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FRANKLIN COUNTY

APRIL 2023

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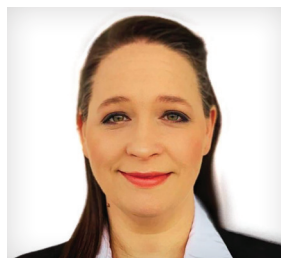
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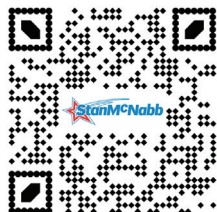
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Education in Bloom

Educators give students the opportunity to bloom like a seed in a greenhouse.

I THINK OF education the same way I think of the spring season. In that time of year, out of season and lifeless-looking trees begin to bloom and become like new. The new nutrients, new water, and new sunlight create new opportunities. They drop seeds, give us food to eat, and give a place to call home for squirrels and birds. When all of these things come together perfectly, these plants—that seemed like they had nothing left to offer—in fact were hiding beautiful colors, growth, petals, and leaves. The brownish grays and mossy splinters turn into pinks, whites, and greens. The snow and frozen limbs are exchanged for new growth and sunlight.

Education does the same thing. It is like having a new lease on your fu-

ture. It can change us for the better, and when we pass this education on and carry the torch, we change the lives of those around us. Education expands our lives. The classroom is like a greenhouse, and we're the ones who get to soak in the nutrients, the sun's rays, and the pure water. This issue of Good News celebrates the educators in our lives that help us bloom. We thank you for your hard work and endless compassion. You give students in our communities the opportunity to bloom. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,
MANAGING EDITOR

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CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY BROOKE SNYDER



Local people celebrate our libraries.

National Library Week is on the way: April 23-29.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

MEMORIES OF books, card catalogs, and hushing librarians come to mind when we recall the libraries of our childhood. We can almost smell that perfect mixture of paper, dust, and nostalgia. Those places full of books were safe havens for young readers, who felt a sense of wonder looking at books with exciting covers or reading stories that seemed out of this world. The books broadened our understanding of each other and the world around us and offered places to go without leaving home. As time passed and technology advanced, our libraries grew with us, but our connection to the libraries of our past survives.

America's first public library opened in Boston in 1854, according to [encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com). Books had to be requested at the desk and then retrieved by the librarian; the public could not access the stacks or browse the shelves. In the early 1900s, however, libraries began to transition to open stacks, changing the role of the librarians from gatekeepers to research supporters.

Campaigns sent books and periodicals to American troops during World War I and II. The Library Service Act of 1956 continued the spread of literacy, education, and entertainment when it put the library's services on wheels and made books available to rural communities and underserved areas.

As technology evolved, libraries grew to include much more than books and periodicals. Tape recordings, microfilm, and microfiche created searchable archives. Soon, books on tape and compact discs put our

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As computers became a part of our everyday lives, libraries created computer labs and loaned time and internet access to their patrons, many experiencing technology for the first time. Classes on utilizing technology, both then and now, enabled users to make the most of their personal computers and devices offsite.

E-books burst onto the scene, and libraries again stepped up to give patrons access to the digital reading realm. Your library card allows you to check out books today and read them on your tablet, laptop, phone, or favorite e-reader.

Genealogists have long haunted the history rooms of local libraries, and today can access a literal world of information online through portals like the Tennessee Electronic Library. Students can use the site's resources to prepare for tests, and history buffs can view the state's photographic library containing a wealth of detailed information.

Most, if not all, area libraries now offer free public Wi-Fi, work areas, and meeting rooms. The hushings of our childhood memories are less likely to be heard, and in their place is the laughter and conversation of students deep in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) projects or adults collaborating on a project.

In the present economic times, our local libraries offer free resources that include something for every household, interest, and age group. Check them out. While you may not hear the dull clunk of the old card machine dating your return card, something old might just find you among the new. **GN**

Visit the Franklin County Public Library at 105 S. Porter St., Winchester. For more information, call (931) 967-3706 or go to franklincountylibrary.org.

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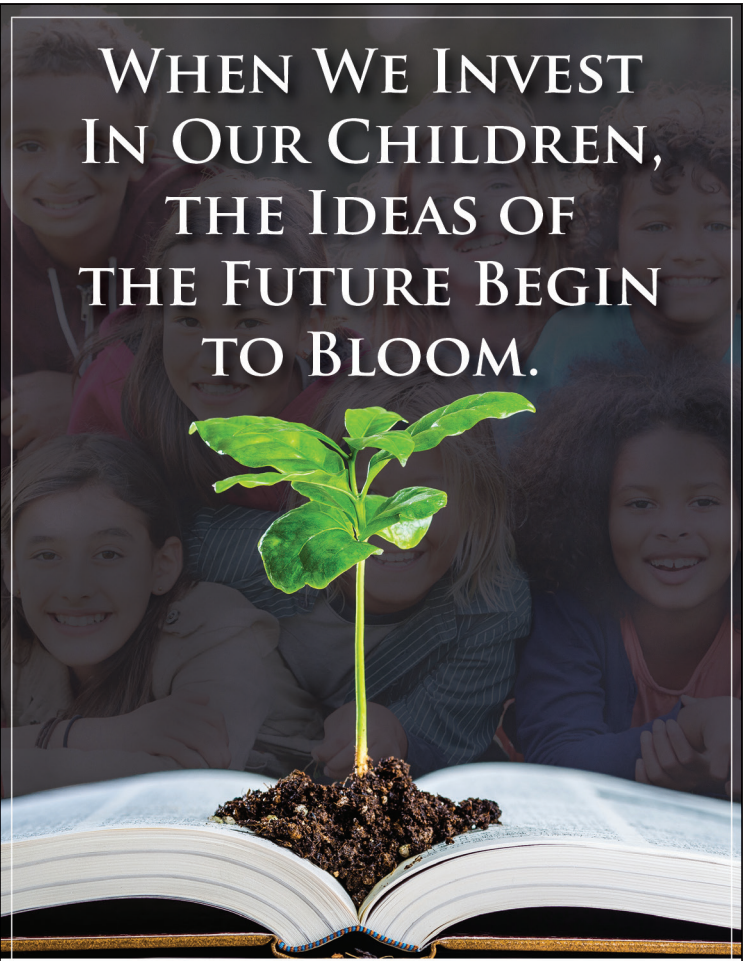


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A photo of a soldier changed the life of Dan Williams.

Dan Williams is on the hunt for the “unknown soldier” in Franklin County.

By Jeriah Brumfield

DAN WILLIAMS found a photo of an unknown soldier while walking past Glenn Grant’s picture frame shop in Winchester. Grant was retiring at the time, and Williams stepped inside to congratulate him on his upcoming retirement. There, he found the soldier’s picture on the wall marked “free.”

Williams immediately asked the store owner who the man in the photo was and where he had gotten it, but Grant could not remember. He and his wife previously attempted to name the person in the picture using social media, but they did not receive any responses.

Williams decided to take the picture home because he wanted the community to help him put a name on the face of the man in the photo.

He said the size of the frame that held the photo first caught his eye because he had an old picture of his grandparents, mother, and two of her siblings that was the exact size of the frame, and he wanted to use the frame to hold the special picture.

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When Williams brought the picture home and started taking it out of the frame to place his grandparents' photo in it, he told himself he couldn't do it.

He said, "Maybe somebody knows him and can use it."

Williams said the man was dressed in a uniform that appeared to be from the World War I era.

He said, "That was only 100 years ago now. And here he is 100 years later, the man who served his country, [and] nobody knows him."

With three brothers who served in the U.S. military, the photo of the soldier hit close to home for Williams.

Two out of three of his brothers were World War II veterans. One of his brothers boarded a troop ship in New York when the peace treaty was signed, and the ship turned around. Another one of his brothers served in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict and the Korean War. He was set to be deployed, but the war ended shortly after.

Williams has a story of his own that he will remember for the rest of his life.

"I was in the Vietnam era, but going to school gave me a student deferment. And by the time I graduated, I had the draft lottery. My draft lottery number was really high, so I never got called. Somebody in Franklin County took my place. And I've always had a soft heart for veterans and people who did serve because somebody did my job for me."

Williams said the first word that comes to mind when he hears the word "soldier" is "servant."

He said he wants the community to be aware of the unknown soldier and hopefully recognize him as a long-lost family member or friend so he can send them the picture.

"It could be that the picture came here with somebody who came into Franklin County or, maybe, from a dealer who found it somewhere else. It could have come from some other part of the state or the country."

Dan Williams is on the hunt for the unknown soldier because "those who sacrifice deserve to be remembered." GN

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◀
Andrea Reed,
Payton Reed,
and
Kermit Reed

A Huntland High School football coach shows loyalty to his alma mater.

How coach Kermit Reed makes a difference at Huntland Schools by demonstrating loyalty and longevity.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photos submitted by Kermit Reed

HUNTLAND HIGH School's head football coach, Kermit Reed, has demonstrated a remarkable ability to create togetherness for the Huntland Hornets through longevity, improving, and rebuilding Huntland's football program time and again.

The Huntland High School graduate attended Huntland Schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. He played baseball, football, and basketball in high school and baseball and football in college as a multi-sport athlete.

The football coach and physical education and wellness teacher attended Motlow State Community

College and received his general studies degree while red-shirting on the baseball team for one year. After graduation, he attended Austin Peay State University where he played football for two years, and won Special Teams Player of the Year in 2000.

Reed is in his 21st year coaching high school sports and his 22nd year overall. He coached for one year at Austin Peay as a graduate assistant.

According to a press release, before returning to the Huntland School District, Reed coached in Franklin County as the offensive coordinator and at South Middle School as the head coach. Kermit said he inherited his dad's dream of coaching in Franklin County.

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▲ Kermit and Andrea Reed

He said, “My dad was a youth coach for years in Franklin County, and I just fell in his footsteps. It was his dream, so it ended up being mine.”

Kermit said his children were his reason for settling down in Franklin County.

“I wanted my children to go to the same school I did. It’s just a different place. You’ve got to be here to understand. Your whole community helps when things get rough. I just wanted my kids to be in that same environment.”

Reed’s passion for sports, education, and community shows through his work ethic and tremendous loyalty to the Huntland Hornets and the Huntland School District. The coach said the Hornets only had four teams to advance to the state playoffs in football, and the last few years have been pretty rough. Still, the coach is optimistic about this upcoming season and spotlighted two key players that will carry the Hornets to a successful season.

“I got a kid by the name of Jarren Kinslow that could have a big season at running back and linebacker, and we have a quarterback by the name of Evan Keller that’s put in a lot of work. And it’s the off-season so far, and I think he’ll have a big year.”

Reed recalled the challenges and rewards of working in multiple positions within the school district. “You have to have leaders of these kids. It’s tough to keep them focused for a great amount of time, but success is when you see a kid push through a threshold and become successful in life later on. That’s the rewarding part.”

Kermit lives by an encouraging motto that reminds him to push forward and make the best out of every situation: “You make do. You get out of it whatever you put into it.”

Reed’s goal for the future is to see kids leave high school to play college football if they aspire to do so, win as many region championships as possible, win each day, and allow everybody to reach their optimal potential. GN



▲ Andrea Reed, Hazel Reed, and Kermit Reed

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▲ Sadie Hill, Marileigh Lewis, and Destiny Jones

The 4-H youth program fuels strong youth development.

4-H Extension Agent Hunter Isbell discusses the importance of the 4-H youth program.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography submitted by Hunter Isbell

IF YOU ask a parent how important their child's academic, physical, mental, and emotional development is, they would probably reply, "extremely important." You would then direct them to a program like 4-H.

The main priority of 4-H is to provide youth with the opportunity to develop strong social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills that will catapult them into prosperous adulthood. Since its inception in 1902, 4-H has become the largest youth organization in Tennessee and one of the state's greatest assets.

4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension — a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation providing experiences where young people learn by experience. 4-H has welcomed youth of diverse beliefs and backgrounds for more than 100 years. Nearly 6 million teens annually engage in critical societal issues like community health inequities, participating in civil discourse and advocating for equity and inclusion through clubs, camps, project groups, judging teams, and livestock shows.

The 4-H Thriving Model has a proven track record of success. It shows how its developmental context directly correlates to the youth's ability to thrive, thus creating measurable positive developmental and long-term outcomes. The model teaches personal responsibility, connection with others, social competence, and an optimistic academic attitude and instills a growth mindset.

Not only does 4-H create strong youth development, but it also provides a nourishing developmental context where youth have a sense of belonging and



▲ Woods McGill, Reese Metcalf, Georgia Tipton, Jeff Mason, Kim Mason, Brittney Trussell, and Chris Rose

can continue to grow and mature confidently. Youth who participate in 4-H programs that cater to their social-emotional skills achieve higher youth development outcomes, including academic motivation, social competence, high personal standards, and contribution to their community through leadership and civic engagement.

These youth achieve positive developmental outcomes and are more likely to achieve long-term results through vocational or academic success, civic engagement, employability, economic stability, happiness, and well-being.

4-H Extension Agent Hunter Isbell said, “In 4-H, we really believe in empowering young people and supporting the youth voice.” Isbell said every child should be prepared to improve the world around them.

The organization meets with 3,100 youth monthly in all eleven schools in the county. They also have a home-school club for youth who are not a part of the public school system and Winchester Christian Academy, a private school in the county.

Isbell said, “Talent is everywhere; opportunity is not.”

Providing youth developmental opportunities is essential to the organization’s staff, who ensure all youth have equal and equitable access to opportunity.

All youth in Franklin County, grades 4-12, can participate in the 4-H program.

During their 4-H clubs, project groups, or judging teams, students learn various concepts, such as parliamentary procedures from being class officers, communication skills from public speaking contests, business entrepreneurship from creating promotional advertising posters, and responsibility from exhibiting livestock.

The program offers more than 29 different projects from which students can choose. Many projects include sewing, STEM activities, agriculture, and performing arts. These projects allow students to find their spark, explore their interests, and develop their skills. 4-H extension agents visit schools from October to March, engaging students in hands-on inferential learning activities.

The 4-H program also engages students in public speaking activities, giving them the confidence to flourish in whatever career path they choose. Through public speaking, the youth learn how to express themselves in various ways while strengthening their communication skills.

“Being able to meet nervous fourth graders who are energetic but unsure of what the future holds and, over the years, invest in them, equip them with the skills necessary, and watch them transition into middle and high school and adulthood is extremely rewarding.”

Isbell said the ultimate goal is to complement the work done by teachers, ensuring the students are prepared to be future leaders, whether they pursue the workforce directly or an intermediate four-year university.

Isbell said, “Much like school teachers, my role as the 4-H agent has the potential to make a difference in the lives of all of our county’s young people. I have the unique ability to inspire and develop the leaders of tomorrow, today.”

Through the 4-H program, kids can learn confidence, responsibility, independence, and compassion. 4-H provides students with unique experiences and opportunities to grow and lead. “Our utmost importance is prioritizing 4-H members and helping them reach their full potential by equipping youth with the tools, experiences, and opportunities to become meaningful contributors to society while positively impacting Franklin County.” **GN**

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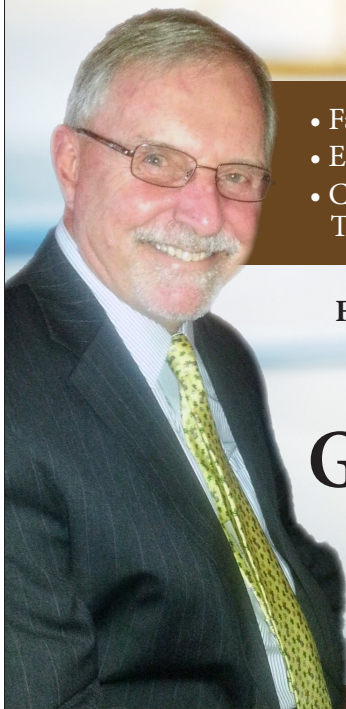
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GOOD NEWS

CHAPTER 2 OF 3

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

- 34** Shattering stigma and breaking down walls
- 40** Education in bloom
- 54** Recipes: Mom, I'm hungry
- 56** Faith: When it's hard to see

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



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PHOTO SUBMITTED BY HUNTER ISBELL

◀ Senior 4-H member mentoring younger 4-H youth



SHATTER- ING STIGMA AND BREAK- ING DOWN WALLS



Life with
autism
spectrum
disorder is
beautifully
different.

By Tina Neeley



SOMETIMES LIFE JUST ISN'T WHAT IT SEEMS.

There are situations where we view each other through the fishbowl of life. We watch from outside, sure of what we're seeing. Meanwhile, inside, life is its own reality, and the days pass with the feeling of someone else watching. What someone else sees and understands may not quite be the reality of life inside. Such is often the case with families living with an autism diagnosis.

According to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. Some

people with ASD have a known difference, such as a genetic condition. Other causes are not yet known. People with ASD may behave, communicate, interact, and learn in ways that are different from most others. There is often nothing about how they look that sets them apart from others, and the abilities of people with ASD can vary greatly.

April is National Autism Awareness month, a great time to shatter the glass separating us from families managing life on the spectrum. Two families offer their perspectives from the inside.





LIFE ON THE SPECTRUM — ONE FAMILY'S PERSPECTIVE

Amanda West shares her family's journey with ASD:

We begin to ponder the life we lived just one day before. Like permanent bookmarks, the diagnosis of ASD separates the pages of our lives into categories of before and after.

“Your son has level one, high-functioning autism spectrum disorder,” the team of psychologists reported. My husband and I took several days to process the information together privately before we shared the diagnosis with our nine-year-old son. He was sitting at his computer desk designing an elaborate video game. When I told him, his fingers froze on his keyboard. He looked right at me and said in his matter-of-fact way, “Well, that explains it,” then turned toward the screen and kept right on typing. Later that evening, he and I watched the movie “Temple Grandin.”

“Mom,” he said, “she has autism like me, but I don’t act like her.”

I explained that if you know one person with autism, you know one person with autism.

Although I know everyone’s experience with ASD is different, the last seven years have been years of temporary regression, enormous growth, physical and emotional maturity, and, most of all, lots of therapy. He underwent occupational and speech-language therapy to recognize facial expressions, decipher body language, and understand idioms and words with double meanings. He underwent physical therapy to strengthen his fine motor skills and overall coordination. Our family feels blessed that he was able to have these necessary interventions provided by Jones Therapy in Shelbyville.

As a 16-year-old, he is a witty honor roll student, a member of the National High School Honors Society, has a steady group of friends, is still highly creative, and is working toward earning hours toward his driver’s license.

FROM THE INSIDE OUT — WHAT THEY'D WANT YOU TO KNOW

Anna Sapach, a single mom to a young child on the spectrum, clarifies things the bowl has distorted from our view and our understanding of those with autism:

From the outside perspective, ASD can be embraced or judged in various ways. It can be embraced by acknowledgment and kindness or judged by silent stares and gawky remarks.

There's a multitude of degrading false information that has distorted the image of individuals with autism. Information and education are powerful tools that can guide or mislead us. The volume of errors and misdiagnoses throughout history, even with advanced testing and medical progression, has left a paper trail so long that it can collectively fill enough books to build a library. That happens when we judge the cover without picking apart the pages first.

If I were to ask you, the reader, what autism looks like to you, what would you see? Without education or background, where would your mind lead from only what the eyes can see? Would you see a child stimming (arm flapping, spinning in circles, tugging on clothes or ears)?

Would you see a child trying to self-soothe in an environment that sets their senses on fire? Or better yet, an environment that they're enjoying, and offer them a smile accompanied by a wave? Would you see an adult in sensory overload (nail biting, popping knuckles, repeating words) at a music store and presume they're behaving oddly? Or, would you see someone trying to manage anxiety in a loud place because they wanted to bravely learn how to set their noise-canceling headphones aside and embrace change?

With this insight, do we embrace a change in our neurotypical day-to-day environment, or do we scratch our heads and turn away?

Coming from a mother to a son with autism, all we ask is that you show kindness. You don't have to read every article or order a stack of books on ASD to become aware or understanding.

If it weren't for my son, I wouldn't have the knowledge I do today on autism. He saved me from the ignorance I held for years, unknowingly blinded by the social stigmas these adolescents had been painted by.

Misguided mindsets distort the beautiful picture that is the wonderful and complex world of life on the spectrum.

NO MORE WALLS

Shattering the walls that separate us from ASD families and coming together as a community that longs to enter their world's beauty and struggles is a priceless gift. It's a gift to them and a gift we receive from them when we allow them to share our lives.

Be on the lookout for opportunities to share life on the spectrum. **GN**



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This issue of Good News celebrates our educators who help us bloom. **GN**

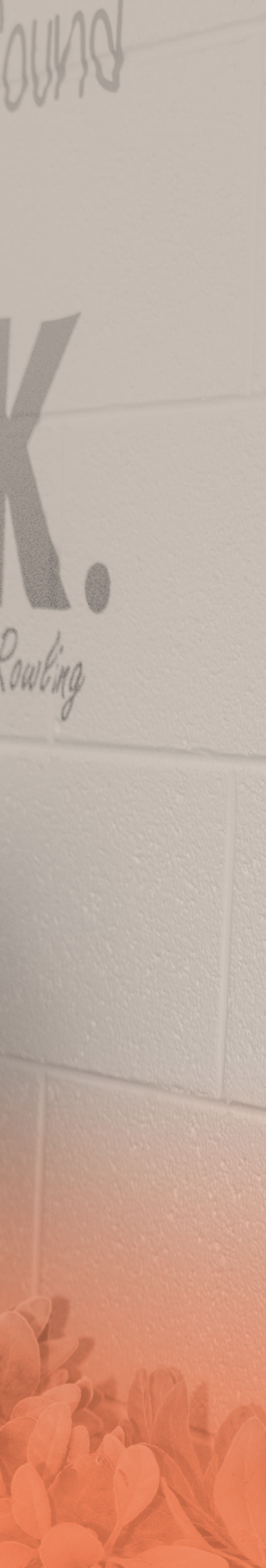


**KATELYN
WILLIAMS**

GIVING BACK THROUGH EDUCATION

Katelyn Williams is paying it forward at North Lake Elementary.

By Jeriah Brumfield
Photography by Ashleigh Newnes



I really loved my teachers and was involved in many different things.

- Katelyn Williams

EVERY STUDENT deserves a healthy learning environment with a teacher who goes above and beyond to ensure their most pivotal school years are as enriching, memorable, and productive as possible.

Katelyn Williams is one of many outstanding North Lake Elementary teachers who makes her students' growth in elementary school a top priority.

Born and raised here in Franklin County, Williams has lived in Winchester, Estill Springs, and Huntland, and now she's back in Winchester, where she teaches third grade at North Lake Elementary.

Williams is proud to pay it forward and teach students in the same county she grew up in. Williams said the Franklin County School System impacted her life, as she always had many great educators throughout her academic career.

She said, "I can still tell you the names of all of my elementary teachers. "I can tell you memories from each grade. Middle school, same thing. I really loved my teachers and was involved in many different things."

She said the Franklin County School System impacted her by leading her to pursue a career in education.

Williams recalled a specific moment when she realized she wanted to be a teacher — in her high school agricultural education class. She said she had a wonderful agriculture education teacher during her freshman and sophomore years at Franklin County High School, who now teaches at Huntland High School.

"He was just so dedicated to the FFA program. He was very dedicated to teaching kids the importance of agriculture."



▲ Mrs. Williams and Jacob read a book together.

Williams said she was very involved in the FFA program in school, and she credits her teacher for her love of agricultural education.

When choosing a college, Williams wanted to stay close to home, so she attended Motlow State Community College, where she earned her associate degree and then a bachelor's degree in elementary education through Tennessee Tech's 2+2 Program.

After graduating from Tennessee Tech in May 2019, Williams eventually decided to substitute teach in Franklin County for her first year until she found another job opportunity. That opportunity popped up for Williams when she least expected it.

She received a call from the late North Lake Elementary School Principal, Mr. Butler, about a teaching position. He asked her if she wanted to come in for an interview, and she accepted the job.

Unlike the usual 10-11 weeks of summer break, which many teachers use to get settled in for the school year, Williams had three days to get her classroom and lesson plans ready before the school year started, and she's been there ever since. She is now in her fourth year of teaching at North Lake.



That's the first step. If the child doesn't feel safe, if the child doesn't feel comfortable, if they don't feel like they have a safe and comfortable environment to learn in, then they're not going to learn. So that's my first goal.

- Katelyn Williams

She said, "It would take something crazy for me not to want to be at North Lake anymore."

Williams's teaching career has come with its challenges. One of her biggest challenges comes during "test week."

She said she constantly tries to find ways during testing weeks to encourage her students and remain a constant support system while balancing the time crunch and excessive study material that test days bring.

Williams hopes to create an environment where every student feels loved and supported. Many students within the school district have challenges to overcome at

home. Williams said she hopes they can come to her classroom and receive the nurturing they need to be successful.

"That's the first step. If the child doesn't feel safe, if the child doesn't feel comfortable, if they don't feel like they have a safe and comfortable environment to learn in, then they're not going to learn. So that's my first goal."

Williams said she wants to create a calm and happy classroom.

One of the many ways Williams fuels her students' creativity is by providing flexible seating options.

"I don't mind if they sit on the floor. I don't mind if they stand up. I don't mind the wobble stools. They can sit on the rug at the classroom library on one of the pillows. I also do not mind the fidget toys, as long as they are used as tools and not toys."

Williams believes students will learn more if they feel respected and cared for. She said one of the most rewarding parts of teaching is watching her students' faces light up when they finally understand the lessons she taught.

The self-awareness and confidence students express after they finally grasp concepts that once challenged them can bring a smile to any teacher's face, especially those who go above and beyond to make their students' growth and development a top priority. GN



**BARBARA
KING LADD**

COLD CASES & EDUCATION

How one spirit-led decision
led a life skills teacher to
solve a 1985 case.

By Jeriah Brumfield
Photography by Brooke Snyder

LIFE SKILLS teacher Barbara King Ladd with Campora Family Resource Center is an educator whose passion for young lives has led her to accomplish amazing things.

Ladd has been working in her current position for 1 1/2 years. Before becoming a life skills teacher, she was an independent contractor as the Drug Endangered Children Response Coordinator for the Franklin County school system.

In her position, she worked with various agencies and individuals to create systems and changes to identify and assist drug-endangered children. Ladd said one of her biggest accomplishments in that position was implementing 'Handle With Care' (HWC) into the school district. HWC is a collaboration between local law enforcement agencies and the school system.

Ladd said one thing she loves about her current position is working with children.

She said, "I hope I am planting seeds that will help them have the life they want."

For the bulk of her professional career, she served as the deputy director for the 12th Judicial District Drug Court. She said she loved helping people achieve recovery from trauma and addictions.

Most people who entered the program began making life-altering choices at 11 and 12 years old. Little did they know the substances they experimented with would negatively impact the rest of their lives.

Ladd said, "They all thought it was something they could play with for a little bit, have fun, and put it down whenever they wanted to. Unfortunately, that was not the case."

Ladd said the young people couldn't go back in time to alter their decisions, but she is glad she has the opportunity to listen to and help them change their stories.

"I love working with kids and helping them feel inspired and motivated to be intentional about who they become and achieve the future they want."

Along with her journey in education, Ladd has another new-found passion — solving cases.





On January 29, 2018, Barbara King Ladd, a stay-at-home mom at the time, stumbled upon an article by an investigator for the 12th Judicial District Attorney General's office, Larry Davis, about a cold case involving Marion County's "John Doe." She was immediately intrigued.

Donald Boardman had just moved from Florida to Georgia in 1985. On Saturday, November 16, 1985, Boardman called his parents to notify them that he was visiting them for Thanksgiving and told them he was on his way to a health fair at the Atlanta Convention Center. Little did his parents know that would be the last time they would speak to their son.

That following Tuesday, his new boss called his parents to tell them they had yet to see or hear from Donald and asked them if they knew where he was. At that point, Boardman's dad filed a missing persons report at the Chamblee Police Department, where Boardman lived.

On November 29, 1985, they found Boardman's brand new Camaro in possession of three known criminals, along with his credit card and jacket. That was all that Boardman's family knew.

Meanwhile, on December 16, 1985, an unidentified man was found off Interstate 24 in Marion County. Larry Davis was the investigator for that unidentified body.

"I was intrigued by it because I didn't realize there was a 'John Doe' close to where I lived. Marion County is like 20 or 30 minutes from Sevanee. So I thought, 'Okay, well, they're asking the public for help identifying him. Let's see what I can do.'"

The same day Ladd read Davis's story, she found Boardman's missing person profile, contacted the 12th Judicial District Attorney's office, and gave them all the information she had.

She also contacted the Chamblee Police Department, where Boardman's father filed the missing person's report. Criminal analyst Lori Bradburn received the message, and Ladd gave her all the information she had on Boardman, along with Davis's contact information.



I love working with kids and helping them feel inspired and motivated to be intentional about who they become and achieve the future they want.

- Barbara King Ladd

Bradburn pieced the information together and found out Boardman's sister was still alive and living in Florida. Through his sister, they were able to confirm Boardman's DNA results.

Ladd credits God for leading her to help solve the case.

"He's the one that lined everybody up, lined all the pieces up, and finally brought Donald Boardman's sister closure. He just allowed me to be a part of this really cool thing."

With a passion for problem-solving, the life skills teacher solved a long-standing case and brought Boardman's family the closure they sought and deserved. All it took was one spirit-led decision and the faithfulness to follow through.

Ladd has not told any of her classes about her exciting experience solving a case, but her first grade son and Sevanee Elementary student came across an article about his mother and expressed his excitement.

"He just kept telling me he was so proud of me." GN





KIMBERLY COLLINS

A JOURNEY THROUGH EDUCATION

Huntland School teacher
Kimberly Collins shares her
story as a STEM educator.

By Jeriah Brumfield
Photography by Brooke Snyder



HUNTLAND HIGH School teacher Kimberly Collins has always been interested in science. Her husband, Rob, owned a computer store, so technology and science have been a huge part of the Collins family's lives.

Originally from Huntland, Kimberly and Rob have lived in Belvidere for over 20 years. They have three children: Emily (Andrew) Langston, Rachel Collins, and Jacob Collins, who all graduated from Huntland High School. Rob and Kimberly also have three grandchildren: Jaycie, Evie, and Lane, and another granddaughter on the way.

Kimberly has a math degree from Athens State University and graduated with an associate degree in accounting from Motlow State Community College. Shortly after her son was born, she began to substitute teach, which motivated her to become a full-time teacher.

She said, "Being a teacher aligned with my kids' schedules as far as them being in school, their sports, and everything else because my kids were very sports oriented. So that inspired me also to want to have the same schedule as they did."

She said when the school moved her to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) department, the idea of teaching science intrigued her even more.

Kimberly has taught at Huntland High School since 2010. She was a math teacher until four years ago, and then she moved on to become a high school STEM teacher, teaching grades nine through 12. The school's STEM program is a new program that took the school a lot of time and innovation to startup.

She said, "Getting it started was a big process to begin with because this is just the fourth year that our STEM has been in progress. And it was a big process to get it funded where we could code the robots and the different equipment we needed for the kids to practice with."

The students in the STEM program take career and technical trips and participate in career engagement to get a glimpse of what their future careers could be.

Another significant hands-on part of the program is hydroponics, which began in August, at the beginning of the school year.

Kimberly helped the program receive grants from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), with the support of TVA and the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN). Battelle, a private nonprofit applied science and technology development company, and the Franklin County Education Foundation also awarded the program grants to start hydroponics.

Kimberly said the program would not have been able to start hydroponics without the help of the

grants, and the students are very involved and interested in hydroponics.

“We had one last year who graduated and is going to college now for hydroponics. So the kids were the ones that were interested in it. And when they’re interested in something, I try to do my best to get what’s going to help them in their future, to learn with, and they wanted to do hydroponics.”

The students’ current project consists of growing and selling lettuce and microgreens, and they currently supply Filo’s Tavern, teachers, and staff with plenty of leafy greens. Kimberly said their future goal is to increase their products enough to provide the cafeteria with all the lettuce they need. In the class, they learn how to plant, water, harvest, and care for the greens.





“

We do learn. We do take notes. We do take tests, but a lot of kids learn so differently. And this is something where they can come and use their imagination.

– Kimberly Collins



The STEM classes also code and design various 3D projects and participate in 3D printing activities. Some of their projects include creating bridges, water towers, and windmills, and they are learning about solar and wind energy. They also have a special partner — Nissan, the famous motor corporation.

“We have a retired Nissan robot that the kids are trained on, and they learn how to use it. So we do many things inside my classroom, besides note taking and so forth.”

One of Kimberly’s favorite parts about being a STEM educator is introducing students to unconventional ideas and concepts.

“We do learn. We do take notes. We do take tests, but a lot of kids learn so differently. And this is something where they can come and use their imagination.”

The class allows students to use their imagination to design something and 3D print or laser cut it and make it their own.

Kimberly sponsors the Technology Student Association (TSA), where students compete in coding, game board design, writing children’s books, 3D design, and VEX robotics. This year the goal is to start a robotics club.

She also sponsors the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and the Interact Club, a community project club where they do different things with the community overseas, internationally, locally, and state-wide. They do nearly 200 projects a year through the Interact Club. **GN**

Mom, I'm hungry!

After-school snack time issues are solved with these delicious and nutritious recipes.

By Kali Bradford

KIDS ARE barreling through the door after school, complaining that they are starving! It's the age-old gripe of children, no matter how old. We all know that kiddos often get hungry between meals. Unfortunately, many packaged snacks for kids are very unhealthy. They're often full of refined flour, added sugars, and artificial ingredients. Snack time is a great opportunity to sneak some extra nutrients into your child's diet. Instead of highly processed snack foods, fill your child's tummy with whole foods that provide energy and nutrition. Check out the following kid-friendly snacks that are both healthy and delicious. **GN**

Veggie Dip

Submitted by Sherry Bell

- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 pkg. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 c. parsley, chopped
- 1 c. salad dressing
- 1/2 c. green onion, chopped

In a blender, combine sour cream, cream cheese, garlic, parsley, salad dressing, and green onions. Blend until mixed. Refrigerate until chilled.



Yogurt Parfaits

Submitted by Rosina Eicher

1 pkg. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened
1/2 c. powdered sugar
1 box white chocolate pudding mix, 4 oz.
1 c. milk
32 oz. plain yogurt
1 tub whipped topping, 8 oz.
fresh fruit
granola

In a bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar. Add pudding and milk; mix well. Add yogurt and whipped topping. Layer with fresh fruit and granola in individual clear cups.



Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies

Submitted by Faye Bonner

2 c. sugar
2 T. cocoa
1 stick margarine
1/2 c. milk
1 c. nuts
2 T. peanut butter
2 t. vanilla
2 c. oats

Mix sugar, cocoa, margarine and milk in a skillet; boil 1 minute. Stir in nuts, peanut butter, vanilla and oats. Drop by spoonfuls onto waxed paper.







When it's hard to see

Faith grows in the dark.

By Tina Neeley

WE FEEL the most comfortable when we know where we're going. Knowing our destination, all the familiar landmarks along the way, and where we'll settle in once we've arrived gives us a sense of control. We're in the driver's seat, right?

But how do we wrestle with the unknown? Whether it's a new job, a new group of people to meet, or a trip to somewhere we've never been before, how does it feel compared to the safety of the known?

I have no scientific data to confirm it, but I'd bet there are three reactions to these situations. Some are always open to a new adventure and can easily go with the flow wherever it leads. Others retreat in panic, unsure they can stand the pressure of the new or different thing. And then there's everyone else — those who hang out in the middle, somewhat unmoved by the change, yet not rushing to get started either.

Moments or seasons of change are inevitable for us all. Some seasons of change come with a bit of notice and time to adjust or ease into the idea. Others occur in the blink of an eye and can range from mild to life-changing. Some are exciting and invite growth and reflection, while others drive us to our knees and leave us with questions no one can answer.

My journey these days meanders a path of uncertainty concerning my vision. I've traveled from a near-sighted third grader to a mono-vision Nana. Some days the clarity of the sight in my remaining eye surprises me and sparks joy and thankfulness. At other times, dimly lit rooms or uneven surfaces cause me to stumble,

leaving me feeling vulnerable and embarrassed. And then there are times when fear of blindness sneaks up, and thoughts of loss of independence overshadow the light.

For me, it's a vision thing, but I know we all have something like it in our lives at any time — loss of a loved one, a job termination, a medical diagnosis, a family crisis — the list goes on and on. We all have times when we feel like we can't see where we're going or how we'll go on.

But when it's hard to see, there's one thing we can be sure of: we are not alone.

Deuteronomy 31:8 reminds us, "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

For me, that's light. Any future blindness cannot be total because He's gone ahead of me, and He is light. Sometimes the light is more for warming than for illuminating as we curl childlike into His embrace and let Him comfort us with His presence. And often, His light comes to us through friends, family, and our community; even strangers have been known to cross our paths and brighten our days.

Seize every opportunity to be the light and receive it graciously if and when the need arises. While the answers may not come, like sunshine on a cold January day, the light and love warms us and reminds us that a brighter day is coming. **GN**

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7



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CHOCOLATE WALK

CHOCOLATE WALK



CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

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PHOTO SUBMITTED BY MOE PHOTOS, MAURICE TAYLOR

◀ Women showing off their bags and tickets from the chocolate walk.

The Rain Teen Center

provides a place of support
to the community's youth.



Volunteers hope to reach teens through fellowship
and the word of God.

By Kali Bradford // Photos provided by The Rain Teen Center

IN THE story “The Star Thrower” by Loren Eiseley, a man approaches a boy throwing starfish back into the ocean. The boy is in a hurry but is taking care of putting them back into the ocean. The man approaches the boy and asks him what he is doing with the starfish. The boy replies that the tide is going out and is trying to put the tiny creatures back into the ocean so they won’t die. Scoffing at what the man sees as a vain attempt, he tells the boy there is no way he can save the hundreds of starfish before them. Unfazed in his effort to help, the boy continues his work, bends down, picks up another starfish, and throws it into the surf. Smiling at the man, he said, “I made a difference to that one.”

This is a favorite parable for Franklin County resident Kelly May. In 2010, he and his wife, Jessica, took a group of kids from their church to a camp in Alabama. Inspired by the kids’ enthusiasm for Christ, they wanted to keep this fire for God burning bright. Thus, The Rain Teen Center was born.

“It started back in 2010,” he explained. “Actually, it started two years before that in our church. Our youth group had outgrown our church building, so we began looking for another building. Long story short, we found a building to rent. We then decided to open it up to the community. It was also a great opportunity to bring in the community. So a nonprofit was formed and separated from the church.”

While Kelly knew he could not save every teen in Franklin County, he hoped to be like the boy in the story and help as many as possible. And over the last decade, that has been just what Kelly and a dedicated group of volunteers have done. Along with those who help with The Center, they have created a place where young people can show up and feel welcome, fill their stomachs and hearts, and leave better than they arrived.

“We have a full game room, and kids can come in and play pool, ping pong, foosball, and air hockey,” he said. “We also feed them for free every Wednesday night. We partner with the Franklin County Prevention Coalition, and they come in and share a positive action message. We always have a time when we share the gospel with them. We are a religious organization, and we don’t make any apologies for that. We share Jesus with them, as we believe that’s the only thing that can change their lives.”



After celebrating 10 years of being a faithful resource to the community, Kelly said that it is his dream to see The Center continue to grow and flourish.

“It’s pretty awesome when they stop by to say thank you,” he said. “It means a lot when they tell us we gave them a place when they didn’t have anywhere. We are so thankful for those times. While we can’t save them all, we know if we can help or rescue one of them, we have done something. It’s always worth it.”

Kelly said that there is still a lot of work to be done. But just as it began, the team will continue to move forward in faith and allow God to work through them and all that come through The Rain Teen Center.

“I would love a center with a basketball court and an additional outside area. Our long-term goal would be to have a center that is larger and able to reach even more of the youth of our area.

For more information on The Rain Teen Center, visit therainteencenter.com. GN



COMMUNITY EVENTS



▲ Sami Lavette

Love, chocolate, and supporting local!

Photos submitted by Moe Photos, Maurice Taylor

Patrons took to downtown Winchester for the annual Chocolate walk to celebrate the season of love and support local businesses. Chocolate lovers of all ages strolled the streets of the historic downtown and received free chocolate from participating businesses.



▶ Ladies with their bags and tickets for the chocolate walk.



▶ Group holding bags and tickets for the chocolate walk.





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EVENTS CALENDAR

March 11

10:00 am Market Place Consignment
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We have been outfitting local families for less and enabling them for more for 29 years. What began as a service to help families make and save money has become so much more. We are thankful to partner with our community and neighbors to pass it on!

7:00 pm The Bellamy Brothers w/Lauren Lucas
Franklin County High School
833 Bypass Rd.
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March 22

10:00 am Storytime
Franklin County Library
105 S. Porter St.
Winchester

March 25

4:00 pm United Way Father Daughter Dance
Monterey Station
Cowan

Photos will begin at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$40 per person and will be on sale beginning February 1 at Citizens Community Bank in Winchester. Only 400 tickets will be sold.

For more information contact (931) 308-7308 or email jeanniamacher@gmail.com



March 26

6:00 pm Kingsmen Quartet
 First Baptist Church
 Estill Springs
 218 N. Main St.
 Estill Springs

March 29

10:00 am Storytime
 Franklin County Library
 105 S. Porter St.
 Winchester

April 1

**10:00 am 2023 Decherd
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Activities include a parade, live music, arts and crafts vendors, food vendors, potato soup and salad recipe competition, seed swap, kids zone, and more.

For more information or to become a vendor: shopdecherdtn.com

April 29

**11:00 am Belvidere Volunteer
 Fire Department
 Spring Fish Fry**
 Belvidere Community
 Center
 349 Belvidere Rd.
 Belvidere

Activities include Bluegrass music and the all-you-can-eat catfish and chicken buffet with all the fixings, including homemade desserts. Adults \$15.00, children (4 – 12) \$5.00.

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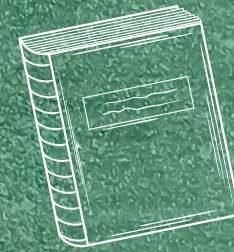
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