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ISSUE 12 2023

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

First, do no harm.

Thank you to the people who swear to heal our hometown.

THE FIRST sounds of life are screams and cries of joy. Oxygen fills little lungs for the first time. The lights above are bright. And the beeping machines from every corner of the room can be overwhelming. None of us remember, but I imagine it's quite jarring to go from the warm womb of safety to the cold room with tile floors and gray curtains. The heroes hold close and wrap the screaming new life in a blanket, then place the happy but confused soul into the mother's arms.

And generations later, back in the same building with the same tile floors and curtains, we walk the same halls again. The overhead buzzing is just as bright as ever. Just like the beginning of life — not always, but often — we're back in that room. This time, surrounded by the next generation of heroes who took the same oath and covenant.

From the minute we open our eyes until they're closed forever, we're guided by angels wearing scrubs and stethoscopes. Healthcare providers know that their work is never over and never easy. Long days and sad tragedies are

typical for our healthcare providers. What keeps them going is the love in their hearts. Not just for their family and friends but for the strangers they help every day. I know this because I've watched my mom, the best superhero nurse on the planet. (Sure, I'm biased.) People like my mom are good at what they do because they are love. They don't do it for money. That's just who they are. They have a warm embrace for their patients that can not be matched. Healthcare professionals in our hometown prove it to us every day — they show the "I'm-here-for-you-unconditionally" kind of love. The best way I can describe it is a mother holding her newborn baby. The same way Mom held me on May 9, almost 30 years ago.

We encounter healthcare providers at the beginning, the middle, and the end of our lives. And without them, this journey would be much shorter. We only get one journey with each other, and they help us make sure it counts.

This issue of Good News is for healthcare professionals. Thank you for fulfilling this covenant to the best of your ability and judgment. GN


Wesley Bryant,
MANAGING EDITOR

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LEAD LAYOUT ARTIST Brianna Brubaker

SENIOR LAYOUT ARTIST Melissa Davis

PHOTOGRAPHERS Ashleigh Newnes, Brooke Snyder

FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHERS Jim Jordan, Brittany Johnson,

Amanda Guy, Tommy Sprouse, Steve Zak, Sarah Bussard

STORY WRITERS Tina Neeley, Jeriah Brumfield

FREELANCE WRITERS Sara McClaran, Gabriel Huff, Paige Cushman,

Amanda West, Kaleob Ashley, Belle Butler, Richard Klin

STORY COORDINATOR Haley Potter

PROOFREADER Michelle Harwell

LEAD PRINT AD DESIGNER Todd Pitts

PRINT AD DESIGNER Ben Adams

JR LAYOUT ARTIST Jane Morrell

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Cindy Baldhoff, Amanda Cox, Kevin Hines,

Mark Mahagan, Kevin Maples, Janet Mullins, Matt Scott,

Sissy Smith, Sandra Thomas

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DIGITAL DESIGN DIRECTOR Clinton George

WEBSITE DESIGNERS Crystal Mehlhaff, Ashley McMurry

SEO CONTENT WRITER Anna Sharp

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GOOD NEWS

CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

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Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Gloria Armstrong



HARPER
BAGLEY



The heart of **GIVING**

YOUR ST. JUDE DONATIONS SAVED HARPER'S LIFE.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

EVERYTHING WAS ready for her. Gifts from friends and family contributed to the completion of the lovingly decorated nursery. Dresser drawers were filled with gowns and outfits, and the rocking chair sat ready for feedings and snuggles. Owen and Jillian Bagley were counting the days until baby Harper's arrival.

But an ultrasound revealed something wasn't right during the final week of Jillian's pregnancy in 2013. Routine ultrasound examinations showed no complications until a follow-up visit at 39 weeks. The medical team discovered what appeared to be a cyst on Harper's ovary, urging Jillian to deliver at Huntsville Hospital, equipped with a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) as a precaution. The morning after Harper's birth, and after a whirlwind of ultrasounds and MRI scans, the doctor advised the couple of a sizable mass in Harper's stomach requiring immediate action, leaving the family grappling with the realization that

their newborn was facing a medical crisis of extraordinary proportions.

"Within an hour of them bringing her back [from the MRI and ultrasound], there was an oncologist from St. Jude [Children's Research Hospital] in the room with us," said Jillian. "They were telling us that she needed to go for emergency surgery right away. It all happened within 12 hours of her being born."

Harper underwent surgery to remove a baseball-sized tumor attached to her adrenal gland. The period that followed was filled with uncertainty as the family faced the diagnosis of congenital cystic neuroblastoma, an extremely rare condition. At the time, Harper's case marked only the 25th reported instance, signifying the tumor's growth during her time in utero.

Following her surgery, Harper's recovery in the NICU marked the start of a challenging period for the Bagley family. Harper was transferred to St. Jude in Memphis, where she spent a week for tests, scans, and evaluations. The family

received word of the best possible outcome: the surgery was successful in removing all of the tumor, and it had not spread. She was released and scheduled to return to the Huntsville St. Jude Clinic in two weeks for a checkup.

“So we went home, and we thought we were on the road to getting back to normal first-baby, stay-at-home things. We went for the checkup when she was 4 weeks old, and they did an ultrasound on her abdomen and found more tumors in her liver than they could count. At that appointment, we were told she had relapsed, and it had metastasized. They said, ‘You need to go back to St. Jude in Memphis, and we’re going to start chemotherapy,’” Jillian said.

Harper bravely endured several rounds of chemotherapy. The community’s prayers and support and the tireless efforts of the medical team eventually yielded a beacon of hope. Harper’s tumors began to shrink,

and after a steadfast battle spanning several months, she was declared tumor-free and in remission in December 2014.

She said, “We lived in Memphis for about six months. We were able to come home on some weekends or weekdays if how Harper’s body was responding allowed us to, but it was relatively few and far between. The community was wildly supportive and prayed for her,” said Jillian. “We had people from all walks of life, whether it was Fayetteville, people we went to college with, or friends from Chicago where I grew up saying they’ve been giving to St. Jude their whole life. And I said, ‘Well, the money you’ve sent to St. Jude saved Harper’s life.’ We didn’t have to pay a dime. We weren’t charged for medications or hospital stays, and we were given a place to live where we weren’t charged. That was all because all of those people had donated. I met a lot of families, and I saw a lot of stories like

ours. St. Jude really is the best place on the planet for us.”

During Harper’s stay at St. Jude, the Bagleys entered the St. Jude Half Marathon as “Team 365 Run for St. Jude.” They encouraged friends, family, and the community to contribute a dollar a day, which snowballed into an extraordinary fundraising effort that generated over \$100,000. It was a full-circle opportunity to give back to the St. Jude community that so fully supported Harper throughout her cancer journey.

Now in her 10th year in remission, Harper has no memory of her treatments at St. Jude, and her ongoing follow-up appointments are something she highly anticipates.

“We get to see a lot of our friends, all of her old nurses, and the doctor who was responsible for her chemo administration, and we try to make it more fun than scary. Harper thinks St. Jude is fun and tells her friends, ‘I’m going to St. Jude. I’m going to see all my people and make sure I’m healthy.’ She thinks of it as something special,” said Jillian.

Jillian is a St. Jude spokesperson who shares their family’s experience with others. Harper continues raising money for the research hospital and is working on her fourth fundraiser at her school. She’s all in on St. Jude.

“St. Jude is so fun, and I love going there. They saved my life and many other kids’. St. Jude is the best!” said Harper.

Harper’s journey through adversity birthed a lifetime of gratitude for the St. Jude and Lincoln County communities. You don’t have to wonder if your donations directly impact the families served. The Bagleys say wholeheartedly, “It does!” **GN**

For more information or to donate, go to stjude.org.



▲ Barron, Jillian, Owen, and Harper Bagley



The Bank of Lincoln County makes a difference.

More than 20 years. More than 100 organizations. Endless impact.

By Kali Bradford // Photography by James Jordan

CHRISTMAS IS the season of giving. Family and friends gather to share food, gifts, and precious time that will create life-long memories. Christmas also offers the opportunity to give back, making the holiday merry and bright for those who might otherwise be unable to enjoy the seasonal festivities.

The Bank of Lincoln County understands that the joy of giving continues long after the Christmas holiday. In their more than 20 years of serving Lincoln County's people, they have repeatedly proven that giving back can occur year-round.

Since opening its doors in 2002, the bank has made a name for itself by being the only home-owned and home-operated bank in Lincoln County. Additionally, over the last 21 years, they have worked tirelessly to meet the financial needs of their customers while serving the community through numerous avenues and causes.

One day at a time, they're helping their customers reach their financial goals and dreams and working to make the Lincoln County community a better place to live.

"Giving back has always been part of the DNA of our leadership and our bank," stated Bank of Lincoln County CEO Gay Dempsey. "My father has been in banking

for over 60 years, and he has instilled in me and in our staff the importance of not only giving monetarily but also of giving our own time and gifts. Every bank can offer the same general services, but what makes the Bank of Lincoln County different is that we truly want to make a difference in the lives of our staff, our customers, and our community."

"Giving back has always been part of the DNA of our leadership and our bank."

- Gay Dempsey

Annually, the bank provides funding, sponsorships, donations, and volunteers to local organizations and nonprofits such as the Humane Society, Camp Blount, Hands of Mercy, Clothe Our Kids, Always Endure, and Junior's House.

The Bank of Lincoln County is also a staple in all of the local school systems, celebrating student achievement by sup-

porting academics, band, athletics, theatre, robotics, and school organizations, such as 4-H, Future Farmers of America, and Future Business Leaders of America. The bank supports Lincoln County Schools, Fayetteville City Schools, and Riverside Christian Academy.

The institution's community outreach also extends to supporting the arts through a local theatre group, the Carriage House Players; the Fayetteville Arts Center; and the Fayetteville Lincoln County Museum. The Bank of Lincoln County has faithfully supported the Friends of the Fayetteville Lincoln County Public Library.

For over 20 years, more than 100 local organizations have benefited from the helping hands at the Bank of Lincoln County, and that list only continues to grow.

"For me, it is truly who we are; therefore, our hashtag is #bolcives," Dempsey explained. "One of my favorite quotes is by Winston Churchill, 'You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.' I have found this to be true in my own life, and I can honestly say that if you are having a bad day or a difficult season in life, go and help someone else. You will be amazed at how it will change your outlook and lift your spirits."



Dempsey added that it is vital that the Bank of Lincoln County not only gives monetarily to the community but also through time and volunteer efforts.

“As a bank, each employee is given three ‘Serve Days’ each year to use at their discretion,” she explained. “They may use them all at once or a day at a time, and they choose many different things, such as mission trips, serving at a local nonprofit, or serving at a school. Our bank plays a vital role in leading the way in so many community en-

deavors. I cannot tell you how many people come to me first for a project and use our involvement as a catalyst to begin. We do support financially, but several of our staff members serve on local and state boards and coach youth teams. Serving together builds community and relationships, and I believe that the Bank of Lincoln County does this very well.”

As a new year is welcomed, along with new hopes and dreams for what the year will bring, Dempsey and her dedicated staff at

the Bank of Lincoln County will continue making Lincoln County grow and prosper.

“We live, work, worship, and play in Fayetteville and Lincoln County just like our neighbors,” she said. “We want to do everything we can to enhance the quality of life and make this a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. We are going to do everything we can to make that happen, whether it is investing in our schools’ athletic, academic, STEM, or fine arts programs; local nonprofits; service organizations; small businesses; or local industries.” **GN**



Bridging gaps and nurturing *Connections*

Fayetteville City Schools' social workers
are shaping a brighter future.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

WHILE SOME students experience a school year filled with the excitement of homecoming events, spirited sports competitions, and bustling after-school projects, a different reality unfolds for others. Families face eviction from their homes, students parent their siblings, and the tragic loss of a classmate leaves unanswered questions.

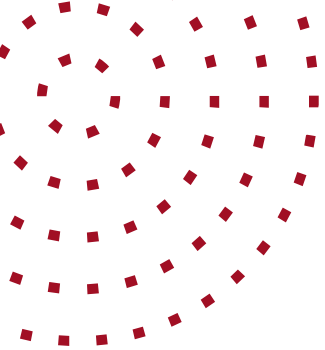
Claudia Styles, the federal programs supervisor of Fayetteville City Schools (FCS), recognized the immediate need to address the social and emotional

well-being of FCS students and their families. To bridge this gap, she secured a transformative three-year grant to place a social worker in each of the district's schools: Ralph Askins, Fayetteville Middle, and Fayetteville High Schools.

Styles explained, "I could hear these needs, but I didn't know how to address them with our families. I love the fact that these ladies are trained professionals. They understand the home environment and how to work with families experiencing hardships that cannot always be addressed in the school setting."



Jennifer Taylor,
E'Sheia Hicks,
and Candace Poliquin



In its inaugural year, the program has yielded immediate and positive changes. Styles said, "All you have to do is ask any person in the school, and they will tell you the difference — that it's the missing link. We missed having that person to make the needed connection between home and school."

The social workers leading this transformative effort are Jennifer Taylor, serving Ralph Askins; E'Sheia Hicks, based at Fayetteville Middle School; and Candace Poliquin, working with Fayetteville High School.

In an increasingly digital world that often isolates individuals, this team wasted no time implementing programs that encourage social interaction and sharing. For elementary students, morning meetings in a circle provide a vital opportunity for personal connection. Taylor elaborated, "It's about 10 to 15 minutes where they sit in a circle, making eye contact and having conversations, something they often lack in today's digital world. They're used to texting and interacting in

other ways with little one-on-one eye contact and conversation. And so that's what the circle does; it creates community."

At the middle school, Hicks invites individual students to a time of conversation over lunch, her table talk program. "We sit at the table and just talk, and they really like that."

Poliquin expanded on her approach at the high school level, stating, "We're doing weekly meetings. Students discuss a theme, share their feelings privately on a Google Doc, set goals, and reflect on progress, making them more goal-oriented."

The social workers support parents, too. Hearing and connecting their needs with resources improves relationships and bridges the gap between home and school, especially in trying situations.

The grant facilitates a safer and healthier environment for students. As conversation improves social skills and programs educate about emotions, there is progress in managing life at home and school.



▲ Candace Poliquin



▲ Jennifer Taylor

The social workers are a resource for students facing bullying. Hicks said, "It's safer knowing there's somebody to [talk] to at the school if I'm in trouble, if something's wrong, or [if] somebody's bothering me."

The support these social workers provide is often absent in students' home lives. The responsibilities they bear outside of school can clash with the structured learning environment. Poliquin highlighted the importance of social-emotional learning to support students who are used to being the parents at home.

Taylor stressed the value of social-emotional learning in elementary education, stating, "Children often have a hard time identifying their feelings and emotions. I believe that is where social-emotional learning comes in. If we can teach children to label and identify their emotions, then we are better equipping them with the language they need to express themselves in a more positive way. Teaching children to talk about their emotions also allows us to teach them how to have empathy. When children have empathy, they can see the world from another person's perspective and develop compassion for others. It is a vital component of social-emotional learning and can help students build relationships, regulate emotions, communicate better, and resolve conflict."

Though still in its early stages, this program shows great promise. In a world increasingly fraught with challenges, the presence of dedicated school social workers can make a profound difference, fostering a stronger and more emotionally resilient community.

"Teaching children to talk about their emotions also allows us to teach them how to have empathy. When children have empathy, they can see the world from another person's perspective and develop compassion for others."

-Jennifer Taylor

Hicks sees a positive future and said, "It's going to be good to see in the three years [of the program] the difference it will make by the time today's sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders get to high school."

This initiative is a potent reminder that investing in students' emotional well-being yields benefits far beyond the classroom. By bridging gaps, nurturing connections, and offering vital support, these social workers shape a brighter future for everyone. **GN**



▲ E'Sheia Hicks



Top: Derian Morales prepares for his day as an apprentice lineman at Fayetteville Public Utilities. Right: FPU CEO/General Manager Britt Dye introduces Apprentice Lineman Derian Morales to local high school students.



From dream to reality

At the age of 15, Derian Morales made the difficult decision to leave Honduras for a better future in the United States. He dreamed of helping his family financially, but he knew it would not be easy to leave his mom and two sisters and travel over a thousand miles to join his dad in Fayetteville, Tennessee.

To carry out his dream, Morales made the journey to the United States alone. Once he arrived, he was eager to attend school and learn English, so he enrolled at Fayetteville High School and worked for a fencing business making \$100 a week and sending half his earnings home to his mom, which is a common practice in Honduras.

“I was by myself with no friends, no way to communicate and very little money,” said Morales. “At one point, I thought about going back to Honduras, but I couldn’t give up. Communication was a huge challenge for me, but I was determined to learn the language. After school, I would write sentences and use an online program to translate the sentences into English. I would practice them over and over until I learned them. I also carried a dictionary and still do today, so I can look up unfamiliar words.”

After graduating high school in 2018, Morales enrolled in the automotive mechanic program at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) in Shelbyville,

"If you want something, work for it. Don't be afraid to take risks because fear will get you nowhere."

-Derian Morales, Apprentice Lineman

Tennessee. He continued working for the fencing business and sending money home, but he had promised to help his family, and he felt the money he was able to contribute was not enough.

"While fencing, my boss told me about a job opportunity at Fayetteville Public Utilities," added Morales. "I had dreamed of a job like this but didn't think it was possible. I interviewed for a job in the shop, and in 2020, I started working at FPU. Eventually, I transferred to the tree trimming department, but my goal was to be a lineman. I was the first person from my city in Honduras to graduate from school and earn a technical diploma from TCAT, and I want to be the first from Honduras to become a lineman in the U.S."

Morales has only lived in the United States for 8 years, and during that time, he has overcome many challenges. FPU has made a huge difference in his life, and he values the support he has received and the friendships he has made. As an apprentice lineman at FPU, Morales is achieving his dream of becoming an electrical lineman in the U.S.

To become a lineman in Tennessee, the first step is an apprenticeship. After years of training, the apprenticeship leads to the position of journeyman lineman. Apprentices assist journeyman linemen with functions related to the construction, repair and maintenance of electric lines. As apprentices complete training requirements, their work is broadened to include more responsibilities. In most cases, it takes 9 years for an apprentice lineman to move into the role of a journeyman lineman.

"While living in Honduras, I could only imagine what it was like to earn a decent wage and own a home," remarked Morales. "It is a good feeling to work hard and better yourself. I would not be where I am today without FPU. In linework, every day is a challenge, but we look out for one another. FPU has given me the opportunity to fulfill my dreams and keep moving forward."



As an apprentice lineman for FPU, Derian Morales performs maintenance on electrical lines.

"At FPU, Derian has a good future as a lineman," said FPU CEO/General Manager Britt Dye. "He is a dedicated and dependable worker who is always willing to help not only at FPU but outside of work as well."

Morales understands what it is like to struggle, and he desires to help others who are going through difficult situations. That heartfelt passion translates to his work as a lineman. He aspires to make his community a better place by keeping the power flowing to the homes and businesses of his friends and neighbors.

When asked what advice he would give to others about following their dreams, Morales responded, "If you want something, work for it. Don't be afraid to take risks because fear will get you nowhere. Focus on one goal at a time, and once you have accomplished that step, move on to the next."

Accomplishing goals one step at a time is exactly what Morales is doing. He dreamed of living in the United States, helping his family, learning English, graduating school, owning a home and becoming a lineman. Through hard work and determination, he is well on his way to achieving each of these milestones. As he sets new goals for his future, Morales will, without a doubt, continue to make his dreams a reality.

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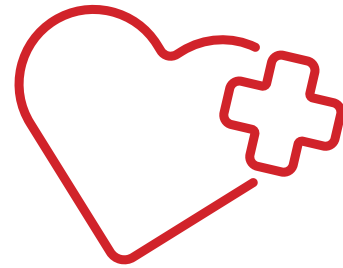
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Gloria Armstrong

NURSING WITH *compassion*

Gloria Armstrong sees both sides
of the coin. *By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder*



IT WAS a time when the world and healthcare resembled a sci-fi horror movie more than the world we'd known. At least our world before the pandemic was larger than theirs. The world of patients confined to skilled care centers is small, occupied by those who can no longer care for themselves and those who watch over them. On a good day, friends, family, and others from the community come and go and break up the day's monotony. Time is measured less by the hour and minute and more by the facility's routines.

But COVID shut down their world, too.

"We were all they had. It was a really tough time, seeing people visit their family through the window," said Gloria Armstrong. "I can't imagine what the nurses in these big hospitals went through. You were scared you would get sick or take something home to your family. Quite a few of us got sick, but we were blessed. We didn't lose the staff, but we did lose a lot of our sweet little patients."

The Donalson Care Center treatment nurse was both a caregiver and a family member during this time. And not just to residents.





“My dad was a patient here then, and I could see him when I worked, but I didn't get to see him when I was off. I was blessed that I was working here,” Armstrong said.

She entered healthcare as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) three months after high school graduation, using the skills she learned in her health occupations class. About five years later, she became a licensed practical nurse and has been in the system for more than 42 years. Armstrong has worked at Lincoln Care Center and Donalson Care Center. She has seen the evolution of healthcare in her time.

“We have a lot more modern conveniences [now]. [In the past], we had old metal bedpans and glass thermometers, and we had to clean [them] all. Everything's just different now,” Armstrong said. “We never had computers [before]. [Now], we have different medicines and things like lifts to help with the patients. There's been a lot of changes. I won't say it's bad, but I'm not a big fan of change.”

Another thing that's changed is her ability to relate to the families of her patients.

“My husband was pretty sick about 16 years ago, and I'm not saying I didn't care about people then, but things really shifted when I saw it from the other side. I try to treat people like I wanted him to be treated,” she said. “As you age, you realize you might be here someday. You have to put yourself in the patient's shoes, and you have to put yourself in the families' shoes.”

In some instances, though, the staff is the only family a resident may have.

Armstrong said, “For most people, this is their last home, and we've just got to make it as comfortable for them as possible. That's our goal. I see many of these CNAs — they don't make a lot of money — spending their money bringing body wash in here so the patients will have something other than the institutional wash, picking them up [something from] Sonic — doing stuff like that. I think that's neat. And then some of them here don't have any family; their family is gone, so the girls are good to pick up the slack and do some special things.”

Armstrong is a treatment nurse specializing in wound care. In a long-term facility, we often associate wounds with bed sores. The source of wounds needing care varies greatly.

She said, “It's related to a lot of things like their condition and whether or not they're eating. They may get wounds on their heels if they've had to be on the operating table. Mostly, it goes along with diabetes; it's hard to heal skin with that [disease]. And when they're getting sicker, it's when it develops. It happens



when they're not eating because you have to have protein. I tell families your skin is an organ just like your heart, and it wears out. It gets old, just like the rest of your body. Many people think it's from neglect, but most of the time, it's due to the patient's overall condition. They have a lot of comorbidities.”

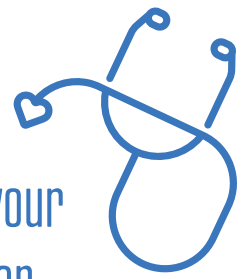
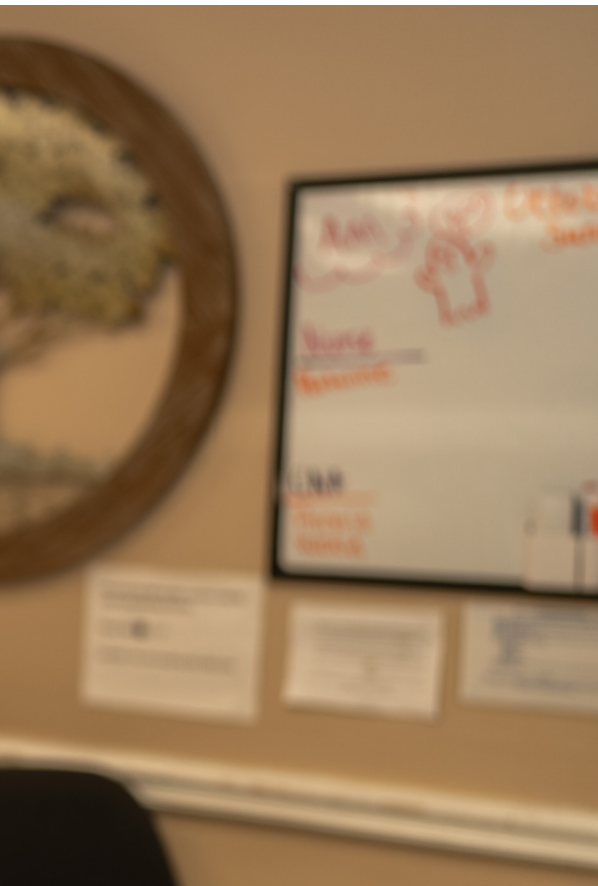
The hours are long, and the work is demanding.

“It's very hard physical work, and it's hard emotional work. Your family suffers, and you've got to work a lot of holidays and long hours. With 12-hour shifts, you miss a lot, and your family has to sacrifice,” said Armstrong. “My husband, Doug, has been a godsend. He gets a little frustrated, but, for the most part, over the years, he's gone along with it.” The years have been many, and the rewards have been great.

She said, “I just like to see their smiles. I have a little lady who is 95, and she calls out to me when I go by. The other day, she said, ‘It just makes me so happy to see you on the days you're here.’ And I've met a lot of families — people that stay in contact with me even after their loved one has died.”

What she has seen reminds her daily of something we often forget.

“Be thankful for your health and your family because it can change in an instant. Treat others as you want to be treated, and love on the people in your life. Your health is a one-time thing, and once it's gone, it's gone,” said Armstrong. **GN**



“Be thankful for your health and your family because it can change in an instant. Treat others as you want to be treated, and love on the people in your life.”

- Gloria Armstrong



▲ Gloria with Crystal Wood



▲ Chris Smith, Gloria, and Betty Hartley

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Savor the flavor of well-being

Balance tradition and health with our hometown-inspired recipes for a nourishing start to 2024

AS WE step into the new year, explore the tastes of hometown healing through recipes built around healthy ingredients. A soup loaded with healthy vegetables flavored with your favorite herbs hits the spot on the coldest of days. How about adding something to your morning oatmeal to mix things up a bit? Trying one new dish a week from a low-carb cookbook or experimenting with an ingredient exchange in your favorite recipes are options that aren't overwhelming. Facebook groups offer tips.

Whether you want to maintain a healthier lifestyle or simply enjoy delicious, wholesome meals, these recipes offer a delightful blend of tradition and well-being. Enjoy dishes that celebrate the flavors of home while supporting your goals for a healthier you in 2024. GN

Vegetable Soup

Submitted by Annie Mills

1 whole chicken, cooked, deboned
3 carrots, chopped, cooked
1 pt. lima beans
1 can garden peas, drained
1 pt. corn, cooked
1 red pimento, chopped
1 onion, diced
several potatoes, cut up, boiled
black pepper to taste
crackers for serving

In a large pot, combine meat from chicken, carrots, lima beans, garden peas, corn, and pimentos. Cook together slowly. When thickened, you can freeze this, if desired. Then, add onions, potatoes, and black pepper. Serve with crackers.

Whole Wheat Bread

Submitted by Lula Parker

3 1/2 c. whole wheat flour
1 pkg. yeast
1/4 c. sugar
2 t. oil
1 1/4 c. whole milk, heated

Mix 1 1/2 cups of flour, yeast, sugar, and oil in a large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly and stir in milk. Place dough into a greased bowl, cover, and let rise in a warm, dark place until it has doubled in size. Add remaining flour as you knead. Roll in a jelly roll style. Seal each end and turn under to fit loaf pan. Cover loaf pan with a towel, check the dough and let rise to near the top of the loaf pan. Preheat oven to 350° and bake for 25-30 minutes.

Cheesy Roast Beef Sandwiches

Submitted by Lawayn Mitchell

1 c. blue cheese crumbles, mashed
1/2 c. sour cream
1/2 c. mayonnaise
1 t. salt
1/4 t. black pepper
6 onion rolls, halved
1 bunch arugula
1 lb. deli roast beef

In a medium mixing bowl, combine blue cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, salt, and pepper. Divide half of the mixture evenly among the onion rolls. Top each with arugula leaves and roast beef. Spread top halves of rolls with the remaining blue cheese mixture and place on sandwich.

Submit your recipes to be included in Good News Magazine and the Exchange Cookbook: 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.

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- 48 Home is where the heart shines

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



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Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Eric Torres



hometown



Healing





A *therapeutic* Relocation

Poland's Selena Suszczynska guides us to better health.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

It was a familiar scene in their Sochaczew, Poland home, though not in others. A mother and her preschool daughter huddled over an anatomy atlas from the mother's nursing classes. Although not yet able to read, the images on the book's pages piqued Selena Suszczynska's interest.

Suszczynska was born with moderate scoliosis. Sessions with her physical therapist corrected her posture and influenced her future career direction. Their interaction improved Suszczynska's quality of life and the lives of the many patients she would go

on to treat. Never underestimate the power of time spent with children.

She obtained her master's degree in physical therapy from Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego in Warsaw in 1992. Upon graduation, she worked in an outpatient physical therapy clinic, providing treatment to reduce pain and facilitate healing for patients after orthopedic interventions.

Shortly after that, Suszczynska and her husband, Jacek, were invited to the United States along with other foreign-trained physical therapists under a program that offered assistance with the legal aspects of relocation.

A portrait of Selena Suszczynska, a woman with short, wavy, light-colored hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a grey blazer over a patterned top and a necklace with a small pendant. Her hands are clasped in her lap. The background is a brick building with a window. There are two large green circular graphic elements: one on the left side of the image and one on the right side containing the text.

Selena
Suszczynska



▲ Raelynn and Selena Suszczynska

“

On average, we lose 17% of our muscle tissue if bed-bound for a week.

- Selena Suszczynska

“We were young and ready to explore the world,” she said. “Traveling and working in our profession sounded very tempting, so we signed a 2-year contract.”

Tennessee and Florida regulations allowed foreign temporary licenses, and the pair landed in Atlanta on Thanksgiving in 1995. “True pilgrims, we were!” she laughed.

The couple’s medical director, Laura Clark, and administrator, Kathy Smith, welcomed them and played instrumental roles in making Fayetteville and its health system their second home. As a therapist at HH Lincoln Health, Suszczynska works with patients on an outpatient and inpatient basis, assisting in recovery from surgeries and sickness and restoring and maintaining their physical function. She utilizes treatments that alleviate pain, help to regain balance, strengthen muscles, and improve the range of motion in the joints to avoid disabling situations.

“Movement is crucial, allowing our heart to circulate blood properly to all its parts, allowing our lungs to breathe fully, allowing our muscles to get stronger, and our joints to develop. It controls blood sugar levels, strengthens our immune system, releases stress from our minds, and keeps us in our best physical form at every stage of life. And it all happens without the side effects that pills and surgeries leave behind,” said Suszczynska.

The most beneficial thing most of us can do is a daily walk.

“Walking is universal and the least demanding physical activity, pumping blood, ventilating our lungs, and keeping muscles functioning. We can start with short distances at a slow pace and build, gradually increasing both to improve our cardiovascular system. No equipment or gym membership is necessary — just motivation to do a little more every day!” she said.

A sickness that leaves us bedridden for any time sets back our functional mobility, and we need three days to recover from every day spent in bed.

“On average, we lose 17% of our muscle tissue if bed-bound for a week. Physical therapy guidance lets patients return to normal life at their best potential faster and smoother,” said Suszczynska.

And when we’re not at our best physically, Suszczynska and others like her guide us back to a better version of ourselves, capitalizing on what our bodies can do for themselves. She said, “Our muscle-skeletal system has the beautiful ability to heal and the nervous system to compensate, but it needs to be guided by professionals to regain its function. In 99% of the cases, it cannot be magically accomplished in one physical therapy session. It takes time and the patient’s compliance with the therapist’s recommendations as a daily routine.”

That’s sound advice from a member of a family of healthcare professionals. Suszczynska’s husband visits Lincoln County patients for home health physical therapy. Their son, Alex, will graduate as a doctor of osteopathic medicine in 2025, and their other son, Adam, will complete school as a registered nurse in 2024, carrying forward their parents’ legacy of service.

You’ll find her practicing the lifestyle she prescribes for her patients, balancing work and rest with a nutritious diet and time spent outdoors. But don’t mistake nutritious for blah. Suszczynska’s kitchen comes to life with U.S. dishes with a Southern flare, Polish dishes, and other flavors as she fuses them.

As she experienced as a child, the relationships she builds with her patients as she guides them toward recovery and wellness is the highlight of her job. It’s a healing Transatlantic journey. **GN**



▲ Justin Groce and Selena Suszczynska



Eric
Torres



A *healing* Visit

Eric Torres knows the weight of his responsibilities as a home health therapist.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

SHE WAS so proud of him. Eric Torres's full-ride scholarship for a mechanical engineering degree made his family proud. His grandmother was his rock and the most significant difference-maker in his life besides his parents. But what would the future hold now? While he was in college, a stroke hospitalized his beloved grandmother. Sitting with her in the hospital, he watched over the woman who'd always watched over him, her constant motion stilled by a stroke.

Early the next morning, a man arrived rolling a cart with a specialized machine. He carefully placed the corded pads on her

lifeless limbs and began the procedure. This was like nothing Torres had ever seen!

"He proceeded to put the electrodes on Grandmother's right leg and right arm, her paralyzed side. He turned it on, and her arm started to move, and I was incredibly amazed," Torres said.

He had to know more and asked the man if he was a nurse. He said he was a physical therapist.

"What is a physical therapist?" Torres asked him.

His reply changed the trajectory of Torres's life.

“I’m going to simplify this by saying that I am the person who’s going to help your grandmother walk again,” he replied.

A career in the oil industry could not answer that question, and he realized the certainty of it as he looked at his grandmother following her stroke. That moment ignited hope for his grandmother’s recovery, and his career path changed immediately to physical therapy.

“I wanted to make a difference, not only with Grandma but for the people I would meet in my lifetime,” said Torres. “I gave up mechanical engineering because I saw the pain in Grandmother’s eyes, and I said, ‘I am so helpless. How do I help this woman who has had a pivotal role in my life growing up?’”

The hope he received in the early morning hours at his grandmother’s bedside is the same hope he delivers to his patients today. It’s a hope his mother understands, too, after therapy for knee replacement.

She told him, “When you are sick, sometimes it is very hard to pray and to believe. When praying to your God, whom you cannot see, hear, feel, touch, or smell, it’s hard to continue to say that you want to be healed. But when somebody walks in like you, Eric, you are actually that healing extension of God. You have the responsibility to make sure that you represent correctly.”

He knows the experience in his grandmother’s hospital room was a divine appointment.

“We all have these plans for our lives early on, but ultimately, God will lead you where you can be used in your lifetime. I believe in that; I stand on that,” said Torres.

Today, Torres has been working to bring patients hope, rehabilitation, and healing for 36 years in various settings, meeting people with all kinds of diagnoses and conditions. He’s worked in outpatient services, skilled nursing homes, hospitals, acute care, and inpatient rehab. He has served in home healthcare the longest and is a therapist for Deaconess Home Health in Fayetteville.

It’s good medicine, and he enjoys the progression as it takes effect.

“When I first walk in, I see all the anxiety and hopelessness in the patient’s eyes, especially if it’s a bad case



like paralysis or something terminal. Then, to be able to see some patients be able to walk 10 feet after being hospitalized for three months — that’s a big deal. You can see the joy on their faces. There is hope and a silver lining,” he said. “Toward the end [of their therapy], I see the faces of families involved in the patient care, and their demeanor changes for the better, too.”

When the opportunities arise to address students in the physical therapy training screenings, his most vital message urges them to offer both care and compassion.

Torres said, “If you do not have an ounce of compassion for your patients when you become a physical therapist, you are not going to be the person that needs to be doing this job. It takes more than a skill set; it takes 110% compassion



▲ Elysha Turner, Eric Torres, and Lisa Corder

to provide the services you're supposed to provide. Hopefully, those kids will remember that when they become therapists."

He said, "I get up in the morning and look forward to meeting my patients for the day."

And they look forward to their days with him.

Patients and their families remember the kindness Torres showed and frequently request him for future home therapy and assistance. It affirms his decision to pursue his dream to make a difference and honor his grandmother's memory.

"When I walk into a patient's house, I'm privileged to be in their home. I have a responsibility to be the best I can be," said Torres.

His best offers his patients the hope and healing they all deserve. **GN**

“

When I walk into a patient's house, I'm privileged to be in their home. I have a responsibility to be the best I can be.

- Eric Torres



Home is where the heart shines

Lincoln Manor redefined “family” during the pandemic.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

A MERICAN AUTHOR Pierce Brown said, “Home isn’t where you’re from; it’s where you find light when all grows dark.” In a time like we’d never seen, the pandemic gave us many opportunities to find light. At Lincoln Manor (LM) in Fayetteville, it was an opportunity that forever changed the bond between residents and the staff. Beautiful and bittersweet relationships spontaneously resulted when home in assisted living and a global pandemic collided.

Although the pre-COVID atmosphere was warm, what happened during that hard season made the meaning of home even sweeter. The doors to the world outside closed behind staff and residents, holding

other personal connections at bay, and their hearts opened to each other. Friends and family did their best to connect with their loved ones through the windows while both sides of the glass longed for a personal touch.

Alyssa Shields, executive director of LM, said, “These residents are on up there in age, and tomorrow isn’t promised for any of us. Having to tell families they had to see their loved ones through the window or talk to them on the phone was the hardest part. Residents had no physical touch except from us. We’d try to hug them and just love on them because nobody else could come in. It was like we were in our own little world here, and we tried to make the best of it.”



Alyssa
Shields





Carpe Diem

A large calendar or grid is spread out on the desk. It features a grid of dates and some text, but the details are too blurry to read. An orange pen is positioned to the left of the calendar.



Once you come into the manor, you're always part of the family. I think that's what sets us apart from other facilities.

- Alyssa Shields

It was a time when so many healthcare professionals made career changes, overwhelmed by the demands on those in their field.

"There were days I thought a job change would be easier, but I reminded myself it wasn't only hard on me, it was just as stressful on the residents and their families. For many, we became their only in-person human connection," said Courtney Smith, a resident assistant.

Human connection draws residents to assisted living facilities, and developing meaningful bonds of friendship is one of the many positive elements of life at LM. Social events, recreational activities, special outings, shopping trips, and religious services are among the activities promised there. But not during COVID. Residents even ate meals in isolation.

"We had to put their food and drinks on a cart and roll it down to their rooms. They couldn't even sit and eat with their friends," said Brittany Horn, a resident assistant. "The residents didn't get to go anywhere. Not even Walmart. It was so heartbreaking to see."

But walls and measured distances can't put boundaries around love and relationships any more than the seashore holds back the sea. Bonds forged during the pandemic bridged the ocean of difficulties brought on by it. A stronger team of co-workers emerged, committed to improving the residents' lives. There's a new depth to the love among the staff, residents, and their families. Success is measured in hugs and smiles.

Stephanie Williams, business office and dietary manager, said, "If we are making them happy, then we're doing our jobs." One of her favorite things about working in her calling is watching a resident laugh and have a good time during an activity or outing.

"At Lincoln Manor, we are a team, everyone willing to pull together to make it home for the residents. None of us are perfect, but with the help of one another, we try to make it as perfect for our residents as we can," said Wanda Dunnivant, a registered nurse.



▲ Lindsey Neely bonds with the residents through activities like puzzles

Resident assistant Krysta Britton agrees. "Some of these residents don't have a lot of family to show them attention and make sure they feel loved. I love being that person for them."

There are many layers to LM employees' emotions.

"One of the hardest parts of my job is watching my residents suffer emotionally. Many of them grieve the loss of their loved ones or the loss of their old selves. It's difficult watching them during this time, knowing there isn't much I can do to comfort them, but that still doesn't stop me from trying," said Britton.

As with any bond, the sense of loss is deeper when a resident passes. The staff mourns with family members, but their relationship doesn't end when the family packs up their room.

"Once you come into the manor, you're always part of the family. I think that's what sets us apart from other facilities. We treat them like they're our own," said Shields.

At LM, the power of human connection and the resilience of the human spirit shines brightly. Residents and staff weathered the storm together within the manor's walls, redefining their sense of family and unity. They emerged not just as survivors but as a testament to the enduring strength of the community, reminding us that even in the face of adversity, home is where the heart finds its truest light. **GN**

Lincoln Manor is located at 115 Medical Center Blvd., Fayetteville, and can be reached at (931) 433-5000. For more information, visit inspiritseniorliving.com or follow Lincoln Manor on Facebook.

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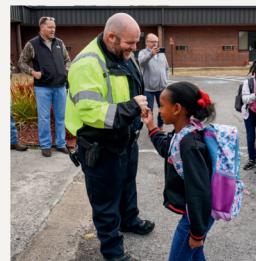


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December 20th
Blue Christmas Service
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Candlelight Service
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How the Good News Magic Happens: From Submission to Print

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

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?

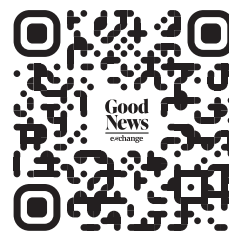
Currently, our dedicated team is hard at work crafting stories under themes like “From The Heart,” “Charity Spotlight,” and “The Learning Curve.” We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is **“Vacation in Fayetteville”**

Submit people who provide local activities:

Do you know local people who have made a significant impact on local fun? Whether it's tourism leaders who provide opportunities or those who promote large events, we want to spotlight these individuals and their stories in our upcoming “Vacation in Fayetteville” issue.

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

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





Good Times

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

58 Community Events

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Submit a positive story
on our website:



goodnewsmags.com

Photo submitted by Velva Walker

◀ Savana Whitt

LCHS Basketball Falcon Fest - Oct. 27, 2023

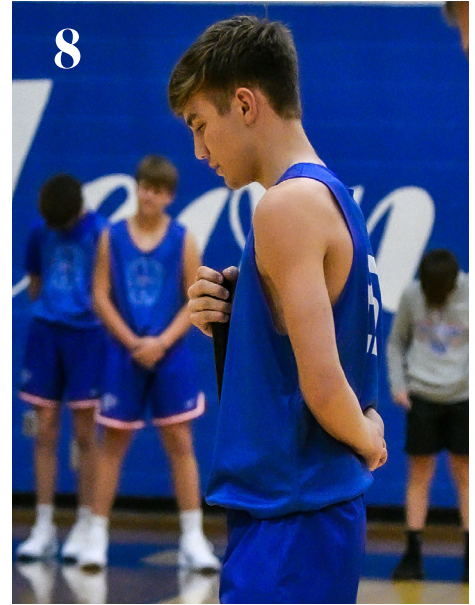


Photos submitted by Velva Walker

The Lincoln County Falcon Basketball Tip-Off Club hosted its inaugural Falcon Fest, a community pep rally complete with activities, crafts, food, and team introductions.



1. Miranda Manderson, Rilee Manderson, and Rikki Stubblefield 2. Lady Falcons Basketball Team 3. Emma Hall
4. Brady Towry, Kyler Monks, Noah Fugate, and Stephen Bryan 5. Kezziah Phelps 6. LCHS Falcon Basketball Team



7. Reese Smith 8. Brody Bryan 9. Lyla Rae Gardner
10. Steve Cunningham and Lance Stephens 11. LCHS Cheerleaders

“Smalls” Saturday at the Trailer Park - Nov. 18, 2023



Photography by Brooke Snyder

The Trailer Park hosted its first “Smalls” Saturday. The event highlighted small businesses in the community, including a mobile petting zoo!



1. Kristy Taylor 2. Heidi Ables 3. Ila Hose 4. Liza Jo Kitchens
5. Miranda Ikard and Shanda Owens 6. Deysha Leflour



7. Joseph Newton 8. Suzanne and Molly Gay
9. Jennie Roles Walter 10. Marie and Charlie Swearingen

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GOOD TIMES

EVENTS CALENDAR

December 25

7:00 pm Lee Gibson's Fifth Annual County Christmas Concert
Bell Buckle Banquet Hall
27 Railroad Square
Bell Buckle

Lee Gibson will be performing his classic country Christmas setlist at the Bell Buckle Banquet Hall for his 5th annual County Christmas Concert.

December 25

6:30 pm Fayetteville Shrine Club
Marvin's Restaurant
4130 Thornton
Taylor Pkwy.
Fayetteville

Repeated every month on the fourth Monday at 6:30 p.m.

December 31

8:00 pm Black and White Grand Ball:
FLC Museum
521 Main Ave. S.
Fayetteville

Celebrate New Year's Eve in style at the annual Main Street Grand Ball. Tickets are \$60 per person, with a limited availability.

January 1

12:00 pm Polar Plunge for a Cure
Quatina M. Wolaver
Foundation of Hope
49 Quick School Rd.
Fayetteville

Join in on a daring New Year's Day plunge into frigid waters to help raise awareness and funds for ovarian cancer research.



January 2

6:00 pm **Card Making with Jean**

Lincoln County
Arts Center
303 Main Ave. S.
Fayetteville

Arts Center member, Jean Reed, hosts this class on the first Tuesday of each month.

January 18

5:30 pm **Social Media Workshop**

100 Main Ave. N.
Fayetteville

Learn from local entrepreneur and The Ville Social Studio owner, Macey Corder, how to improve your social media reach and more. For members only!

January 25

5:00 pm **Love Thy Neighbor Merchant Mixer**

Norman's Furniture
203 Main Ave. S.
Fayetteville

This mixer is the perfect opportunity for merchants to come together and see what other stores in the community are all about. RSVP opens in January!

For more events and to submit an event visit:

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



Merry Christmas

&
Happy New Year

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| Fahrig, Stephen | 1-800-345-5016 |
| Kerrigan, Jimmy | 1-800-345-5016 |

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| Cline, Richard | 931-438-4111 |
| Edwards, William A. | 931-438-4111 |
| Gafford, Christopher E. | 931-433-7778 |
| Hughes, William D. | 931-438-4111 |
| Jones, William R. | 931-433-2551 |
| Loiacono, Mike | 931-433-2551 |
| Sain, Paul D | 931-443-2551 |
| Thelen, Sarah | 931-227-4984 |

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| Nedumthottathil, Thomas | 931-438-1100 |
| Uzzi, Idowu | 931-438-1100 |

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| Spears, W. Kyle | 931-433-2551 |

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