

# Good News

exchange

*Ricky Tipps*

## Christmas magic in Franklin County

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the  
Holidays

ISSUE 11 2023

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Heartwarming stories at home

Experience the good this holiday season

LIKE THE cozy warmth of a heated blanket, Good News and the holidays are in the air once again. The season of festive lights, crackling fireplaces, and familiar carols is upon us, inviting a sense of togetherness that warms the soul. As the vintage Christmas record spins on the player and marshmallows swirl in steaming hot chocolate, it's a time when family and friends gather to create lasting memories.

Home for the holidays is a special feeling. It's the time when loved ones from far and wide journey back home, coming together to share in the glow of holiday decorations. Volunteers wrap gifts for those in need, schools close their doors, and students anticipate a well-deserved break. Whether or not the snow graces our Christmas Day, the spirit of peace and love is ever-present.

In this holiday season, we want to celebrate those who elevate the holiday experience for everyone. Our community is filled with stories of love, generosity, and second chances, and Good News is here to share them. As you navigate your own traditions this season, we encourage you to share the love, positivity, and good news with our community. It's the best gift we can give one another. Grab the blanket, start the fire, and pour the hot coffee. It's time to go home for the holidays.

From all of us at Good News Magazine and Exchange Media Group, we extend our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. May your year conclude with joy, and together, let's spread happiness and goodwill throughout the world. **GN**

*Wesley Bryant*  
**Wesley Bryant,**  
MANAGING EDITOR

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**GOOD NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY** Exchange Media Group, Inc.

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# Good Living

## CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

- 14** People like us are everywhere
- 20** Bridging disparities with food and fellowship
- 26** Keeping the tradition alive
- 32** Tasteful traditions

Submit a positive story on our website:



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Photo submitted by Chris Ball



▲ Kristen Hannah and Joe Brown

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# People like us are everywhere



## THERE IS HOPE FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND.

By Tina Neeley // Photos submitted by Kristen Hannah Brown

**A**S A FRANKLIN County High School (FCHS) teenager, Kristen Hannah Brown felt lucky to get out. Forget dreams and aspirations; Brown was just counting the days until her graduation in 2001. In hindsight, she understands that her struggles weren't so uncommon — people just didn't talk about it.

"High school was hard for me. I was never confident or believed in myself. I battled, mentally, every day. Back then it wasn't talked about or advertised that you could talk to someone, like it is now. I still battle daily," Brown said.

One place she was comfortable, though, was in the FCHS flag corp and concert band.

"Flag corp meant that I belonged to this sorority of young ladies performing a task; it's a talent not just anyone can do. Waving a flag and keeping time, making sure you're where you're supposed to be at the right moment, is harder than it looks," she said.

And so it is with life.

Jumping onto the hamster wheel of life carrying the flag of your dreams, desires, and struggles often leaves us feeling we have to keep perfect time and stay in line with the rest of life's corp. It's more complicated than it looks, but one thing is different now than when Brown was in high school: the stigma of mental health is declining.

Brown said, "In high school, I saw how other people glowed and thrived. That wasn't me, and I desperately wanted that. But I didn't know how to grasp it, and I didn't know that I had to find it in myself. It wasn't until I entered the medical field that I realized there are people like me."

A band student since middle school, Brown played in the high school concert band. Band and flag corp was the closest thing to finding "it" she came to at the time.

"It allowed me to do something creative that I had control over. I was able to think for myself in band," Brown said. "Nobody talked about the signs or the symptoms [of depression]. Nobody said anything. Now, I think the mental health community has had such a big voice over

recent years; it's not taboo to be a little depressed anymore. A lot of teenagers are still battling the same things we did 20 years ago. Bullying is still there, and the stigma and judgment are still there. But if anybody gets anything out of this and my struggles in high school, I hope it's that they know they're not alone."

Brown married her husband, Joe, in 2002, and his stepmother, a nurse, steered her into a new path in adulthood. Her success and outlook influenced Kristen's future career.

"She encouraged me to start off small in nursing school and move up as I became comfortable. I did just that. I started as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) and am now a licensed vocational nurse. I started small, and now I'm confident, although I'm no longer practicing in the healthcare field. The same actions still resonate true in life and my current career at Halliburton Energy Services in Texas."

Now that Kristen knows help is available for her struggles, she lives a life that far outshines the one she knew in school.

# “Be yourself. Be happy with yourself. Then if people think you’re weird, just compliment them. Say thanks.”

- KRISTEN HANNAH BROWN



“Sure, we can go through the motions every day. And a lot of people define that as happy. They go through the motions daily, do the same thing every day, struggling but thinking they’re okay. But if life isn’t joyful, if you don’t have fun, if you don’t smile for yourself or bring a smile to someone else every day, it’s not joyful. You have to filter out all the ugly that this world is offering,” she said.

Kristen’s filter is creative outlets.

“I’m a hobby crafter. I have to release myself into something else. If I’m anxious or feeling depressed, I have to find something creative to channel feelings and emotions into. Otherwise, I’m just gonna get way too down. And life shouldn’t be like that. It’s too short for you to be miserable. Band was a good resource for me. It was something creative that I could use to channel something away from depression and anxiety, and just somewhere where I could feel like I fit in.”

With the tools for managing her mental well-being, Kristen plans to live intentionally for the next years of her life.

“I recently told my husband, I feel like it’s only in the last five years we’ve become happy with ourselves, living in joy. Life is too short for you to wait until you’re 35 to live in joy. I said no. Especially now, when we’re 40. And we’re only embracing it now. You need to live that as soon as you can.”

It’s a philosophy she shares with her son, Austin, as well.

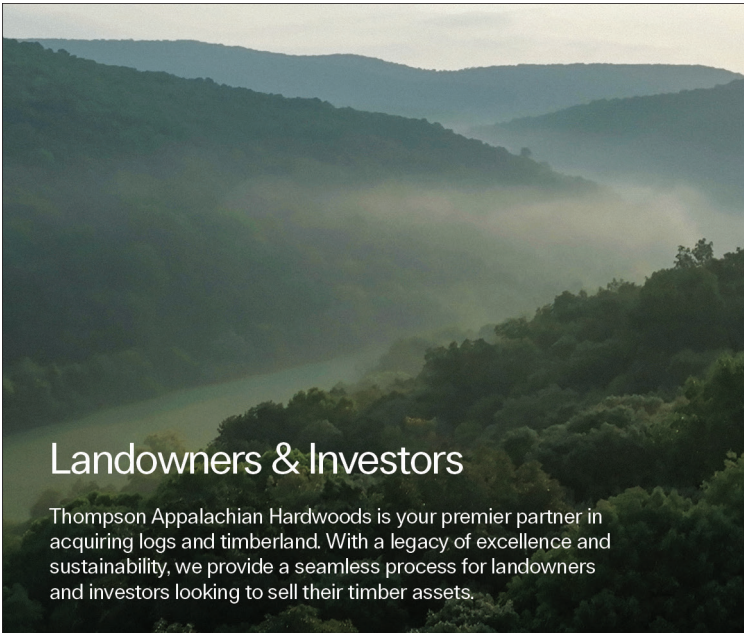
“I tell my son, ‘Look at your better side. Don’t compare yourself to other people because in 20 years, those people will not be the same people. Be yourself. Be happy with yourself. Then if people think you’re weird, just compliment them. Say thanks. I appreciate that because I think weird is awesome. They may think you’re an outcast, but God made you to stand out, not to fit in.’ And on social media, they want drama and chaos. Stay off of it. If it doesn’t interest you or bring you joy, stay away from it.”

It’s the message she has for all young people.

“Depression and anxiety are a big deal. But let’s get it fixed. Life is worth living. Let’s get it fixed.” GN

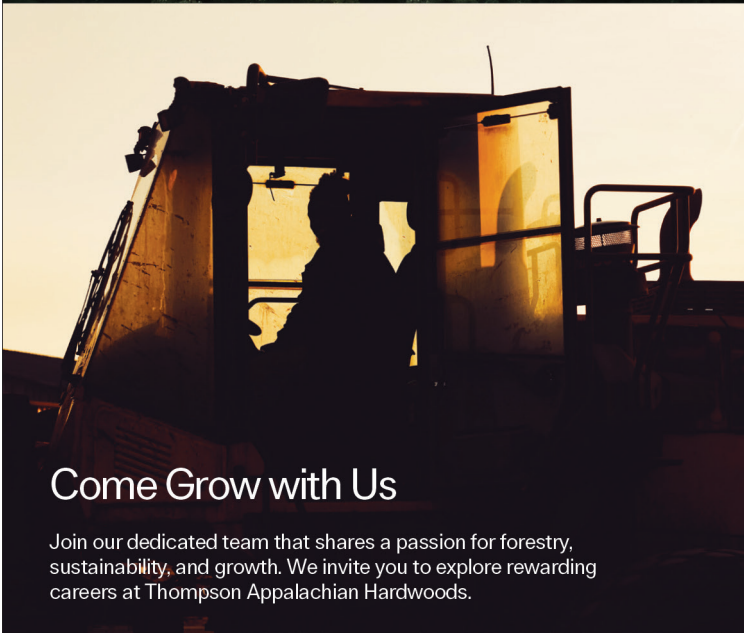






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# BRIDGING DISPARITIES

with food  
and fellowship



# Where the community bonds and hunger vanishes year-round

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photos submitted by Chris Ball

A HIDDEN TRUTH exists that often eludes our attention — the existence of the less fortunate population. These individuals remain easily overlooked as we venture through our daily lives. Among the distractions that captivate us, we unknowingly skim over their stories, their struggles, and their humanity. The material possessions they lack and the life they lead — these disparities rarely make it to the forefront of our thoughts. But, a fundamental reality remains: our worth has no restraints. Each person, a unique masterpiece strategically knit into existence, bears the mark of something greater. Regardless of our surface-level judgments, a higher truth prevails — the truth that we are all worthy of love.

The vision of Kathy Stamey, her son, Steve, and his wife, Meredith, was born out of compassion, driven by the desire to make a difference. They embarked on a journey

to address a pressing issue plaguing their community: hunger. As Kathy repeatedly heard stories of individuals within the county going to bed hungry, she decided to take action.

"She just decided to do something about it," shared Chris Ball, a volunteer with the organization. "They originally started simply delivering meals at Thanksgiving to people who needed food. If they asked for it, they got it."

The vision was to create a place similar to cherished family gatherings around the table during holidays amidst such divisive times.

"We all gathered in the kitchen around the table. That's where the event usually ended up. Everybody sat around the table, and we were one."

This idea of unity and togetherness inspired the concept of The Table.

"The goal of The Table is to be a place that unifies our community in times that are so divisive," Ball shared.

“ We all gathered in the kitchen around the table. That’s where the event usually ended up. Everybody sat around the table, and we were one.

-Chris Ball





"It's about bringing people together regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances."

The Stamey family transformed a basement into a welcoming restaurant, a place for everyone in the community, regardless of their circumstances.

The Table isn't just a conventional soup kitchen; it's a free restaurant where anyone in the community who's hungry or in need of fellowship is welcomed with open arms. Families struggling to make ends meet, individuals seeking companionship, and those who simply want to share a conversation are all embraced.

The impact of The Table has been profound. From its humble beginnings of serving meals to 50 people, it has rapidly grown to serve 500-700 people in just a matter of months. The demand for this safe haven of sustenance and camaraderie is evident.

Their generosity extends beyond food. The Table provides free fruits, vegetables, bread, and essential items to families. Recognizing that the need doesn't stop when they close their doors, they're determined to be there around the clock for the community.

"The table is much more than food for your body. It's food for your soul and food for your spirit," Ball said.

Challenges are prevalent, but the community's dedication is unyielding. Volunteers and donations power this endeavor, and the Stamey family is determined to expand their reach. Plans are in place to

transform The Table into a haven for more than just meals — a place for movie nights, friendly gatherings, and family-friendly entertainment.

With open arms, The Table invites anyone seeking connection, compassion, and unity to join their family. For the Stamey family and their community, The Table isn't just a place; it's a symbol of what's possible when hearts and hands come together to make a difference. And everyone is welcome to take a seat at The Table.

"Come visit us and see the 500-700 people. It's going to change you," he said.

As The Table continues to grow and serve, its message is clear: compassion knows no boundaries. People from different walks of life, backgrounds, and beliefs are finding common ground at The Table. In a world often divided, this group reminds us that kindness and community are always in season.

"The reality is that everybody has intrinsic value. Every person is special. We are all wonderfully and fearfully made by God. And this means that we are all God's children. And because of that, you have a value, they have a value, regardless of their clothes. Regardless of where they're sleeping, they still have value." GN

Call Chris Ball at (931) 636-3219  
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# KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE

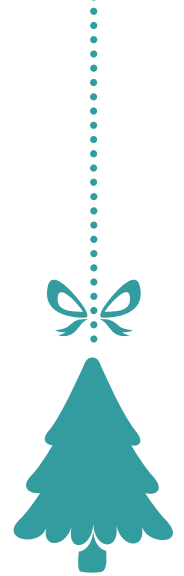


The 59th annual Cowan Christmas Parade continues to unite generations in festive tradition.

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photos submitted by Cowan Development



Brenda Lee



WZYK Radio

**T**HE COWAN Christmas Parade is an event that has brought joy, unity, and family traditions to the community for nearly six decades. Each year, the event fills the community with love, charm, great food, great memories, and a wealth of Christmas spirit. The 59th annual Cowan Christmas Parade promises beautifully decorated floats, talented band performances, Tin Lizzies, tumbling teams, grand marshals, and countless smiles.

For Chuck Stines, the chairman of the Christmas in Cowan committee, and many others in the community, Christmas in Cowan is a time-honored tradition that transcends generations.

"For me and my family, I know the way we celebrated was we always went to the Cowan Christmas Parade, and then we put our Christmas tree up. That's a tradition that we've had throughout the years and that I've continued with my family," Chuck shared, reminiscing about his cherished memories of attending the parade as a child.

Chuck's involvement with the parade began several years ago when the event was at risk of fading away. He stepped in while serving on the county commission and as a city council member in Cowan. The parade's importance to the community and its tradition of celebrating Christmas cheer were reasons enough for him to pick up the mantle.

Thanks to the dedicated support of the community, the Cowan Christmas Parade has never been canceled despite occasional delays due to unforeseen circumstances. The event thrives with the help of local businesses, organizations, and individuals who come together to keep the tradition alive.

In recent years, the committee has added famous grand marshals to the parade, developing an extra layer of excitement. These grand marshals, whether celebrities or local community heroes, contribute to the festive spirit and highlight the true meaning of Christmas.

Chuck emphasized the importance of community involvement: "We've prided ourselves on getting it built back up to not just the parade but other events



South Middle School Trojan Band



Pageant winners



Pageant winner Robert Hendon



that draw people into Cowan and Franklin County. We love to see participation from all our churches, civic organizations, and schools."

The parade route takes participants and spectators on a journey through the heart of Cowan, reflecting the city's history and heritage, often with a train playing a central role — a reference to the city's deep connection to the railroad.

The colorful floats and bands contribute to the parade's vibrant atmosphere. Chuck shared that the committee encourages and invites everyone to participate. He also mentions the community's efforts to collect candy for the parade and their dedication

to ensuring Santa Claus has enough candy to last throughout the event.

In addition to the festive floats and entertainment, the Cowan Christmas Parade often features local organizations and community-focused themes. Each year, they choose an organization that has positively impacted the community to honor and support.

The Cowan Christmas Parade's inclusivity extends to participants as well.

"We allow pretty much any kind of entry that you have. We want as much involvement as [possible]," Chuck explained, emphasizing their open approach to participants and the importance of community engagement.



Cowan Elementary School

As the parade winds its way down Cumberland Street, it begins at Paw Paw's Country Cookin on the west side and concludes at Cowan Elementary School. The parade showcases the community's unity, pride, and resilience and continues to be a precious tradition that brings joy to Cowan during the holiday season.

Chuck Stines and the Christmas in Cowan committee work tirelessly to ensure that the Cowan Christmas Parade remains a cherished tradition for generations to come. With its rich history, diverse participants, and unwavering community support, the parade exemplifies the true essence of Christmas — unity, joy, and the celebration of cherished traditions.

“It's definitely a high-energy, free event. And it's a pretty event. It's something to be able to drive down that parade route and see the kids' faces light up when you're throwing candy. They get that candy, and they get to see the siren on the fire truck with Santa. Just seeing the look in their eyes takes me back to feeling like a kid for a little while and enjoying that moment. It sparks some excitement and gets them hyped up for the Christmas season. And that's what we want to see and want to promote: the true meaning of Christmas and the love for one another and community involvement.” GN

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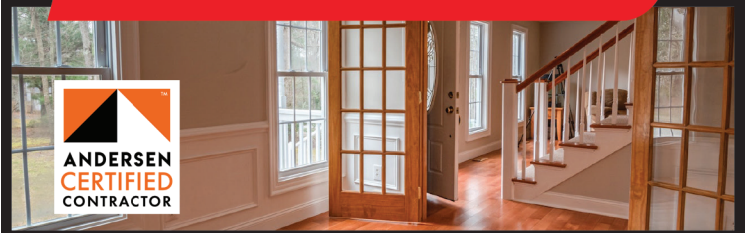
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# Tasteful traditions

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**A** LONG WITH December's hustle and bustle, our kitchens come alive with the spirit of the holidays. As friends and families gather, delightful treats take center stage, each dish a connection to cherished traditions. A medley of flavors accompanies these festive celebrations. From rich cocoa by the fireside to the potluck dishes that adorn our tables, these recipes capture the essence of family, love, and togetherness during this special season. **GN**



## Holiday Ham with Cider Glaze

Submitted by Donna Simmons

5-6 lb. ham, cooked, rump or shank  
2 c. apple cider or apple juice  
1 c. honey  
1/2 c. cider vinegar  
1/4 c. Dijon mustard  
2 t. chili powder  
1 T. butter  
1/2 t. apple pie spice

Score ham with diagonal cuts in a diamond pattern and place on rack in a shallow roasting pan. Bake until it registers 140°, about 1 1/2-2 hours. In a large saucepan, combine cider, honey, vinegar, mustard, and chili powder. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Boil gently, uncovered, for 15 minutes, stirring often. Remove half of mixture to a small mixing bowl. Stir in butter and 1/4 teaspoon pie spice. Set aside for sauce; use for glaze. Brush ham with glaze the last 20 minutes of cooking. Serve remaining sauce with ham.

## Gingerbread Cookies

Submitted by Donna Simmons

3 c. AP flour  
1/2 t. baking soda  
1 t. baking powder  
1 1/2 t. cinnamon  
1 1/2 t. ginger  
1/2 t. nutmeg  
1/2 c. molasses  
1/2 c. butter, melted  
1/2 c. sugar  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1 1/4 c. confectioners sugar  
1/4 c. milk

In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg. In a small bowl, combine molasses, butter, and sugar. Add to flour mixture. Add egg; mix until smooth dough forms. Divide dough in half. Flatten between wax paper. Refrigerate for several hours. Press dough to 1/4" thickness. Cut into the desired shapes. Bake at 350° on a greased cookie sheet for 8-12 minutes. In a medium mixing bowl, combine confectioners sugar and milk. Spread onto cooled cookies.

## Hot Cocoa

Submitted by Angela Putman

1/3 c. cocoa  
1/3 c. sugar  
1/3 c. water  
5 c. milk  
1/4 t. vanilla  
dash salt  
whipped cream for garnish

In a saucepan, combine cocoa and sugar; add water. Bring to boil and cook 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Lower heat and slowly stir in milk. Heat but do not boil. Stir in vanilla and salt before serving. May top with whipped cream if desired.

*Submit your recipes to be included in Good News Magazine and the Exchange Cookbook: [www.southernaprons.com](http://www.southernaprons.com)*



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# Good Stories

## CHAPTER 2 OF 3

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

- 38 Home for the holidays
- 40 A heartwarming community tradition
- 44 Uniting hearts and community spirit
- 48 A journey to illuminate hearts beyond the holidays

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



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Photo submitted by Layla Peck

◀ Pam and John Peck



*Home* for  
the  
*Holidays*





**RICKY TIPPS**

# *A Heartwarming Community Tradition*

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Brooke Snyder



## Two passionate visionaries rekindle Winchester's Christmas tradition.



**R**ICKY TIPPS and Montana Medina's childhoods were highlighted by the town's treasured tree-lighting event and other festive traditions during the holiday season. However, as time passed, this beloved tradition gradually lost its brilliance. Motivated by nostalgia and a shared desire to reignite the holiday spirit, Tipps and Medina took it upon themselves to rekindle Winchester's Christmas magic.

"Growing up with Merry Little Downtown Christmas, my favorite part of the event was just the community involvement with the officers' fire trucks. We're doing our best to try to bring that same feel into it," Tipps remarked. "It was one of the things that always stuck out in my memory growing up, and knowing that my dad was one of the ones that really pushed to get that here."

As passionate individuals, Tipps and Medina both possess a profound affection for their community and a firm commitment to reviving the cherished Christmas traditions from their upbringing. As the executive director of the Winchester Downtown Program, Tipps spearheads initiatives to promote local businesses and events. Medina, with the Oldham Theater, brings her creative flair to the table.

In 2022, fueled by determination and a shared vision, Tipps and Medina embarked on a journey to resurrect the tree-lighting event. Their deep roots in the community and genuine love for the town's rich history made them ideal torchbearers for this endeavor.

"Both of our parents were very involved in the community. Last year, my mom was in the hospital for almost seven months with cancer. So just having somebody to pick up and be in that leadership role was really important and all the community needed," Medina said.

With unwavering passion and determination, they rallied local businesses, volunteers, and the support of government entities within the town. Despite obstacles and challenges, they embarked on a mission to create a heartwarming event that would unite the community and create lasting memories for families, mirroring their own childhood experiences.

Their first tree lighting event was successful and attracted more than 2000 people to the historic Winchester square. Echoes of children's laughter filled the air as they shared their Christmas wishes with Santa,

“

Both of our parents were very involved in the community. Last year, my mom was in the hospital for almost seven months with cancer. So just having somebody to pick up and be in that leadership role was really important and all the community needed.

**- MONTANA MEDINA**



carols rang, and other participants marveled at the glistening lights. The event received instant praise, reigniting the town's festive passion and nurturing a revitalized sense of communal unity.

As the holiday season approaches, Tipps and Medina are gearing up for the second annual Winchester Tree Lighting event, and their enthusiasm is evident. The event is scheduled from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the Friday following Thanksgiving, promising festive amusement and entertainment for families. The square will be off limits to vehicular traffic, making way for various activities promising to bring joy and delight to visitors of all ages.

"This year, we've got so much more that we're putting into it. We're really excited about it," Medina said.

Attendees can anticipate various attractions, including Christmas carolers filling the air with festive melodies, Santa Claus lending an ear to children's wishes, and the Polar Express train offering rides around the community.

A unique feature, the Christmas Tree Forest, will guide visitors through an enchanting woodland filled with Christmas trees, each possessing a surprise: princesses for children to meet and take photos with. The event's highlight will feature a live performance by local artist HunterGirl, infusing the stage with the essence of music and cheer.

The event will conclude with the grand Christmas tree illuminated, an inspiring moment uniting the entire community. Local eateries will serve delectable dishes throughout the event, and a heated tent will provide a snug setting for families to savor their meals. It's an immersive experience designed to evoke the warmth and cheer of the holiday season while highlighting the local businesses that sustain Winchester's community.

Winchester's historic camaraderie and shared responsibility reminds us of a time when neighbors looked out for one another, something Tipps and Medina hope to preserve through this festive tradition. They envision a Winchester where children and adults can create cherished holiday memories for generations to come.

"I work with a lot of these kids in my day job in the community, so seeing them is neat. And to know they have something to come to inspires me and makes me keep going," Medina remarked.

As anticipation for the holidays grows stronger, let us remember the true spirit of the holidays is about coming together, celebrating community, and making lasting memories. GN

*Visit Tis the Season on Facebook for more information.*

“

**It was one of the things that always stuck out in my memory growing up, and knowing that my Dad was one of the ones that really pushed to get that here.**

**- RICKY TIPPS**





**ADDY AND HALLE KONRAD**

# *Uniting Hearts and Community Spirit*

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photos submitted by Sue Fulmer

## Santa Comes to Town event promotes a season of giving in Franklin County.

**T**HE HOLIDAY season is a time of giving, sharing, and coming together as a community. The unifying Santa Comes to Town event in historic downtown Winchester strengthens this sentiment.

At the forefront of this tradition stands the Kiwanis Club of Franklin County, which has taken on Santa Comes to Town as one of its leading community events. Over the years, the Kiwanis Club of Franklin County skillfully adapted to meet the community's evolving needs while remaining steadfast in its commitment to its core mission.

Santa Comes to Town, while expanding its reach, continues to focus on bringing holiday joy to those who might need it the most.

Kiwanis member and project manager Sue Fulmer said, "Everybody has their part in it. It's the event that we look most forward to."

Initially, in a collaborative effort between the city and the Kiwanis Club, Santa Comes to Town took on a new dimension when Kiwanis partnered with the Winchester Downtown Program.

This partnership breathed fresh life into the event, transforming it into an emblem of community spirit and support. Santa Comes to Town is not just about festive celebrations; it's a resounding affirmation that the spirit of giving transcends all ages and backgrounds.

An essential element of Santa Comes to Town is its consistent focus on inclusivity. While the event is open to all, it mainly targets low-income families, ensuring that children who may not have the privilege of receiving gifts get to experience the joy of the holiday season.



▲ Jeanne Bates , Brenda Long, Kabella and Koralyn Masters

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SUE FULMER

The event featured a bike giveaway in previous years, but the organizers recognized that some children might not require another bike so soon. Thus, the event evolved into a unique “Santa’s Workshop” concept, where children select their preferred toys, an idea that resonated deeply with the community.

The Santa Comes to Town event has grown over the years, thanks to the support of the community and various organizations. Fulmer expressed the collaborative nature of Santa Comes to Town, mentioning that it’s not just Kiwanis but a collective effort. The A.M. Rotary Club, another community-driven organization, hosts a free pancake breakfast during the event, Kiwanis serves chili and hot dogs for lunch, and local groups contribute crafts and activities for the children.

Fulmer fondly recalled life-changing stories from past events, such as a mother telling her children to savor the free meal because it would be their only one for the day. This instance accentuates the event’s significance, as it provides gifts and much-needed nourishment. The event is a safe haven for those who want to create lasting memories for their families.

“It’s things like that that motivate us to want to give back as much as we can. It just makes us ecstatic to see the smiles on the kids’ faces when they get to pick out a toy that they probably wouldn’t have ever gotten,” Fulmer said.

Volunteers gather, children’s faces light up, and the event unfolds, rain or shine.

Franklin County’s uniqueness is found in its generous communities, always ready to help those in need and create a positive atmosphere.

Countless volunteers and supporters work tirelessly to ensure that this event remains a gratifying tradition that enriches lives and nurtures the true spirit of the holidays.

“Christmas should be all year long because it’s the giving time of the year, and we always need to be in the giving mindset,” she added.

Santa Comes to Town serves as an inspiration to us all, reminding us that the joy of giving knows no boundaries and that the true magic of the season lies in unity and kindness.

“

It’s things like that that motivate us to want to give back as much as we can. It just makes us ecstatic to see the smiles on the kids’ faces when they get to pick out a toy that they probably wouldn’t have ever gotten.

- SUE FULMER





Fulmer's closing thoughts encapsulated the essence of Santa Comes to Town: "Christmas is an exciting time of year with all the decorations, music, and events. Kiwanians love the opportunity to provide a free community event for families that may not be able to take pictures with Santa, do crafts, or receive a new toy."

She continued, "We are as excited as the kids for the event. That's what it's all about – providing opportunities for underprivileged kids. It's open to everybody. And we've had some prominent people come in and bring their kids. Christmas is just an exciting time of year."

As Santa Comes to Town continues to light up the hearts of the Franklin County community, it serves as a reminder that the true magic of the holiday season lies in the generosity, compassion, and unity that come from within. GN



▲ James Wiseman



PAM PECK

# *A Journey to Illuminate Hearts Beyond the Holidays*

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photos submitted by Layla Peck





## Love, grace, and compassion at home

**I**N THE heartwarming Winchester community and beyond, one luminous gem shines with brilliance – Pam Peck. Her presence is a treasured blessing, an embodiment of love itself. Pam is a cherished wife, mother, grandmother, and realtor who embodies love and grace.

Originally from Grundy County, Pam and her husband, John, planted roots in Franklin County, where they laid the foundation for their real estate venture, Century 21. In this charming county, with its timeless appeal, they discovered an everlasting affection that continues to deepen with each passing day.

Pam Peck’s gracious spirit radiates throughout the year, a testament to her servant’s heart. She requires no special occasion to extend her kindness to those in need, embracing the philosophy of caring for “the least of these” as described in sacred pages.

In the enchanting moments of her childhood, Pam’s granddaughter, Layla Peck, was a frequent visitor to her grandparents’ home alongside her cousins.

Layla recalled the faith that fuels her grandmother’s every action: “She’s always been such a godly woman and has been so faithful all my life.”

“

It was just so amazing to see that she was dealing with her own battle, and yet she cares more about other people and what they’re going through rather than the struggles that she’s having to deal with still to this day.

**- LAYLA PECK**



Pam's selflessness knows no bounds, but the holiday season holds a special place in her heart. During this time, she lovingly opens her arms, providing a haven for community members seeking warmth during the holidays.

As a realtor, Pam found immense joy in hosting holiday parties at her office, extending an open invitation to all corners of the community. These gatherings, filled with laughter, camaraderie, and joy, helped cultivate a sense of unity and turned strangers into friends.

Layla remarked, "There would be hundreds of people there that would just rotate out and come to get food all day. And, of course, the family had to be there to serve the food. But it really helped us not be afraid of the community that we live in."

During Christmas time, Pam's humble abode transforms into what her family lovingly calls a scene from a Hallmark movie. Adorned with Christmas trinkets and draped in warm and cozy holiday colors, the walls resonate with the spirit of the season. Outside, a scenic view adorned with vibrant colors and twinkling lights adds to the magic.

Past holiday seasons have witnessed Pam's selfless dedication as she delivered gifts to nursing home residents and invited children to select their own Christmas gifts, igniting hope in those facing a seemingly empty holiday. For those grieving or without financial support, Pam shared her culinary delights, cooking comforting home-cooked meals.

The night before Christmas sees Pam hard at work, whipping up delectable holiday meals that will grace her family's table. From savory bread squash to flavorful Mexican cornbread and luscious banana pudding, Pam's culinary expertise knows no bounds.

Pam, fully devoted to the season's spiritual significance, does more than just commemorate the life of Christ during Christmas; she embodies it. She treats His words as a reflection that guides her deeds and shapes her existence.

While life has thrown its challenges, Pam's unwavering faith remains unshaken. A severe cancer diagnosis might have slowed her down, but her spirit refuses to yield.

Layla recalled, "Even after the diagnosis, she continuously tried to do things with people from inside her house. If she found out that clients were in the hospital, she would call their families or call them if she





PHOTO SUBMITTED BY LAYLA PECK

▲ John and Pam Peck

could. It was just so amazing to see that she was dealing with her own battle, and yet she cares more about other people and what they're going through rather than the struggles that she's having to deal with still to this day."

In the face of adversity, Pam remains a devoted source of encouragement for her family, a rock they can lean on. Her strength, an unyielding force, defies her circumstances, inspiring all who cross her path.

Layla reflected on one of her grandmother's quotes that inspires her family today: "I'm gonna continue to live

my life the way that He wants me to live my life until the day that He calls me home."

In August 2023, Pam received a clean bill of health, and she and her family are rejoicing in her newfound freedom from cancer.

Let's all come together with Pam as she embarks on a journey to deepen her love for God and others during the holiday season and throughout our everyday lives. May her heartwarming example create that cherished feeling of "home" throughout the holiday season and beyond. **GN**

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# How the Good News Magic Happens: From Submission to Print

## *How does a story get into Good News Magazine?*

Nominate someone to be featured in Good News Magazine.

Since Good News launched, we have received hundreds of nominations for people to be covered. Ever wondered how a story finds its way into the pages of our magazine? Well, the answer is simple: it's all thanks to you! Not only are the stories about local people, but they come from other local people, too! Here's a glimpse into the journey of how stories come alive in Good News Magazine.



### Step 1: The submission process: [goodnewsmags.com](http://goodnewsmags.com)

We believe that everyone has a story worth sharing, and we rely on our readers to help us discover these extraordinary individuals. Submissions are made through our website and include the following details:

- A nominee's name
- Contact information (phone and email)
- The reason for the submission, along with why they qualify as a "Good News" story. This may include their contributions to the community, impactful deeds, family life, occupation, and more.
- We're not looking for you to write the story or find a superstar. We believe everyone has a story, and we only need relevant information. Our writers will do the rest!

### Step 2: Selection and theme assignment

We tell stories about local people and what they are doing to make a difference. We have told stories about charities, medical staff, volunteers, school staff, and your next-door neighbor. Again, everyone has a story. While we feature six remarkable individuals in each issue, keep in mind that our production schedule is planned months in advance. So, if someone isn't featured in the upcoming issue, there's still a chance they'll be highlighted in the future. We keep all submissions on file for potential use.

### Step 3: Interviews and photo shoots

Once a story is selected, our talented writers and photographers swing into action. We continue to be inspired by the stories submitted to us, and we complete the interviews and photo shoots several months before the issue goes to print. Our writers may conduct interviews via phone or video chat, while others prefer in-person meetings with the individuals behind the stories.



## *What's next in Good News Magazine?*

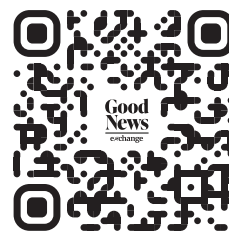
Currently, our dedicated team is hard at work crafting stories under themes like “Hometown Healing,” “From The Heart,” and “Charity Spotlight.” We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is **“The Learning Curve.”**

### **Submit local educators online:**

Do you know local educators who have made a significant impact on your life and the community? Whether it's teachers who have overcome challenges to inspire their students or those who promote lifelong learning, we want to spotlight these individuals and their stories in our upcoming “The Learning Curve” issue.

*Do you know someone who deserves to be in Good News Magazine?*

Let us know with a submission at [www.GoodNewsMags.com](http://www.GoodNewsMags.com) or scan the QR code. Share your stories with us, and let's continue spreading the Good News together.









# GoodTimes

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

- 58 Community Events
- 64 Events Calendar
- 66 Advertiser Index

Submit a positive story on our website:



[goodnewsmags.com](http://goodnewsmags.com)

Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Stacey Gilliam, Corbin Gilliam, and Patty Mankin

# Baby Steps Fifth Annual Walk - Oct. 15, 2023



Photography by Jessica Howard

The community gathered together for the fifth annual Baby Steps walk to raise awareness and support those grieving from pregnancy and infant loss.



1. Daniel and Katie Ross 2. Chaz Wimley, Hope Lee, Shaun Lee, and Ali Peters 3. Natalie and Kenton Crossman  
4. Kyle, Ashley, and Kollins Chumbley 5. Natalie, Kenton, and Dallas Crossman 6. Jason and Mindy Morris



7. Piper Howard 8. Sarah Beth, Chris, and Kenny Ray Eddens 9. Jade and Albert Bloom  
10. Camellia, Kenzie, Andrew, and Paisley Ross 11. Tonya Allgood, Jade Bloom, and Bonita Staten

# Fall Festival - Oct. 14, 2023



Photography by Brooke Snyder

The fall festival was a heartwarming display of community spirit. Families and friends came together to celebrate the fall season.



1. Jalen Wilburn and Jaclyn LaFleur 2. Violet, Chloe, and Levi 3. Aubrey Penner and Julie Bolkinghorne  
4. Aubrey Penner 5. Anita Krause and Katie Yannayon 6. Merle Lapp and Josh Glick

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## EVENTS CALENDAR

### *November 12*

**7:00 am Remember Football Tournament**

*Nov. 11-12*  
839 Dinah Shore Blvd.  
Winchester

Inaugural November 2 Remember youth football tournament for travel teams and local rec teams, ages 6U to 12U. Security will be present and enforced. For more info contact Gary at (931) 691-8533

### *November 23*

**8:00 am Hayden's Hope Turkey Trot 5k**

Lincoln County High School  
1233 Huntsville Hwy.  
Fayetteville

Hayden's Hope Turkey Trot 5k Run / 1 mile Fun Walk on Thanksgiving morning at Lincoln County High School. Burn calories before your turkey meal. Visit [runsignup.com](http://runsignup.com) to register.

### *November 25*

**10:00 am Christmas Marketplace in Wartrace**

26 Main St. E.  
Wartrace

The holiday spirit starts at the Christmas Marketplace and will have arts, crafts, food, and drinks. Call (615) 785-2124 for more information.

### *December 2*

**10:00 am Antique Appraisal Fair**

Sissy's Antiques & Interiors  
208 Main Ave. S.  
Fayetteville

Our third annual antique appraisal fair at Sissy's Antiques & Interiors. Appraisals are \$10 for one item or \$25 for three items. Bring anything, including furniture.





**December 3**

**7:30 am Divine's Annual Open House**  
 1253 Dinah Shore Blvd.  
 Winchester

Divine Salon and Day Spa invites everyone to their Annual Open House, featuring local vendors and discounted products and tools. Support small town businesses and shop for holiday gifts.

**December 9**

**7:30 am Rudolph Run 5K**  
 Downtown Winchester  
 135 1st Ave. NW.  
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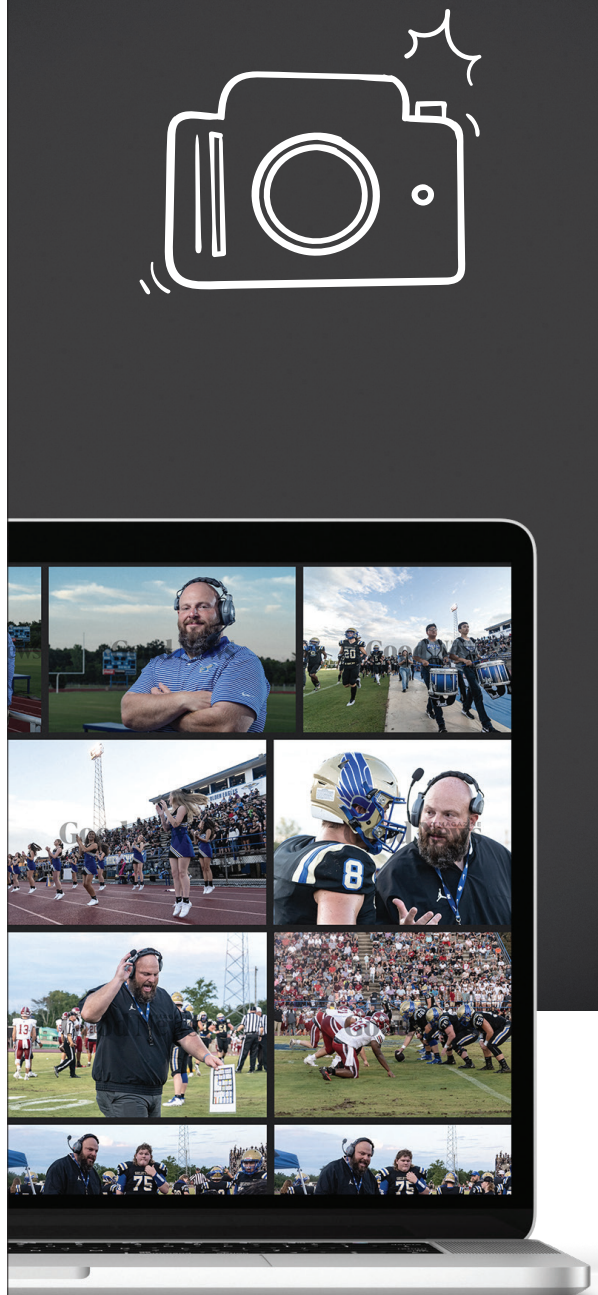
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce invites everyone to join the second annual Rudolph Run - Family 5K. \$35 registration, \$15 for kids under 12. Door prizes, costume contest, and exciting activities. Proceeds support Animal Harbor.

**December 16**

**10:00 am Fourth Annual Island of Misfit Crafts Show**  
 Coffee County Fairgrounds  
 99 Lakeview Dr.  
 Manchester

Handmade crafts, food trucks, prize giveaways, photo booth with Santa, and misfit toy hunt game. Contact Oliver's Wood & Fabric at (931) 841-5584.

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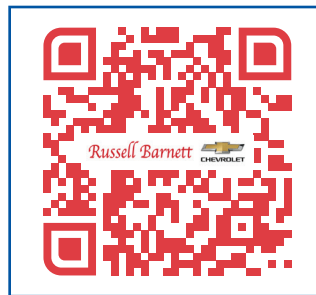
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