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exchange

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# From the Heart

ISSUE 1 2024

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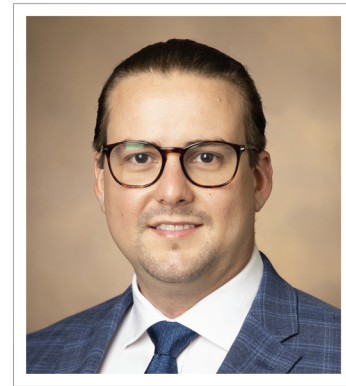
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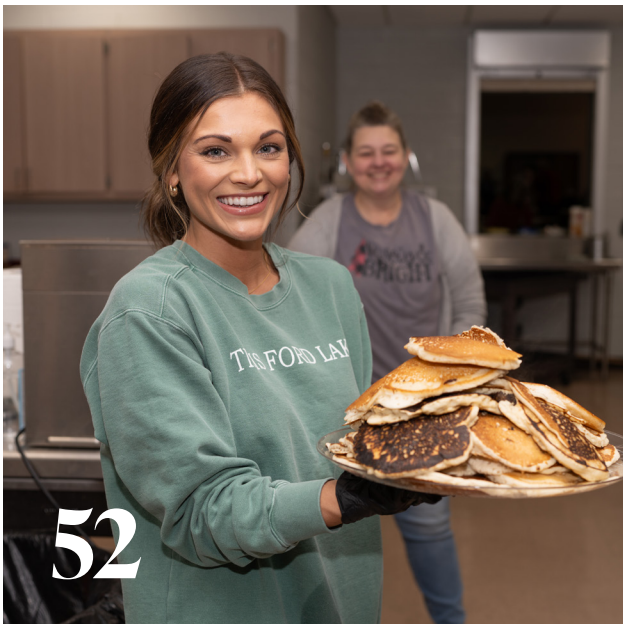
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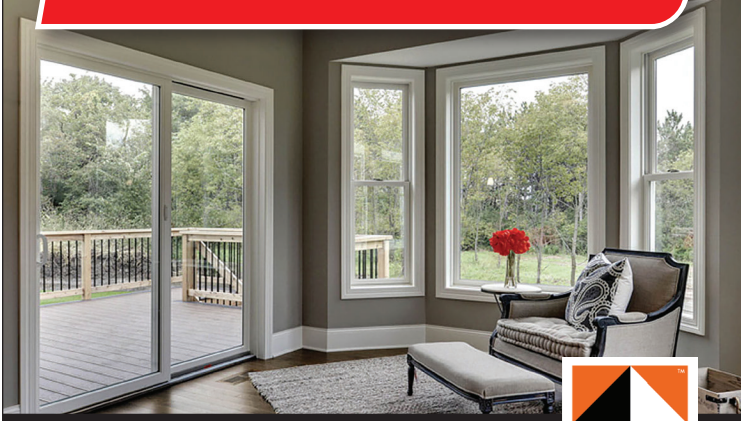
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Every Gesture of Love is from the Heart

Celebrating everyday love

IT'S HOLDING the door open for the person behind you. It's sending a sweet text when they cross your mind. It's stopping by to say "hi" when they've had a bad day. Showing up and showing love is like medicine for our souls. It lets us dance, sing, laugh, and cry together. It lets us know that someone is saving us a seat at every table. We know that – while we may be off-key – there is someone to sing backup from the passenger seat. And when we have those really bad days, we know there is a shoulder waiting like a therapeutic tissue. These moments, while they may feel

small, carry a heavy weight. It keeps the world from falling apart when it feels so fragile. It keeps our head above the water in the deepest, darkest oceans.

This issue of Good News is about celebrating our love. We're not just talking about romantic love, either. We're talking about the real love that can only come from the heart. Our community is full of actions that show love in every minute of every day. It can be as simple as a "Luv U" text or as kind as holding a door open.

We're proud to share stories of love to make the community a better place. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,  
MANAGING EDITOR

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partner



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# GOOD NEWS

## CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

- 14** Balancing academics, passion, and community impact
- 20** Foundations of friendship and marital bliss
- 26** Rebuilding, reviving, restoring, and recovering souls

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Photography by Brooke Snyder

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# Balancing Academics, Passion, and Community Impact

A young community member's excellent academic journey and community impact

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**E**DEN KILGORE is a young girl, wise beyond her years, who wears many hats — a student, an athlete, a business owner, a volunteer, and a public speaker. One couldn't help but wonder how she manages to juggle it all, and Eden is more than willing to provide the answers.

"I always prioritize my schoolwork first. I don't usually procrastinate," Eden began.

"I always jump on assignments really early, usually on the day they're assigned. I always anticipate that my schedule is going to be pretty busy, so I like to stay ahead of things."

Eden's ability to manage her time and focus on academics has set a strong foundation for many accomplishments. One of these accomplishments is her business, Doodle Dandy's, which she established with her Labradoodle as her inspiration.

Eden's business is rooted in her love for animals, primarily focusing on her stylish and personally sewn bandanas. Additionally, she offers a small selection of dog treats, a small add-on. She uses some of the profits to support the local animal shelter, Animal Harbor.

She added, "Some of the proceeds go to the Animal Harbor, and I typically have a booth at the farmers market and set up booths at various craft fairs. Twice a year, I make a donation from the sum of proceeds we collect."

Eden's commitment to her business and community goes hand in hand, as she is a business owner and an active volunteer in her church's Operation Christmas Child program.

Regarding her motivation, Eden said, "I have always had a passion for helping







Eden Kilgore









others. When I was introduced to the Operation Christmas Child program years ago, I knew I wanted to do something to help.”

The program involves filling shoeboxes with toys, toiletries, school supplies, and more, which are then sent to children in various countries around the world, along with a heartfelt message full of hope.

Eden shared, “I promote and assist the program at my church, where we sort and assemble supplies to be shipped around the world.”

Despite her busy schedule, Eden maintains her involvement in these activities, thanks to her time management skills and dedication to her passion.

She explained, “I focus on one thing at a time. I pick a topic I’m passionate about, write, and practice my speech until I’m confident in my presentation.”

Her impressive public speaking skills have earned her first place in the Franklin County 4-H Public Speaking contest for three consecutive years, a remarkable feat for anyone, let alone a young tween. In her spare time, she enjoys caring for her dog, Toby, who serves as her inspiration for Doodle Dandy’s.

She shared, “I looked online and found a recipe for dog treats I had made for Toby a few times before. After testing them and finding out my dog loved them, I decided to start making more and selling them.”

Her mother, Jennifer, is an excellent source of support. Eden even cited her as her biggest role model.

“My mom has always been there for me and supported me through all my activities,” Eden said.

Jennifer added, “We’re just so proud of everything she does. We just want to keep encouraging her and telling her that the sky’s the limit on anything she can do.”

Eden shared her vision for the future.

“I would like to expand more into dog treats in the future and create a pantry where we give food donations to owners in need. This would be a great way to keep our shelters from being overrun and help animals in our community.”

Eden’s hometown, Franklin County, holds a special place in her heart. She sees it as a close-knit community that has shaped her values and commitment to making a positive impact.

She concluded, “I am proud of my community and how they have helped me become who I am today.”

Young Eden’s story is one of dedication, compassion, and the power of pursuing one’s passions to make a difference. Her achievements at such a young age represent what can be accomplished when one follows their heart and prioritizes giving back to the community. **GN**

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A photograph of a man and a woman in a forest setting. The man is wearing a green sweater and blue jeans, and the woman is wearing a beige sweater and black pants. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The woman has her hand on the man's shoulder. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, and there are trees in the background with string lights hanging from them. A large, light green heart graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Maggie and Grant Gipson'.

*Maggie and Grant  
Gipson*





# Foundations of friendship and *marital bliss*

The unbreakable bond of Maggie and Grant Gipson

By Jeriah Brumfield // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**M**AGGIE AND Grant Gipson's love story began on a crisp autumn evening on the bleachers at a Franklin County High School football game. It was in the eighth grade when mutual friends played matchmakers, and from that moment on, their lives became intertwined.

Three years into their marriage, the couple reflects on the most rewarding aspect of their journey together — their foundation of friendship. It's the foundation upon which they've built their life.

"Being best friends with your spouse can be immensely rewarding as you enjoy each other's company and share interests," said Maggie.

Having known each other for 15 years, they've navigated through various phases of life hand in hand, finding unexpected joys along the way.

Balancing demanding careers and supporting each other's extra commitments can be a delicate dance. For Maggie and Grant, it's about being each other's biggest cheerleaders.







*Our marriage has been a fun adventure. We built our first home, welcomed our first dog, embraced career changes, laughed a lot, and traveled to create wonderful memories together.*

*-Grant Gipson*

**CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS AND OFFERING UNWAVERING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IS THEIR PLAYBOOK.**

They celebrate each other's achievements and offer unwavering emotional support during challenging times. Acknowledging each other's efforts and accomplishments is the cornerstone of their partnership.

Their deep connection with each other intertwines with their deeply rooted connection to the community. They support local organizations like New Life, One Day Health Clinic, and the Franklin County Education Foundation. Having been born and raised in Franklin County, they feel it's their duty to give back, striving to make a difference now and for future generations.

"We're just genuinely committed to giving back in any way we can. Our involvement in local organizations is our small way of making a positive impact. We hope that our contributions will provide immediate help and, in the future, inspire others to join in and create a stronger, more caring community."

In the midst of their journey, one memorable event stands out — the addition of Ruby, their fur baby. This four-legged companion has brought immeasurable joy and revealed new facets of their relationship. Ruby's love for the water and newfound passion for kayaking have become exciting family adventures.

As for advice, Maggie and Grant offer simple and valuable advice to other couples: spend quality time together doing activities you both enjoy. It could be a romantic date night, a memorable travel adventure, or simply unwinding at home.

They respect and support each other's passions even as they nurture individual interests like golf, Taylor Swift, or reality TV.

Their dreams align with their upbringing in Franklin County. They aspire to raise their children in the same community that has given them so much, continuing to support and uplift those around them.

"We both have been fortunate enough to be born and raised here in Franklin





*Ruby, Grant,  
and Maggie*

County, which has given us so much. Saying this, we feel a deep desire to give back however possible,” Maggie reflected.

A simple philosophy guides their relationship — have fun and laugh a lot. This lighthearted approach to life has kept their love alive and thriving.

And if they had to sum up their love in one word, it would be “consistency.” Every day, in big and small ways, they reaffirm their commitment and strengthen their bond.

“We show up for each other every day. We commit to each other every day. We show up for each other for each other’s work functions. We support each other’s hobbies.

This all takes consistency,” said Maggie.

Good memories are a common occurrence in their lives, but one particular moment in their journey sticks out to them.

“With knowing each other for so many years, there’s a lot of memories and moments that stand out. In more recent memories, building our first home together was a memorable time. It’s been special to create a space together where we can host our friends and family and make it our own,” said Maggie.

“Our marriage has been a fun adventure. We built our first home,

welcomed our first dog, embraced career changes, laughed a lot, and traveled to create wonderful memories together. It’s been really special to build our life together,” Grant added.

As Grant reflected on his hometown, he couldn’t help but express his deep appreciation for the close-knit community that defined Franklin County.

“Franklin County is a special place because of its community. We love how the people here truly look out for one another. We both have so many memories growing up in Franklin County, and we can’t wait to make more here.” **GN**



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# **REBUILDING, REVIVING, RESTORING, and RECOVERING SOULS**

**A faith-based community initiative  
in Franklin County**

By Jeriah Brumfield

Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Alyssa Atkisson


---





▲ 1. Josh Williams's mother, Josh Williams, his daughter, and his father  
2. Troy Johnson and Josh Williams 3. Brandon Scott and Jordan Atkisson  
4. John Ross Luskand Jordan Atkisson





**I**N EARLY 2020, Jordan Atkisson and his wife found themselves at a pastor's conference in Louisiana, where a person who had recovered from a drug addiction shared a powerful message. This moment sparked a vision to address a common tragedy in many churches — the struggle to help broken individuals find their way back.

"The Lord began to deal with me about a problem that's in a lot of churches where they don't know how to put broken people back together. With that, we decided to get out of our comfort zone and start a recovery ministry called R3, and doors just began to open from there," he said.

The name R3 signifies the three crucial phases of the recovery journey. Revived spirits, restored relationships, and recovered lives form the foundation of this transformative initiative. The program's name speaks to its purpose, but the mission put into action speaks even louder.

From the beginning, the community rallied behind the R3 program. As word spread, doors swung open, and opportunities abounded. What began as a simple vision for a recovery meeting in Franklin County soon evolved into a comprehensive year-long recovery program.

A simple idea spoken aloud led to action steps that ultimately opened the program's doors.

"It all just really fell into place. And since then, we've had people give houses and vehicles. People's lives have been revived, restored, and recovered," Atkisson continued.

The program's structure is carefully designed to address the holistic needs of participants. The initial 30 days offer a period of rest and reflection, allowing individuals to focus on personal growth and their relationship with a higher power. Following this, participants engage in employment, attend classes, and partake in various activities aimed at instilling discipline, purpose, and a sense of belonging.

"During this time, they're building a community

around themselves. They're making friends at work, they're making friends at church, and they're building a community around them. We work with the drug coalition, and they help them as well," Laura Verdine, the communications specialist at R3 Recovery, said.

But R3's impact extends far beyond the structured framework. It's about creating a supportive environment, a community that stands strong alongside those on their journey to recovery. The Franklin County community has proven instrumental in the program's success, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to the cause.

"They're getting themselves back on track. And it takes a village. So it can't be just one person being supportive of them. They have to have that community around them, and that's the biggest thing," Verdine continued.

"From a pastor's perspective, there's been nothing that has changed the culture of our church greater than when we started reaching for drug and alcohol users. We have seen God move more since we started R3 than we had in the five years before that. People are the heartbeat of God, and when you reach for the ones that society has given up on, that's when God shows up," Atkisson added.

One example of this support comes from a local businessman who stepped forward to purchase a house when circumstances threatened to leave program participants without a place to live. This act of kindness, among many others, showed program leadership the power of collective action in transforming lives.

R3 isn't just a program; it represents the resilience and determination of individuals seeking recovery. Graduates of the program often choose to remain involved, becoming living proof that transformation is possible. Families once fractured by addiction are now reunited, testifying to the program's profound impact.

At the heart of R3 lies a profound faith-based approach. The program emphasizes that proper recovery



involves physical and emotional aspects and a spiritual awakening. By integrating faith into the recovery process, participants find strength and solace in knowing they are never alone in their journey.

They emphasize that everyone deserves a chance at recovery regardless of their background or struggles. The program invites all churches and individuals to join hands in this endeavor, recognizing that the heartbeat of God is found in every person in every community.

Atkisson also highlighted the importance of the program's staff, two members in particular, Troy Johnson and Leif Plunkett, endearingly referred to as the "backbones" of the program.

Recovery is a universal journey. It transcends race, social status, and circumstance, emphasizing the innate need for human connection and support. With the right support and unwavering commitment, R3 will continue to rebuild lives, one step at a time. GN

“

*We have seen God move more since we started R3 than we had in the five years before that. People are the heartbeat of God, and when you reach for the ones that society has given up on, that's when God shows up.*

-Jordan Atkisson



▲ Calli, Troy Masters, Troy Johnson, Leif Plunkett, Christopher Bowden, Jason Reed, and Shawn Patton



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live for today,  
hope for tomorrow  
- Albert Einstein

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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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Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

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Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ CleiJo and Dennis Walker



# From the Heart

**T**HE CONNECTION between humans — we call it love — is a profoundly beautiful thing. Our Creator built us to have different types of love. The Greek words for the three types are eros, agape, and philio.

Eros is the passionate and romantic love we often think of when picturing two people sharing an intimate bond. It's full of emotion, desire, and longing, and people find it every day.

Agape love is a love that is unconditional and selfless. It's love without expectation or demand, often seen among family members and friends who care deeply for one another.

Philio love is the love of friendship and community. It's about shared experiences and mutual understanding. We often see this type of love in close-knit groups of people who have a deep connection — just like Franklin County.

No matter what type of love you experience, it's an essential part of the human experience. Love and connection bring us closer together, allowing us to share life's highs and lows with those we care about most. Good News is happy to share these one-of-a-kind stories from the heart. **GN**









Holly and Jim Cortner



# It Was Just Meant To Be

The influence of family and upbringing on Jim and Holly's life

By Jeriah Brumfield

Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Holly and Jim Cortner

**J**IM AND Holly Cortner's love story unfolds, intertwined with the legacy of their shared values and dedicated service to the community. Jim's upbringing, which consisted of early morning rises with his father, who owned a funeral business, instilled in him the values of discipline and dedication. His father's work ethic, principles, and fair treatment of people have been the foundation of their success. His mother's three-decade commitment to education echoed the importance of community service.

"If I wasn't already up, he was getting me up by seven o'clock. That was invaluable in my working career because I think that the success that we have been blessed to achieve definitely stems from the core values of my dad's work ethic. Watching him handle problems over the years when I was tagging along has really paid off." Jim reflected.

Holly's journey mirrored Jim's mother's and her father's dedication to education. Growing up with a father, a well-known and beloved teacher in the community, and a

mother, a dedicated nurse, Holly, much like Jim, grew up valuing community service.

She still hears her father's words echoing in her mind. 'Holly, for some of these kids, the best part of their day, [and] the best part of their life is spent at school.'

As an educator, Holly strived to create an environment where children were excited about learning, just as she wished she had been during her school days. Her dedication to making the classroom a place of joy and learning reflects her commitment to community service.





As Holly transitioned from education to joining Jim in the family funeral business, she carried with her a teacher's heart, seeking to make this new chapter a source of joy and excitement. This transition marked a turning point in their lives. Together, they have built a business that thrives on shared values and dedication.

In the midst of their shared dedication to the community, Jim and Holly found not only kindred spirits but soulmates. Their connection was immediate, and their interests eerily aligned. Their story unfolded

with a grace that seemed preordained, each day reaffirming the depth of their bond.

Together, they navigate the complexities of running a family business, finding the balance between the demands of work and the sanctuary of home. In their union, they've discovered that unity is not merely a word but a lived reality, where each team member, from the cemetery groundsman to the office assistants, is vital in a well-oiled wheel, integral to creating something exceptional.

Generations mold seamlessly within the walls of their business. Jim's father still stands beside him. Their son, Robert, now carries forward the legacy as the fifth generation worker in a business that spans over a century. The family bonds, strengthened by shared values, persistence, and dedication, form the foundation for their success.

Gazing toward the future, Jim and Holly remain persistent in their commitment to adapt and evolve. In an ever-changing landscape, they understand that staying relevant is not merely an aspiration but is imperative. Their business isn't just a reflection of their work; it's a manifestation of their faith, an embodiment of their belief that they are following the path laid out for them.

Their faith extends beyond their walls, flowing into the community they serve. They pour their hearts into causes that touch lives, from youth sports to drug recovery programs, children's hospitals, and animal shelters. Their involvement is not just an act of generosity but reminds us of the profound truth that love is, indeed, the greatest of all.

As the couple expands their services and remains active in their community, they



“[God] gave us three things: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.”

- Holly Cortner

strive to maintain a deep connection to the heart of their mission — serving others. Their commitment to love and faith defines their journey and the legacy they are building.

To Jim and Holly, “from the heart” is more than a phrase; it’s a way of life. It’s the echo of their shared heartbeat, the rhythm that guides their every step. Their love story continues and flows seamlessly into the community they cherish.

“I believe that we live from the heart because everything that we do and strive to live for comes from our heart; it comes from our character, and I will give all that glory to God that gave us that heart.”

“[God] gave us three things: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.” GN

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CleiJo and Dennis Walker



# The Walker Way

A tale of love, resilience, and  
community commitment

By Jeriah Brumfield

Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by CleiJo Walker

**I**N THIS thriving community lies a love story that has stood the test of time. Dennis and CleiJo Walker, a couple with 55 years of marriage under their belt, share their journey of love, support, and community service. From destined encounters to shared passions, their love story is one of resilience, unity, and a deep commitment to giving back.

Their story began in a university cafeteria, where fate and God's love and mercy brought them together.

"I attended Huntland High School, and she attended Franklin County High School. We were from the same county but did not even know each other until we wound up at MTSU," Dennis recalled.

As his loving wife, CleiJo, pointed out a grading error, a simple act of kindness led to shared meals and dances, eventually blossoming into a lifelong partnership.

"I had just gotten my economics test back. I was eating lunch beside her and looking over my test. She noticed a grading error of 10 points, which made a great difference in my test score. After going to my professor and getting it straightened out, we started eating lunch together and went to a dance or two. [And] here we are, 55 years later."

It's clear that CleiJo had Dennis's back from day one, and the love they've nurtured over the years is nothing short of inspiring. But their lasting love is not the only inspiring aspect of their life together.

Over the years, the Walkers attribute the longevity of their marriage to a careful balance of independence and togetherness.

"We give each other space," CleiJo noted.

This mutual respect for individual pursuits allowed them to grow together while maintaining their unique identities. Their children and grandchildren have been the "glue" that kept them close as they navigated the ups and downs of family life.

Both dedicated to their respective careers, the Walkers have impacted the community in many ways. CleiJo's passion for education led to a 38-year career in teaching, where she touched countless students' lives. Her involvement in various educational organizations and scholarship





“Marriage is not about you or me. It’s always about us.”

- CleiJo Walker

programs only highlights a fraction of her dedication to impacting students and encouraging and educating young minds.

Many of her students have become successful adults. Her involvement in the Southern Tennessee Ladies Society allows her to help provide scholarships to high school seniors, contributing to their educational journeys.

Dennis’s passion lies in the finance and banking realm. Serving on numerous boards and civic organizations, he has used his tools and skills to enhance the community’s financial knowledge and abilities. He spearheaded impactful community projects, including senior citizen housing and the founding of Citizens Community Bank. His ability to make local decisions ensured the bank’s success and continued positive impact on the community.

The Walkers’ relationship thrives on open communication and shared goals.

CleiJo said, “Marriage is not about you or me. It’s always about us. And I think you have to have a shared vision for what you want your life to be. And in our case, we both worked very hard to have a home and raise three children. And we were unified in that.”

They stress the importance of respecting each other’s opinions, even when they differ. Their financial transparency and responsible decision-making have also been pivotal in weathering challenges and maintaining a strong partnership.

Their advice to young couples looking to build lasting relationships is grounded in the lessons they’ve learned throughout their journey. Their advice stands on the basic principles of realistic financial planning and understanding the value of shared vision.

As they look ahead, Dennis and CleiJo are determined to keep their commitment to staying active in the community, enjoying the fruits of their labor, and traveling.

Dennis, “the finance guy,” continues to be a part of the banking world, offering his expertise and guidance to those who seek it. CleiJo’s passion for education remains as she serves on the Franklin County School Board and engages with the Retired Teachers Association and the United Way.

Their hopes for the future revolve around health and happiness. They intend to cherish their time with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, making the most of family gatherings and celebrations.

We live in a world that often celebrates fleeting and short-lived experiences. The love and unity that Dennis and CleiJo Walker have shared for nearly 55 years inspire a community of hope, reminding us that consistent love, commitment, and community engagement are the true ingredients of a life well-lived. GN









Patty Fandrich, Yvonne Stewart, and Janie Woodall



# Best Friends by Chance, Sisters by Choice

Exploring Ya-Ya Sisters' two  
decades of laughter, support, and  
unforgettable memories.

By Jeriah Brumfield  
Photos submitted by Yvonne Stewart

**T**HERE'S NO better remedy for the soul than the profound connection of friendship love, known as "philia" in Greek. In 2002, a close-knit group of friends embarked on a journey inspired by the film "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood." Little did they know this venture would create a lifelong bond that thrived for over two decades. From holiday dinners to impromptu adventures, this group, known affectionately as the "Ya-Ya Sisters," has become a safe space for women of all ages.

Yvonne Stewart, lovingly referred to as the "queen," recalls that special moment; "Me and 13 of my friends were going out

for a Christmas holiday dinner at High Point Restaurant in Montecagle. I decided to add some fun to the evening. I created princess names and purchased crowns for each friend. That night at dinner, I talked about our friendship and how we related to the women in the movie, "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood," crowning each friend and bestowing them with a whimsical title (a Ya-Ya name) that each one had 'earned' throughout our years of friendship, based on shared memories and personality quirks."

Thus, the Ya-Ya Sisterhood was christened.

Their gatherings, a fusion of camaraderie, celebration, and support, soon became a





Ya-Ya Sisters' Christmas Party 2016

▲ Kelly Master, Brandy Montye Scott, Carolyn Wiseman, Charlotte Scott, Katie Rae Long, Janie Woodall, Cheryl Morris, Jeannie Bates, Patty Fandrich, Rhonda Gray, Carline Boswell, Owene Yarbrough, Pam Peck, Tammy Holt, Sara Hunter, Brenda Long, Theresa Tucker, Dianne Zimmerman, Michelle Glover, Yvonne Stewart, Courtney Worley, Amber Farris, Dana Farris, Nancy Hibler, Glorier Godwin, Cynthia Silagyi, Marsha Worley, Dianne Yates, Tara Ashley Swinson, Lexi Sons, Ashlyn Farris, and Emily Stewart



cherished tradition. Each member carries their title like a badge of honor. New additions to the group are apprentices, lovingly called “YITS” or “Ya-Yas in Training,” and must earn their names to be crowned as official Ya-Ya members.

As the group expanded, so did their eclectic mix of backgrounds and professions. Homemakers, professionals, and working women came together, drawn by the magnetic pull of this extraordinary sisterhood. The Ya-Yas find strength in their diversity, celebrating the goodness in each individual.

“What do the Ya-Yas do?” It’s a question often asked. The answer, delivered with a sparkle in their eyes, is simple yet profound: “We eat, drink, and be merry.”

With laughter as their compass and music as their anthem, the Ya-Yas take on adventures, filling customized vans for concerts.

Their eclectic tastes span from Tennessee football to rock ‘n’ roll legends like Lynyrd Skynyrd. With Jeannie Bates as the designated driver, they pile into a customized van and head out for unforgettable concert experiences. Jeannie might have been more suited for driving a shopping cart, given her knack for exploring every souvenir shop when they travel.

Whether dressing up as trashy women for a birthday celebration or donning their best cocktail attire, these women know how to throw a good old-fashioned theme party. Halloween, St. Patrick’s Day, Mardi Gras — you name it, and they’ve got the outfits and enthusiasm to match.

But it’s not always festive; the Ya-Yas stand together through life’s highs and lows. When storms arise, they’re each other’s shelter.

In 2006, they faced the profound loss of their first sister, Pat Zimmerman.

Theresa Tucker, another member, said, “During the recent loss of one of our Ya-Ya Sisters, Patty Fandrich, there was never any concern for who would provide lunch for her loved ones after the service. While sharing lunch and celebrating her incredible life with her family, I realized our deep love and support for our Ya-Ya Sisters goes far beyond ourselves and extends to our spouses, children, and grandchildren. Our Ya-Ya group is more than inducted sisters. It’s a bonus family.”

Through decades of shared experiences, they’ve weathered storms, celebrated triumphs, and consoled each other through sorrows. From births to divorces, they’re a chosen family, always ready to gather around like a protective flock.

One member, Janie Woodall, shared a touching sentiment about the love and support she received from her cherished sisterhood: “When my sons passed away, Ya-Yas gathered around me like a flock of birds. I felt like a baby bird in a nest. And they were protecting me. The worst had already happened, but having a support group lifted me up.”

Their extended family includes mothers, aunts, and grandmothers as generations intertwine, creating a legacy of sisterhood.

“Some of our mothers have been gone for many years, and others in more recent years. Yvonne’s mom and Ms. Carlene have inspired me since I was inducted into the Ya-Yas. It has always been a pleasure and comfort to have them present in this part of our lives,” said Tucker.

Their unconditional support provides a safety net of love and empathy.

Take a moment to reflect on the people who hold you up, support you through life’s challenges, and share in your moments of joy. In the end, it’s these lifelong bonds of friendship and love that make life truly spectacular. The Ya-Ya Sisters prove that the bonds we forge can enrich our lives in ways we never imagined. GN

“Our Ya-Ya group is more than inducted sisters. It’s a bonus family.”

- Theresa Tucker



▲ Cheryl Morris, Brenda Long, Dianne Yates, Marsha Worley, Jeannie Bates, and Yvonne Stewart



# 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?*

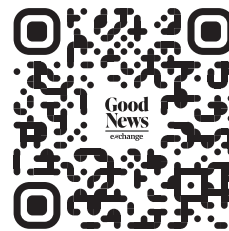
Currently, our dedicated team of magazine writers and editors is hard at work crafting stories under themes like “Charity Spotlight,” “The Learning Curve,” and “Shop Local.” We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is “**Independence.**”

### **What we seek in Independence stories:**

We are looking for local veterans in our community who are willing to share their stories. Do you know a veteran in your community who faced and overcame challenges? Or veterans who now use their experience to assist others? Or, you might know of charities led by veterans that positively impact the community. We're looking to highlight such veterans and their inspiring stories in our upcoming Independence 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.









# Good Times

## CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

- 52 Community Events
- 56 Events Calendar
- 58 Advertiser Index

Submit a positive story  
on our website:



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

Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

◀ Ashley Murray and Anna Watson



# Tims Ford Christmas Market - Dec. 9



Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

Tims Ford State Park hosted their Christmas Market at Spencer Hall on Dec. 9. The hall was packed full of vendors selling festive goods and were accompanied by food trucks feeding all of the Christmas shoppers.



1. Tammy King and Brittany Fyfe 2. Abby Lumpkin and Francis Christopher 3. Pam Brandon, Joy Cunningham, and Stacy Pross 4. Alissa Dodson 5. Kayleigh and Shannon Williams 6. Leslie and Patrick Burns



# Pancake Breakfast - Dec. 9



Photography by Brooke Snyder

The Rotary Club hosted their annual free Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 8-10 a.m. Santa and his elf made a grand appearance, and The Rotary Club made a donation to the Franklin County 4-H students to help with funding to get to the state competition.

1. Pieter Nowak and Joan Zietlow 2. David Stewart, and Sharon and Jerry Conrow 3. Lexie Hayes and Ethan Tin





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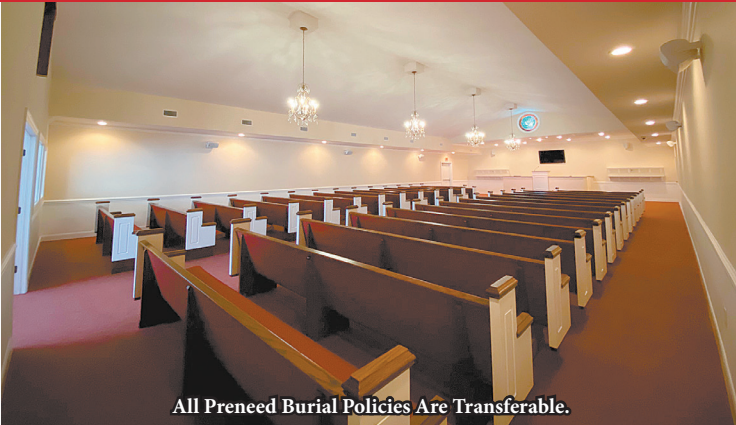
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*from my  
FRONT ROW SEAT*

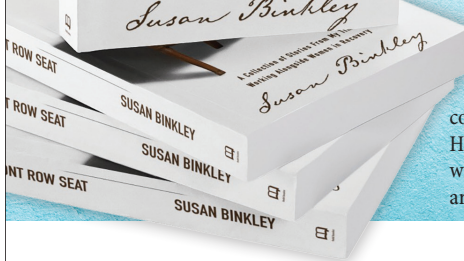


A Collection of Stories From My Time Working Alongside Women in Recovery

Susan Binkley

**A Collection of Stories From My Time Working Alongside Women in Recovery**

From My Front Row Seat is a collection of popular blog posts, where Susan weaves an intricate tapestry of candid Blue Monarch life, as seen through her eyes, combined with her own colorful lifetime experiences. Her voice is raw and authentic with a thread of humor just around the corner.



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# EVENTS CALENDAR

# Get a good look



## January 20

**8:00 am Franklin County Farmers Market**  
Franklin County Fairgrounds  
1502 Dinah Shore Blvd.  
Winchester

The market is open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

## February 6

**6:00 pm Winchester Ladies Networking Night**  
Camino Real  
1106 Dinah Shore Blvd.  
Winchester

Winchester's women can connect, network, and share knowledge to build relationships and grow together.

## February 17

**8:00 am Peekaboo**  
The Caverns  
555 Charlie Roberts Rd.  
Pelham

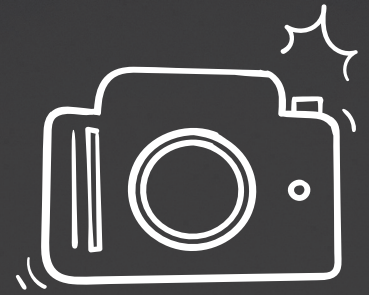
A live music performance by Peekaboo

**8:00 am Custom Cow Cupid Shuffle 4 and 8 hour Endurance Run**  
Warren County Middle School  
200 Caldwell St.  
McMinnville

Challenge your endurance with four or eight hours of running/walking on a flat, paved track. Prizes for the top three finishers. There will be on-site EMS for safety.

We wish we could publish all the photos we have, but we have too many! Browse our online gallery for free or purchase photos to be mailed to your home. All proceeds from photos go to local nonprofits.





## February 19

### 6:00 am Health Council & Coalition Meeting

Campora Family Resource Center  
900 S. Sheperd St.  
Winchester

Join us for this month's Health Council & Prevention Coalition Meeting! For more info visit: <http://fcpctn.org>

## February 21

### 6:00 am Story Time

Franklin County Public Library  
105 S. Porter St.  
Winchester

The community is welcome to gather at the library for story time. This is a weekly series.

## February 23

### 6:00 am Lil Smokies Live

The Park Theater  
115 W. Main St.  
McMinnville

The Lil Smokies will be live, blending virtuosic instrumental acrobatics with riveting lyrical craftsmanship for the entire community to enjoy.



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

[www.GoodNewsMags.com/events](http://www.GoodNewsMags.com/events)  
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Franklin Farmers Co-op.....	31	Traders Bank Tullahoma.....	18
Franklin Manor.....	18	Vanderbilt Tullahoma Harton Hospital.....	2
Grant Funeral Services.....	55	Watson Funeral Home.....	3
Keiths Tank Service.....	4	Watson Metals LLC.....	8
Lone Star Rodeo.....	24	Winchester Family Dentistry .....	55
Lynch Rigsby Realty and Auction.....	30	Winchester Podiatry .....	4
Lynchburg Nursing Center .....	24	Zaxby's .....	19
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