Civic Center and Mitchell Museum
404 S. Jackson St.
Tullahoma

We have the goal of sparking conversation, connection, and community. We will be featuring several experts from across the region with a variety of topics, including women in music, virtual reality, and rehabilitating wildlife.

For more events and to submit an event visit:

www.GoodNewsMags.com/events
or call (800) 247-7318



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