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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

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 Local people celebrate our libraries
- 18 Dotson's Country Market has a new home
- 22 Coffee County Middle School golf team seeks another win

Submit a positive story on our website:



goodnewsmags.com

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASHLEIGH NEWNES

◀ Kisha Thayer, Eddie Stamey, and Alyssa Kendrick



Local people celebrate our libraries.

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

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

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. 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 favorite books on the road again, this time in our vehi-

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cles and homes. Video cassettes took us to exotic lands, taught new skills and hobbies, and entertained us with movies at no charge.

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 Coffee County Manchester Public Library at 1005 Hillsboro Blvd., Manchester. For more information, call (931) 723-5143 or go to coffeecountylibrary.org.

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▲ Kisha Thayer, Eddie Stamey, and Alyssa Kendrick

Dotson's Country Market has a new home.

Dotson's Country Market has a new place to call home, but its quality remains the same.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

DOTSON'S COUNTRY Market, once housed on Hillsboro Boulevard in Manchester, now has a new place to call home. The market is currently located at 1306 Hillsboro Blvd., a few buildings away from its previous location at 738 Hillsboro Blvd.

Owners Eddie and Kathy Stamey leased the previous building, which will be torn down and used as an office building.

The Stamey's granddaughter, Kisha Thayers, works at the market along with Alyssa Kendrick and Thayers' daughter, Alanta May.

Kathy's parents, James and Edna Dotson, opened Dotson's Country Market in Sale Creek, TN, in the '50s, and it has lasted for five generations.

There's nothing like eating a meal with home-grown, locally sourced ingredients. You can't beat the taste of fresh fruits and vegetables straight from the city where you live and feel safe. Dotson's Country Market is family-owned and locally sourced, bringing many community members together to enjoy all the tasty ingredients the market offers.

Some of the most rewarding parts of shopping at local businesses are the per-

sonalized shopping experience, the jobs that arise from local businesses, and, in this case, the garden-fresh, natural products from locally owned farms and markets.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, farmers markets have grown increasingly important for the U.S. economy, food systems, and communities. They are connecting pieces that bridge gaps between rural and urban communities, farmers and consumers, and fresh ingredients and the human body that craves them.

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▶ Eddie Stamey



◀ Kisha Thayer



meet the growing demand for locally grown food. Marketing directly to the consumer gives farmers income opportunities without the additional costs of shipping, storage, and other business processes.

When you walk into Dotson's Country Market, you feel a sense of freshness that you wouldn't otherwise feel at a regular grocery store.

Thayers said, "I always carry fresh vegetables and produce all year round. And then we have Amish products."

Amish pickled baby beets, sourced in Ohio, and Tennessee mountain honey are some of the market's best-sellers, along with their fresh, juicy tomatoes.

Not only does the market offer fresh products, but it also promotes a friendly environment for all people. Customers can expect a family atmosphere when they walk through the door.

"We're all family here. We love all of our customers, and we try to make it a good experience when you walk in."

The market has live Christmas trees during the holi-

day season and various plants in the spring and fall.

One of many ways the family gives back is by sending products like pumpkins to local schools and families for fall festivals, and many schools in the area purchase fresh produce at the market throughout the year.

Thayers said the community could continue supporting the market by visiting them in-store and interacting with them online.

"Just come support us, and... you know — social media — we're on Facebook, you know — share our posts and stuff like that."

Thayers would like the community of Manchester to know that they are loved. She said, "We love Manchester. Manchester has been really good to us. We just love all our customers here." **GN**

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Coffee County Middle School Golf team seeks another win.

Coach Rachel Williams seeks to lead her team to another win after last season's SEC Championship.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photo submitted by Rachel Williams

THE COFFEE County Middle School's golf team won their first SEC season in 10 years and went on to win first place in the conference tournament, with golf coach Rachel Williams coaching for the first time.

Williams played golf in high school and was a talented multi-sport athlete. Her kids have since carried the baton and have been involved with Coffee County junior golf programs since they were young.

Williams revealed that the players have a lot of chemistry, which helped them win the championship.

She said, "The eighth grade boys played together in the junior golf program since they were little, so we just kept waiting and waiting."

Williams said she and the golfers knew they would win a championship when the boys transitioned from junior golf to middle school golf.

"They said, at the beginning of last season, 'We're gonna win it this year.'"

The golf coach highlighted that she had a strong team last year, and eight of her 14 golfers played in every match, with her son, Cade Williams, being one of them. James

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“I want to see them grow as players and enjoy the game. That’s the whole point – to enjoy what you’re playing.”

-Rachel Williams

Bradley, Skylar Releford, Lucas Turner, and Luke Lowe were among the eight players. Williams listed her top four players that took the team to the next level. She had returning players Cade Williams, Tallan Crosslin, Noah Costello, and Brayden Kesling on the line-up. She hopes the conference championship win will bring in more players, specifically girl golfers.

The team was forced to contend with inclement weather conditions last season. Williams said the golfers had to play in the “pouring down rain.”

She recalled, “I’ll never forget we played a match in Franklin County at Bear Trace, and it probably rained seven of the nine holes they played, bless their hearts, and they were drenched.”

The team rescheduled a couple of matches due to difficult weather conditions, which extended the golf season.

Their successful season last year earned

all but one of them, Luke Lowe, a returning varsity seventh grade player, a spot on Coffee County High School’s golf team. “The high school coach was like, ‘Absolutely, I want all of them.’ It was because they had such a great season. I had such a great group of players, so they just got to end with me and pick up with high school and start their whole high school career. It was a positive transition from leaving me to going to high school.”

The coach hopes that her new group of players and the one returning player will have a successful season but, most importantly, enjoy the sport without the pressure to repeat last year’s feat.

“I want to see them grow as players and enjoy the game. That’s the whole point — to enjoy what you’re playing. I don’t want to put that weight on their shoulders at the start of the season. I just want to see them enjoy it and improve as individual golfers.” **GN**



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CHAPTER 2 OF 3

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

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◀ Teresea Bellamy and Rhodes Bendus



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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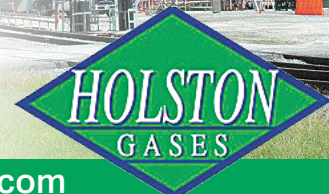
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Jeff Hinshaw

THE BALDWIN CART PROJECT

Mr. Hinshaw's Manufacturing Practicum class creates a mobile DSLR cart for Mrs. Baldwin's Digital Arts class.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

MR. HINSHAW'S Manufacturing Practicum class created a portable cart for Mrs. Baldwin's Digital Arts class to hold their digital single-lens reflex (DSLR). Little did they know their senior capstone project, the "Baldwin Cart Project," would turn into a memorable experience the class would never forget. Though it wasn't the first project they worked on for Mrs. Baldwin, it opened the door for the two classes to collaborate on further projects in the future.

Coffee County Central High School teacher Jeff Hinshaw has taught his Manufacturing Practicum class for 12 years. Before teaching, he was an engineer, but he soon realized a career in education would allow him to spend more time with his children, so he brought his skills to the classroom, teaching and coaching basketball, softball, and baseball.

Hinshaw said when he first started working, he had one lathe and one working mill. He now has five working mills and six working lathes.

The program has come a long way since he started teaching at the high school.





▲ PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY JEFF HINSHAW

Remington Banks, Jaden Conlee, Brayden Davenport, Jeff Hinshaw, Anthony Fidecaro, Daniel Ferrell, John Mckelvey, and Kyler Heilman

He said, “Since then, I’ve grown the class. We got our own 3D printer with a lot of help. We [received] funding for CNC mills, a CNC lathe, a CNC plasma cutter, and added a lot more machines.” The project initially started with Mrs. Baldwin needing a safe spot to keep her cameras and equipment because she found that cameras ended up broken or misplaced without one. It quickly transformed into one of many projects that the class will work on for the digital arts teacher in the future.

The Manufacturing Practicum class knew just what the digital arts teacher needed and immediately began locating the cameras, lenses, and charging stations and built the cart from scratch. Mrs. Baldwin appreciated the class’s efforts in helping her find effective ways to store her equipment.

She said, “Mr. Hinshaw’s class did an excellent job creating a cart for the DSLR cameras and lenses for my Digital Arts courses. The cart provided students with an easy storage area for our camera equipment and an area to charge batteries. It even has hooks for storage of camera bags on the sides. The best part about the cart is that I can easily see if a camera is still in use or has not been returned.”

The cart is one of several projects Hinshaw’s students have completed to help organize the Digital Art program’s multimedia room. His students also created a cart to hold their Panasonic video cameras and small wall mounts to organize their equipment cords and cables. Mrs. Baldwin said she is very pleased with his students’ work and looks forward to collaborating with them more in the future.

Working on the project allowed the seniors to enjoy each other’s company and encouraged them to work together to achieve

a common goal. Only seven seniors were working on the project last year, which created a more intimate space for the students and their teacher to collaborate and create something the school would never forget.

Hinshaw said, “This group that I had was just awesome. They worked well together. Some kids had certain skills and some other skills. So that’s the thing they did. And I knew that and then let everybody do a little bit of something. So yeah, it was a full-team project.”

Hinshaw described the project as “a critical-thinking job.”

“Find a problem — solve it. It’s the basis of being an engineer, but you’ll have these problems all your life, at your house, home, or work. You have [these problems], and you need to fix them. To know that instead of standing back with your hands crossed and saying, ‘I don’t know what to do,’ come up with solutions, test them, and try them. And that’s some of the stuff that they did.”

Hinshaw said he enjoyed working with his students last year and is now enjoying a new group of seniors. This year, the class will work on their own projects and are waiting for the school’s softball field bleachers to arrive. Mr. Hinshaw’s class always makes the holders for the sports banners for each player. Incoming seniors never know what project to expect in Mr. Hinshaw’s class, but they’re always prepared to do their best work and learn critical skills in the process.

He said, “Capstone projects are good because they get a chance to use all of their skills together, not just training specifically on one machine. And they also get to think critically about how to solve these problems.” GN



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



**TERESA
BELLAMY**

MORE THAN A TEACHER

Teresa Bellamy enriches students' lives through core life skills.

By Jeriah Brumfield
Photography by Ashleigh Newnes



She kept telling me as a little girl that I can do anything I put my mind to. And when I was little bitty, I would set up my stuffed animals as students in my class.

- Teresa Bellamy

ASIDE FROM teaching, you might find Westwood Elementary School teacher Teresa Bellamy sitting in faculty meetings and attending her grandchildren's and students' sports games. You might also find her helping with the drama club.

Teresa Bellamy has been married to her husband, Bob, for 34 years. Together they have five children, 14 grandchildren, and a great-grandson due in May. They have two dogs: Pickles, a miniature dachshund; and AnnaBelle, a mixed breed.

Teresa is in her 26th year of teaching and enjoys working in the school system and spending time with her grandchildren, who attend Westwood Elementary.

She said her late grandmother inspired her to pursue a career in education, but she wouldn't officially start teaching until her 30s.

Teresa said, "She kept telling me as a little girl that I can do anything I put my mind to. And when I was little bitty, I would set up my stuffed animals as students in my class."

She said that growing up, she moved to different schools and was never in one spot for a whole school year, so she could never share a connection with her teachers.



▲ Aiyana Jernigan, Jonathan McDaniel, and Arlie Bridgets

“I never had those bonds with special teachers. I never had a teacher to really influence me to become a teacher. But it would have been my grandmother that influenced me to become a teacher.”

Although she maintained good grades in school and earned a spot on the honor roll, Teresa couldn't attend college until she was 30 because it was not feasible for her and her family when she was a teenager. She overcame many obstacles as a child, including not knowing her dad until she was older. Her dad, Cliff Griffin, who lived in North Carolina, contacted her and asked if he could move to Manchester and live with her family soon after he developed throat cancer. She and Bob decided Manchester was the best place for him, and he lived with them for 15 years before he passed away. Griffin was a door greeter at Walmart who spoke through a microphone and was well-known in the community.

After Teresa and her husband were married, a man at her church told her she needed to be a teacher. She hadn't given it much thought after her grandmother passed, but he told her he would pay for her first semester of college, books, and tuition.



Teaching is one of the most rewarding professions in that it gives you an opportunity to impact a future generation.

- Teresa Bellamy

Teresa was initially reluctant because she was married with four kids and a newborn. After he reassured her that he and his wife would do whatever they could to help her, she decided to enroll. Her dad was also helpful; since he lived with the family, he took her children to school and cared for her baby while she was in school. She applied for several grants and worked on the campuses she attended. She graduated with honors from Motlow State Community College, Middle Tennessee State University, and Tennessee Tech, earning her associate, bachelor's, master's, and education specialist degrees. She said, "I could not have completed this without the help of my family, friends, and my church."

Teresa enjoys attending her grandchildren's sports games and performances. She also enjoys crocheting gifts for her students at Westwood during the holidays. Her students received a crocheted heart pillow and a warm winter hat this year.

"I love it when my former students tell me they still have the gift I made them for Christmas."

The most rewarding part for her is helping enrich her students' lives through core educational and life skills.

"Teaching is one of the most rewarding professions in that it gives you an opportunity to impact a future generation."

Teresa said her students are the inspiration that keeps her moving forward.

She said, "I want to help them grow, learn to think critically, and develop enduring bonds with them, even after they leave my classroom. I love keeping up with my former students and watching their children grow up."

Being an educator, to Teresa, means bearing the knowledge to understand where a child is and building upon the skills and knowledge they've already obtained to help them grow. It also means interacting with families, parents, and the community and being a voice for the children.

"I want my students to use what they learn in school to make valuable changes in their communities. Educating is supplying the facts and then going with the students on the journey to uncover the knowledge that the facts supply." GN



**BRANDON
MCWHORTER**

MORE THAN A COACH

Coach Brandon McWhorter wants every child to have the opportunity to play sports regardless of their situation.

By Jeriah Brumfield
Photography by Ashleigh Newnes



CO-ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, head softball coach, and math teacher Brandon McWhorter, with Coffee County Central High School, graduated from Coffee County and played college football in West Tennessee. He landed his first job as a coach shortly after he graduated.

Eventually, he decided to pay it forward and returned to his alma mater to coach football and softball. He later decided to explore the sports world a little more and earned his master's degree in Sports Administration at Belhaven University.

He said, "A couple of years after I finished my degree in Sports Administration, our athletic director position opened. Our principal approached me asking if I was interested, and I'm thankful he did." McWhorter has served Coffee County Central High School for 14 years.

His service is not exclusive to himself but also spreads to his softball team and the entire school district. As a coach, McWhorter encourages his team to serve their community as much as possible. "This year, the team participated in our school system's Angel Tree Program. The girls and coaches went out to shop and wrap gifts for two angels in our community."

McWhorter said his athletic director role helps him stay active in the community. He is currently involved with the Dream for Weave Foundation, which gives back to athletes of all ages in the community. "Hopefully, one day, the kids involved in our youth programs today will play for us here at the high school. So we want to make sure that every kid has an opportunity to play as many sports as possible and can do that no matter their situation."

McWhorter enjoys wearing multiple hats and interacting with different athletes and students. Coaching softball means more to him than winning championships. Through



Hopefully, one day, the kids involved in our youth programs today will play for us here at the high school. So we want to make sure that every kid has an opportunity to play as many sports as possible and can do that no matter their situation.

- Brandon McWhorter



the softball program, McWhorter can build relationships that lead to lifelong bonds.

“You know you made an impact when you are two years beyond graduation and girls come back, and they invite you to the weddings, or they reach out to you to tell you about how they’ve been. That family atmosphere will teach these girls stuff that will help them on the field, but hopefully will help them outside of softball and beyond graduation to make them well rounded.”

McWhorter’s roles as coach, athletic director, and teacher have each inhabited a unique impact. McWhorter said he often has students in his class talk to him about joining a sports team. “Sports is a huge thing for high school kids to be part of because it helps them learn some life lessons that the classroom can’t teach.”

McWhorter said sports teams teach students responsibility and time management. Coffee County Central High School’s softball program has been running since 1990 and has had many successful seasons and a history of winning district and region championships. They’ve been to the state tournament seven times, and just two years ago, they earned “runners-up” in the 2021 state tournament, finishing second in Tennessee, the highest position they’ve ever had in the program’s history.

McWhorter said softball is considered a minor sport, but it could be considered a major sport in Coffee County.

“It’s a program with great tradition and success every year. Softball, in this town, is a big thing. We have had many great athletes come through our program, and many have gone on to play in college.”

The athletic department has a wall of names of students who have graduated and gone on to play softball after college.

As exciting as his positions are, McWhorter’s biggest challenge is time. He teaches four classes, handles athletics and softball program activities, and works around the clock to ensure the math and athletic programs run smoothly.



If he isn’t filling out paperwork or attending meetings, he’s scheduling games and coordinating referees.

“On a typical game day, I arrive at school at 7:20 a.m. and do not get home until sometime around 10 p.m., anywhere from 1-3 times a week during the fall and winter. As you can tell, this usually means a good morning is about all I get with my family on these days.”

McWhorter said his wife and daughter are his biggest supporters, and he couldn’t do what he does without their sacrifice and support.

McWhorter said that over the past 16 years that he’s taught, technological advancements and a supportive group of co-workers have helped him manage his jobs as effectively as possible.

“We work at a great school with a lot of good people, which makes coming to work enjoyable.” **GN**



CHRISTY CLOUSE

TEACHER AND AVID COMMU- NITY MEMBER

Christy Clouse teaches physics and science, but her impact extends beyond Raider Academy's four walls.

By Jeriah Brumfield
Photography by Ashleigh Newnes



NINTH GRADE Raider Academy teacher Christy Clouse was born and raised in Manchester and is a proud, lifelong resident of a charming town many call “home.” The honors physics and physical science teacher, who also spent time teaching psychology for a while, has always been a Raider and moved with the ninth-grade students to Coffee County Raider Academy when it opened. She is also a children’s teacher at her church and a leader for many in the community.

Clouse earned her undergraduate degree in physics at Middle Tennessee State University. Clouse said watching a few Olympics games intrigued her and made her even more interested in physics.

“Watching that and some of the stories they had about the scientists that worked with athletes really got me interested. And I also got into a couple of aerospace courses. That made me interested in flight. I spent a little time in graduate school at the University of Tennessee Space Institute, so I became a physics major,” said the science enthusiast.

After graduating undergrad, she attended Tennessee Tech and received her master’s degree.

Aside from teaching STEM-related courses at Coffee County Raider Academy, Clouse is the head cheerleading coach at Coffee County Central High School. She decided to make a life for herself in Manchester because living here gives her a familial connection.

Last year, the high school basketball team made it to the state tournament. This year, the football team celebrated its 100th year of Red Raider football with a region championship, which was their first playoff win and best record since 1969. Witnessing how close the community became through watching sports reminded Clouse why she decided to stay and be a part of the school and community.

Raider Academy has a tightly-knit group of faculty and staff, which allows the students and staff to experience a closeness and collaborative effort that might be more challenging to cultivate at a regular high school.

Clouse's father was an elementary principal, so working in a school system was second nature for her. Her most important moments as a teacher come from watching students learn something new.

She said, "A lot of scientific principles are things that maybe they haven't thought about or experienced hands-on. And seeing [the] 'Aha!' moments [is] one of my favorite things."

One of the biggest challenges Clouse faces as a teacher is keeping the students engaged and helping them understand the importance of academics. Another is time management, which can seem daunting for educators teaching a subject with concepts with which students are unfamiliar.

One skill Clouse tries to instill in her students is problem-solving.

"Learning how to problem-solve will carry you through with whatever it looks like when you graduate. And being a close-knit community, we hear a lot about those that go into STEM-related careers. Some go to technical school, which can also be very STEM-related."

Aside from problem-solving, critical thinking skills are among many values students learn in the Raider Academy's physics department. Clouse recently introduced her physics students to one of their larger projects, which is a catapult project.

Clouse explained that taking ideas and coming up with a plan, following that scientific method or the





Learning how to problem-solve will carry you through with whatever it looks like when you graduate. And being a close-knit community, we hear a lot about those that go into STEM-related careers

– Christy Clouse



engineering design process, and working together helps the students learn important concepts like collaboration that will carry them after their high school career ends.

The physics and science teacher plans to continue seeking innovative ways to help improve the science courses at Raider Academy.

“My goals are to continue building on what I’m doing, add new ideas to the classroom, and constantly look for nice things that I can add to the classroom, as well as making time for other activities I’m involved with and being involved with family.”

Students at Raider Academy learn real-world scientific techniques through hands-on experiences.

Each year, in May, Clouse takes her students to Lake Winnepesaukah (Lake Winnie), a small amusement park outside of Chattanooga, where they hold their annual “Physics Day.” At the amusement park, the rising physicists measure concepts like time and height for different rides, calculating the physics and specific aspects of the rides.

“That’s something we all look forward to — catapults and Lake Winnie.”

Clouse is a Coffee County Fair board member who serves as chairman of the pageant and scholarship committees. The board recently attended the state fair convention, where it won “Most Improved Fair” in AAA divisions, the highest division. She is also the president of the Tennessee Cheerleading Coaches Association. She manages events like the All-State Cheerleading selection process and coaches the cheerleaders at the East-West All-Star football game each year in December. **GN**

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MIGHTY





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Good News is coming to dinner!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as she dines in Manchester. This month Shellymar Repollet visited Ramsey Grill.

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I TEETERED BEHIND the edge of the counter in anticipation, trying to catch a better glimpse of the man shaving thick slices of the simmering meat just a few feet away from me. Tummy rumbling, I ordered everything that looked good from the customers around me, including a collection of falafels, the gyro sandwich, a falafel sandwich, and crispy baklava. In quick time after being seated, my eyes feasted on the arrangement atop the platter set at my table. Acknowledging what I had been previously fawning over, with its contents of meat, salad, cheese, tzatziki sauce, and sliced onions all spilling juice and filling over the wrapper keeping them contained, the gyro sandwich was enjoyed through to the very last tender morsel. Enough to feed an adult belly to the brim, I was told the gyro sandwich was an all-time favorite for regular patrons of this Greek American Restaurant, and its savory contents did not disappoint.

Between bites of the perfectly spiced gyro meat and crunchy french fries was another star of the meal, the falafel. This mixture of the fluffy chickpea and herb interior with the tanginess of the yogurt sauce they gave me to dip was almost too delicate, too “good” to merely devour. Even better than just the falafel by itself was the falafel as a sandwich. Containing the same fillings as the gyro sandwich except for the gyro meat itself, the falafel sandwich is a vegetarian’s dainty great-food-induced dream. At this point, my tastebuds were nearly reaching the end of its meal, but not before the prize of dessert, baklava. Rich in flavor and layers of paper-thin pastry beckoning you to bite into its nutty, sweet interior, the baklava itself spoke of my whole dining experience at Ramsey Grill. Tasty, comforting, and the culmination of international flavors brought to America for us to enjoy what they have become today. GN





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





Good Times

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASHLEIGH NEWNES

◀ LeBron Haggard, Renee Haggard,
and Jon Pritt



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Reading is for adults, too! ≡

Annual author-signing rekindles the love of reading for patrons.

By Kali Bradford // Photography by Ashleigh Newnes



▲ Jenna Cossey

THERE IS nothing quite like the idea of curling up with a good book and taking the afternoon to journey off into another land or planet and go on a grand adventure with unforgettable characters or learn about a historical figure or time. And there is always the favorite scenario of reading through a love story where the hero and heroine live happily ever after. Books give us these opportunities and more. No matter how old we get, a book is always ready and waiting to take us on an adventure.

One of the best ways to get your fix for a reading adventure is through the local library. Not only do they offer a plethora of books to explore, but they also host several events throughout the year to inspire patrons to read.



▲ Reggi Broach and Ron Broach

Helping locals get excited about reading is the Coffee County Manchester Library. The local library recently held its annual author-signing event. The event kicked off the adult reading program from January 14 through February 11. According to the youth services librarian

and event coordinator, Daphanie Gragg, the program's purpose was to rekindle the love of reading for their adult patrons.

“The program this year is called ‘A Winter's Tale,’ said Gragg. “Attendees received an author passport, which was new this year. We wanted every author to be visited. So with each visit, you received a sticker to place on your passport. When they visited all the authors, their passports became a raffle ticket where attendees could win prizes. The event helps to introduce them to local authors and possibly a new book to read and enjoy.”

Gragg added that over 20 local authors were on hand for the event. Gragg said she



Michael Shoulders

“Being able to meet the authors motivates readers to try different books. I also hope they get to know these amazing local authors and all they have to offer.”

-Daphanie Gragg

is happy to showcase the many talented authors in the area.

“We are blessed to have so many talented authors here in the area,” she said. “Some of them are patrons, and one of them I go to church with, and I was unaware of what a talented writer she was. Each author was able to set up their table and display. We also received permission from the board for the authors to be able to sell their books.”

Her first time hosting and coordinating the event, Gragg said she is glad to be able to offer such a unique event to patrons that will continue to spread the knowledge of local authors and grow the importance of reading at any age.

“Being able to meet the authors motivates readers to try different books. I



▲ Kelly and Nathaniel Rich

also hope they get to know these amazing local authors and all they have to offer,” she said.

For more chances to increase one’s love of reading, follow the library on Facebook or visit coffeecountylibrary.org. GN



▲ Mia Smith, Jane Banks Campbell, and Lori Jill Smith

COMMUNITY EVENTS



▲ Jon Rubke, and Nik Dunavant

A loving, innocent orphan child

Photos submitted by Erica Petersen

The Millennium Repertory Company opened its 2023 season with the classic musical “Oliver!” Patrons enjoyed the local theatrical production that included laughter, romance, drama, rousing dances, and some of the most memorable songs in musical theatre history.



▲ Jonathan Higdon and Alyssa Freeze



▶ Ko West, Charlotte Hubble, and JD Dill



◀
Dustin
and Holly
Hepburn



◀
Nicole
Freeman,
Crystal
Kerns,
and
Amber
Tucker

Music and Brew

Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

Rising country music singer, songwriter, and performer Sam Grow stopped at Common John Brewing Company for an evening of great music and brews. Grow's performance was part of his 'Bar Like This' Acoustic Tour.



▶
Jenna
Hludzik
and Ryan
Madsen



▶
Jordan
and Deb
Saint James



◀
Alex
Seller



▲ Sam Grow

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EVENTS CALENDAR

March 23

**8:00 am On My Own
Simulation for
Students —
Volunteers Needed!**

March 23-March 24
Throughout the two-day
simulation, students will
learn how to manage
their finances based
on a number of factors
given to them prior to
the event.

Volunteers will help
students navigate
stations that represent
areas of life — housing,
groceries, etc.

March 25

8:30 pm Double Down
Country Junction
4027 Murfreesboro Hwy.

Get your country dance
on!! Great folks, great
fun, and great music!
Scoot your boots to all
your favorite country
dance tunes!

March 31

7:00 pm Rhonda Vincent
Manchester
Coffee County
Conference Center
147 Hospitality Blvd.

Join us for a night
with Rhonda Vincent,
bluegrass singer and an
accomplished mandolin,
guitar and fiddle player.

April 14

**8:00 am The Three
Musketeers**
Millennium Repertory
Company
128 E. Main St.

Ken Ludwig's adaptation
of the timeless
swashbuckler is a comic
thriller! Young D'Artagnan
sets off for Paris in
search of adventure,
along with his tomboy
sister, Sabine, disguised
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heroes, swordfights, and,
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April 15

9:30 am **TEDxTulahoma**

South Jackson Civic
Center & Mitchell Museum
404 S. Jackson St.
Tulahoma

An independently organized event in the spirit of "TED Talks," 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 the first time in TEDxTulahoma history, we will have a Tulahoma City Schools student as part of our lineup. It will be a great morning to learn and celebrate what makes Tulahoma a great place to live!

April 29

11:00 am **Belvidere Volunteer Fire Department Spring Fish Fry**

349 Belvidere Rd.
Belvidere, TN

**For more events
and to submit
an event visit:**

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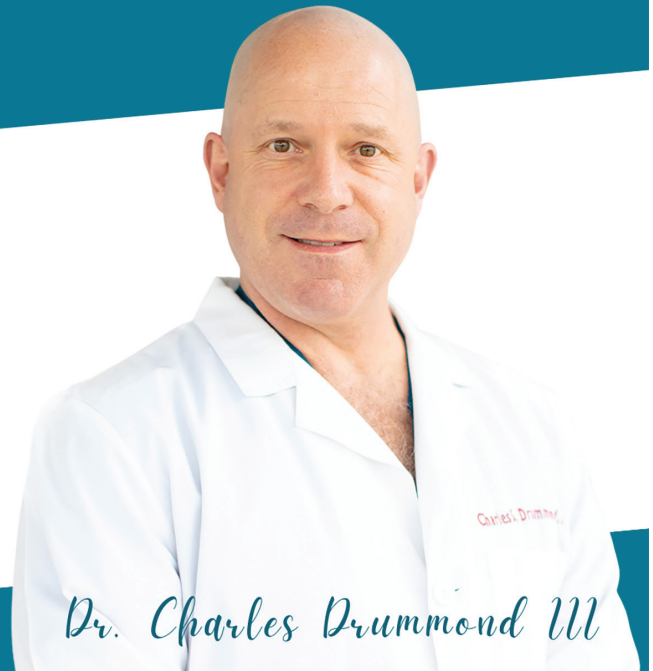
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