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From the Heart

ISSUE 1 2024

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ISSUE 1 2024

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR: 10
From the Heart

Good News

FOR THE LOVE OF HORSES 14
The remarkable journey of Jamie Clifton and Volunteer Equine Advocates

EAT HENDERSONVILLE FIGHTS RESTAURANT CRISIS 20

EMPOWERING CONNECTIONS 24
The rise of 'Women Supporting Women' in Hendersonville

UNLEASHING THE CHAMPION WITHIN 28
The power of believing in yourself and defying the doubters

SAVOR THE SWEETNESS OF LOVE 30
Discover cozy and delicious recipes to brighten your day

36





Good Living

- 34 FROM THE HEART**
- 36 LOVE FOR THE USA**
A rising country star's heartfelt mission to honor the American flag
- 40 393 CAFÉ**
Mother-daughter team serves up a side of kindness
- 44 A JOURNEY OF HOPE**
Ameera Briefki's odyssey from war-torn Iraq to the tranquility of Tennessee

Good Times

- 52 COMMUNITY EVENTS**
- 56 EVENTS CALENDAR**
- 58 ADVERTISER INDEX**

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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

From our
publishing
partner



"As a Navy vet turned business professional, I'm thrilled to bring "Good News" magazine to the Hendersonville area. Please join me on this journey of spreading joy and optimism. If you're passionate about your community or promoting your business, let's connect!"

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CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

- 14 For the love of horses
- 20 Eat Hendersonville fights restaurant crisis
- 24 Empowering connections
- 28 Unleashing the champion within
- 30 Savor the sweetness of love

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Photography by Steve Zak

◀ Jamie Clifton

For the love of horses

The remarkable
journey of
Jamie Clifton and
Volunteer Equine
Advocates

By Haley Potter
Photography by Steve Zak





Jamie Clifton

“

*I have always
loved horses.*

-Jamie Clifton



IN A setting where rolling hills merge into endless green pastures, a sanctuary for horses emerges. But this haven is more than just a refuge; it is a testament to a lifelong love affair with horses that began in the heart of a young Jamie Clifton. With a dedicated team of around 40 volunteers, Clifton now leads Volunteer Equine Advocates, a small nonprofit organization with an immense love for horses and a compassionate desire to make a difference in their lives.

Clifton and her organization have been transforming the lives of horses for the past two decades.

Clifton's journey into the world of horse rescue and rehabilitation began in 2003 when Volunteer Equine Advocates officially gained nonprofit status. Their mission was clear: to work closely with law enforcement to rescue horses seized from cruelty cases. The organization's primary focus has always been giving these innocent creatures a new chance at life.

However, it's not just about the legal cases and the court orders; Clifton and her team go above and beyond. In certain situations, they even take in owner-surrendered horses. As Clifton put it, "We have 14 horses right now. They're mostly senior horses that are the last to be adopted unless somebody is just looking for a pasture mate. We have a couple of mules, too."

Clifton's deeply personal connection with her mission sets Volunteer Equine Advocates apart. It all began with a news story that hit close to home — a case of extreme neglect and cruelty in Sumner County, just a stone's throw away from where Clifton lived.

"I got such a drive to do this when a case here in Sumner County that was actually very close to where I live, was on the news, and there were a lot of dead horses. [It was] just a terrible situation," Clifton recalled with sadness filling her voice.

The local sheriff's department took action, charging the owner with animal cruelty. Still, they faced a significant challenge: They had no place to house the rescued horses until they were ready for adoption and no one to care for them properly. Clifton's friend stepped in and offered to find foster homes for all the seized horses. "And I think there were 11," Clifton remembered. "She called on friends that had pastures and knew how to take care of horses and got that situation taken care of."

In this pivotal moment, Clifton realized the need for an organization like a Humane Society that could handle livestock, especially in severe cases like the one she had just witnessed. She wasted no time and, with the help of like-minded individuals, began writing bills and policies, eventually securing nonprofit status. They approached the sheriff, offering assistance, not interference. Clifton recalled, "We went to the sheriff and said, 'We're here to help you, not here to tell you how to do your job.' And he was very receptive."



The impact of Volunteer Equine Advocates soon extended beyond the boundaries of Sumner County. They started receiving calls from other counties, such as Giles County, and even from counties farther away.

Clifton said, “Within a couple of years, the word got out, and we were being called by counties far away. It has been 26 different counties we’ve worked in.”

Clifton’s passion for her work is clear, and thinking about her work over the past 23 years makes her smile and fills her heart.

“It is so fulfilling, you know, to be able to help so many horses and be able to take them in,” she explained.

The transformation these horses undergo is nothing short of miraculous.

“You can’t believe how wonderful it is when you get one that is skin and bones, and in three months, you wouldn’t even know it was the same horse,” said Clifton.

Clifton’s love for horses has been a lifelong affair, beginning with her childhood ponies. Her involvement in different nonprofits in the past, mainly related to historic sites, took a completely different turn when she saw a need in her community. “I have always loved horses,” she shared. “It was just a passion and something I saw a need for.”

With the help of her dedicated team and the support of her community, she has rescued and rehabilitated over 1,500 horses in Central Tennessee and sown the seeds of hope, healing, and a brighter future for countless equines to come. **GN**







Building Stronger Communities

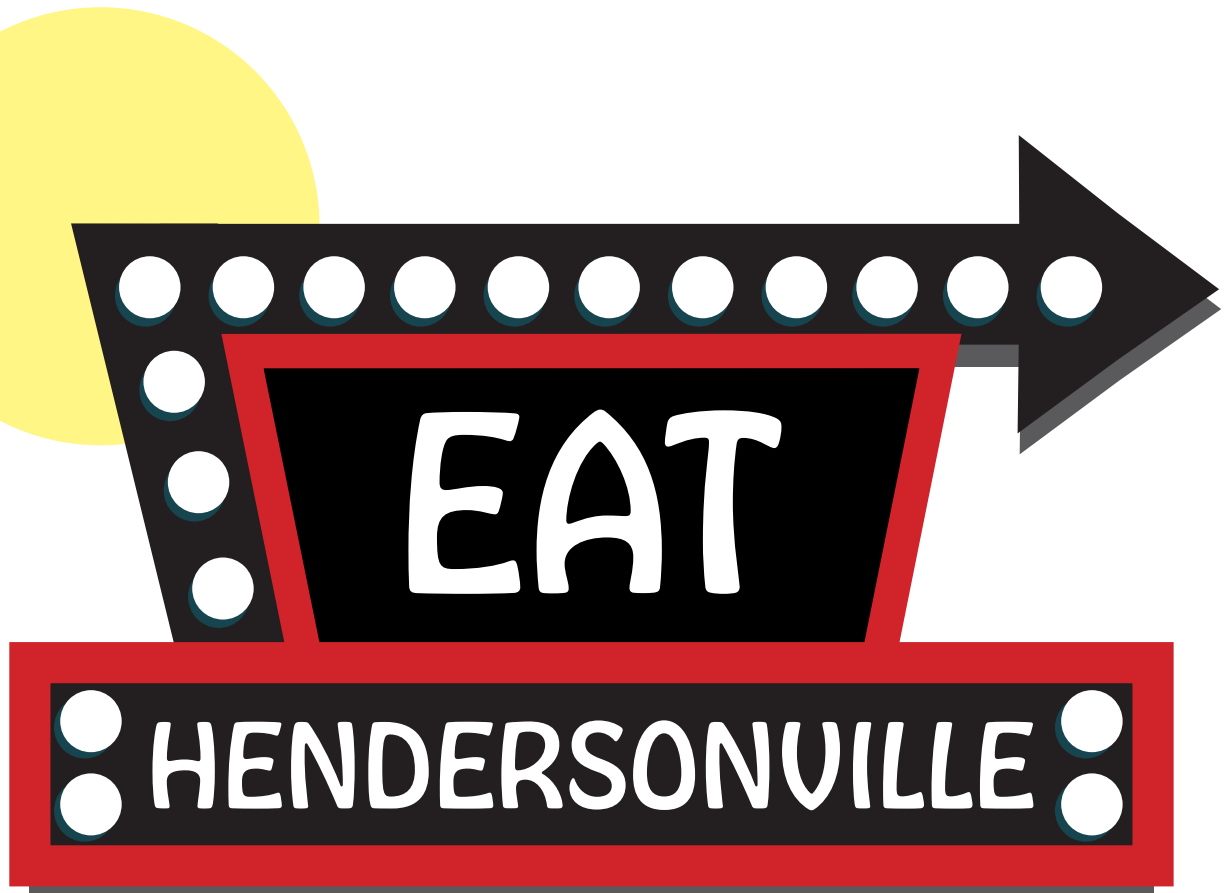
Through positive stories

Consuming angry, sad, and negative news can make readers feel overwhelmed and helpless. We want to remember there are still uplifting people to meet and positive stories to tell.

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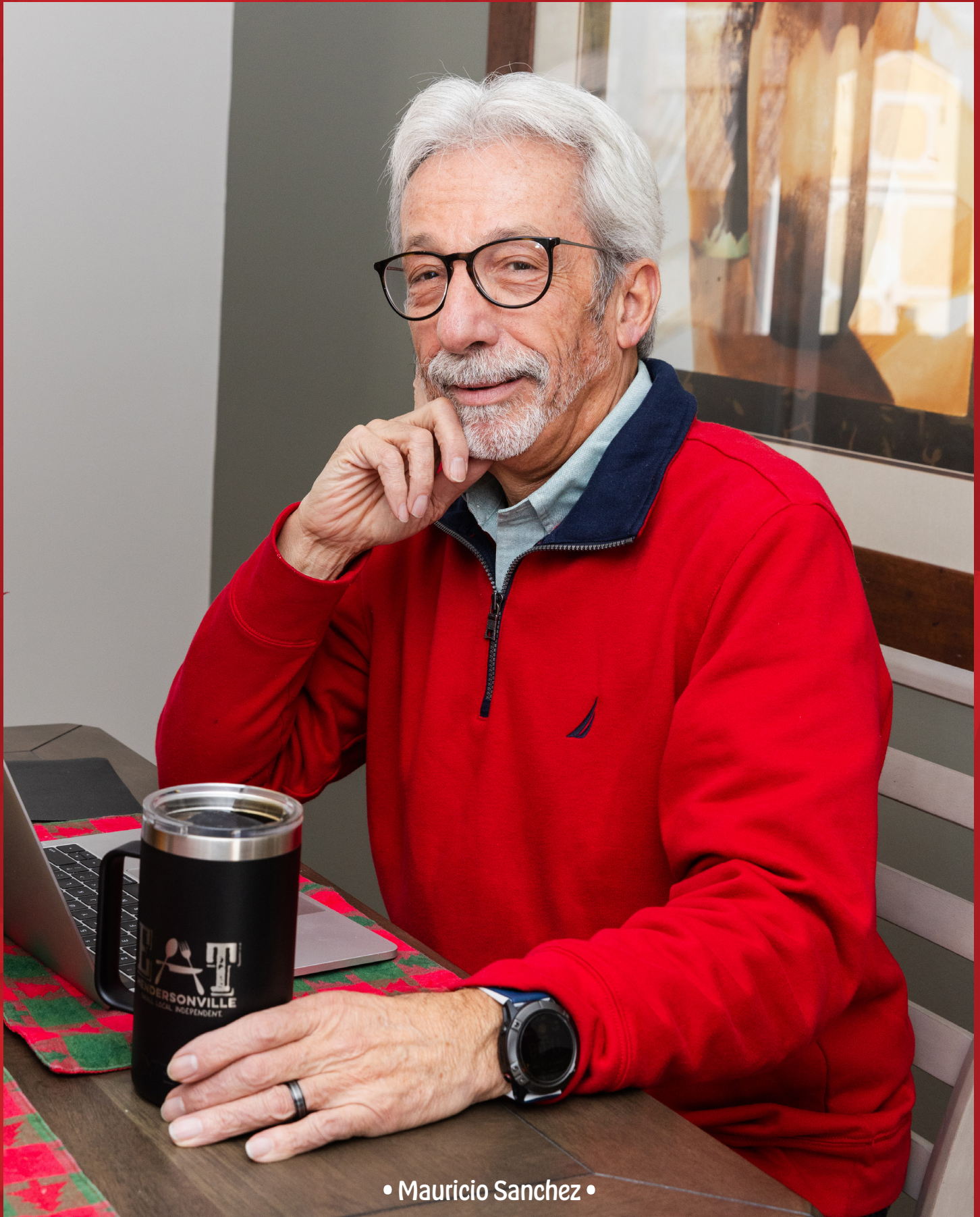
fights restaurant crisis

By Richard Klin // Photography by Steve Zak

THE COVID epidemic caused immeasurable harm, including the economic fallout, with the restaurant sector taking some of the biggest hits. Amid 2020's lockdown, restaurant veteran Mauricio Sanchez took steps to aid Hendersonville's suddenly endangered independent restaurants — the mom and pop businesses that are the lifeblood of local communities.

“When COVID hit,” Sanchez relates, “We were sitting here like everyone else. And one day, my wife and I decided we

wanted to buy a to-go hamburger from one of the local restaurants. We called, we ordered it, and when I got there to pick it up, the owner came out to deliver it, and she was pretty much in tears. When I asked her what was wrong, she said she was scared. She and her partner had poured all their savings into their venture. It had only been open for around a year. They were afraid. They didn't know what was going to happen. I didn't know what to tell her because I didn't know either. So I just listened.”



• Mauricio Sanchez •

These concerns were something Sanchez, a restaurant consultant with experience in operations and distribution, understood very well.

“I came home and told my wife about the experience. We thought there had to be something we could do, and we didn’t know what it was. We thought about it for a little bit, and maybe a week or two later, on a Sunday night, we were having dinner. Our daughter was here, and we decided we were going to commit \$600 from our family fund. We were going to go out and buy \$25 gift certificates from every mom and pop [restaurant] and help that way. One thing I did know is that they needed cash flow.”

This was just the beginning of his efforts. “We bought the cards, and I took a picture of them and posted it on my Facebook page. I encouraged our friends to do the same. [Do] whatever you can. [Buy] one [or] two cards from your favorite restaurant to help them out.’ Before I knew it, friends started sending me money. They told me to buy the cards from whoever needed it.

“We ended up with almost \$2000 worth of donations. I went out and bought who knows how many. Do the quick math, and that’ll tell you how many cards I bought. And we had no idea how we were going to get rid of them! We couldn’t stand on the corner and hand them out! And that’s how the idea of ‘Eat Hender-

sonville’ came about.”

“We created a Facebook page to be a vehicle to help us to distribute the cards. There’d be a contest or whatever, and we would send them a card, and then they would go to a restaurant and maybe order more cards. One thing led to another, and all of a sudden, within a week, I had over 2000 members on my page. And it just grew like you wouldn’t believe. People started posting pictures of their takeout food. When restaurants began opening their doors, they started posting pictures of their food from the restaurants.” By the end of the year, there were over 10,000 members.

Since 2020, Eat Hendersonville has given close to \$4500 worth of gift cards. Eat Hendersonville’s active membership now totals around 20,000. The need these days, luckily, is not as great, but independent eateries always need support.

Sanchez has one ironclad rule: No negativity on Eat Hendersonville’s pages. “The success of our group has been the fact that we do not allow any negativity on the page — nothing — zero. There are thousands of pages out there, [so] if you want to blow off steam, do it over there. If you have a negative comment or something wrong happened at the restaurant, I want you to call the owner. I can’t fix it; the group can’t fix it.”

Hendersonville had 67 independent restaurants. Incredibly, they didn’t lose a

“

The success of our group has been the fact that we do not allow any negativity on the page – nothing – zero. There are thousands of pages out there, [so] if you want to blow off steam, do it over there.

-Mauricio Sanchez

single restaurant for 2 ½ years. Nationally, thousands of restaurants were lost.

Sanchez's outreach was innovative, user-friendly, and fun. Who doesn't want a gift card?

"The community responded," he concludes. "They went out, and they helped. They did what they had to do." GN

Eat Hendersonville can be found on Facebook.





EMPOWERING CONNECTIONS

THE RISE OF 'WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN' IN HENDERSONVILLE

BY BELLE BUTLER // PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE ZAK

THE POWER of community and friendship cannot be overstated in a world that often feels fast-paced and disconnected. Sheryl Kirkland, a vibrant resident of Hendersonville, recognized the profound impact of camaraderie and took a bold step to create a space where women could find encouragement and lasting connections. What started as a Facebook page has blossomed into the heartwarming community known as Women Supporting Women in Middle Tennessee.

Fourteen years ago, Kirkland moved to Hendersonville from Texas, facing the challenge of building a new network of friends from scratch. Knowing the feelings of isolation and loneliness, she decided to make a difference. In 2019, she started a Facebook page to unite women in Hendersonville, foster friendships, and provide a platform for mutual

encouragement. Little did she know that this would evolve into a thriving community with almost 2000 members as it celebrates its fifth year.

The growth of Women Supporting Women in Middle Tennessee has exceeded Kirkland's expectations. In 2024, the group aspires to transform into a nonprofit organization, focusing on community initiatives with a special emphasis on uplifting and empowering women.


The strength of this community lies in its diversity, with women from various backgrounds coming together to make a positive impact on each other's lives. Gathering three to five times a month, they embark on outings ranging from eating to horseback riding to distillery tours. Kirkland has witnessed the transformation of individuals who, once reserved, are now comfortable socializing and making strong friendships.



“

*SOMETIMES ALL WE
NEED IS A HUG AND
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FROM A FRIEND.
WOMEN SUPPORTING
WOMEN AIMS TO FILL
THAT NEED, CREATING
A SPACE WHERE
EVERY WOMAN
FEELS CONNECTED,
IMPORTANT, AND
SUPPORTED.*

-SHERYL KIRKLAND



Kirkland's journey reminds her of the significance of female friendships during challenging times. Recognizing the tendency of women to be hard on themselves, Kirkland has made it her mission to cultivate an atmosphere of support, empowerment, and encouragement within the group. She emphasizes the importance of women understanding their inherent value and the strength of standing together, even in the face of life's hardships.

Kirkland emphasizes the need for uplifting, positive, and encouraging dialogue. Whether during dinners or other gatherings, she intentionally ensures that newcomers feel welcome, creating an environment where lasting connections can take root.

The impact of Women Supporting Women extends beyond social outings. Kirkland said, "I receive messages from new members, reaching out due to shyness, and I offer one-on-one events to ease individuals into the larger community. The group is diverse, made up of introverts and extroverts alike."

This organization goes beyond just socializing; it serves as a platform for women to share life events, give and receive advice, and form real, lasting friendships. Kirkland observes that the support within the group becomes all-encompassing, "We often see friendships grow that extend to giving and receiving advice on various aspects of life, including jobs, family issues, and financial concerns."

Reflecting on her own experience of not initially feeling connected to Hendersonville, Kirkland notes a transformation within herself when she founded the group. She has embraced her calling to help women grow, learn, and realize their inherent value while contributing to the community.

The annual meet-and-greet events, Women-Owned Wednesdays, and participation in local events like the Christmas parade underscore the group's commitment to fostering a sense of community and supporting women-owned businesses. Looking ahead, Kirkland plans to focus on community outreach by hosting events for women and children-focused organizations each month, demonstrating the group's dedication to making a positive impact beyond its members.

As Women Supporting Women continues to grow, Kirkland remains vigilant to ensure that the organization doesn't become so large that it loses its personal touch. Intending to stay around 3000 members strong, she takes each day as it comes, allowing organic growth to shape the future.

In the era of COVID-19, where social interactions have been impacted, Women Supporting Women stands as a beacon of hope, providing the human connection that so many crave. Kirkland wisely notes, "Sometimes all we need is a hug and encouragement from a friend. Women Supporting Women aims to fill that need, creating a space where every woman feels connected, important, and supported."

For any woman seeking the warmth of community and friendship, Women Supporting Women in Middle Tennessee opens its arms wide, meeting three to five times a month. More details can be found at wswmiddletn.com, and women interested in joining this uplifting community can request to join through Facebook. In the heart of Hendersonville, Women Supporting Women proves that when women support each other, incredible things happen. **GN**



Unleashing the champion within: Embracing self-belief and ignoring the critics

The power of believing in yourself and defying the doubters

IN THE vast arena of life, there is a paramount lesson that champions across all disciplines have learned: the significance of believing in oneself and casting aside the weight of others' opinions. Just like in sports, where athletes rise above the naysayers and push through the barriers, in our own lives, self-belief can become our most potent weapon. When we anchor ourselves in unwavering confidence and disregard the detractors, we unleash our true potential, transcending boundaries and achieving greatness.

It is often said that greatness is not solely defined by natural talent or physical prowess, but rather by an unyielding belief in one's abilities. Think of a tennis match where the underdog defies all odds to triumph over a higher-ranked opponent. It is their unwavering self-belief that propels them forward, enabling them to silence the doubters and claim victory. In our own lives, we encounter similar challenges, be it pursuing a career change, embarking on a new venture, or following our passions. The echoes of skepticism may reverberate around us, but it is in those moments that our inner champion must rise and drown out the noise.

Just as a sprinter on the track tunes out the crowd's roar, so too must we tune out the judgments and criticisms of others. External opinions are fleeting and subjective, often rooted in their own fears and limitations. It is vital to remember that the only person who truly knows our potential is ourselves. When we believe in our dreams, our capabilities, and our unique talents, we cultivate a resilient spirit that propels us forward, regardless of the obstacles that lie ahead.

The path to self-belief is not without its challenges. The road may be filled with setbacks, failures, and moments of self-doubt. However, it is in these moments of adversity that we must draw upon our

inner strength and summon the courage to persevere. Just like a basketball player who misses a shot but maintains their belief in their skills, we too must learn from our failures and use them as stepping stones toward growth. The journey to self-belief requires patience, self-reflection, and an unwavering commitment to personal development. It is through this process that we shed the shackles of external validation and find solace in our own intrinsic worth.

In the arena of life, we have a choice: to succumb to the pressures of conformity and the fear of judgment or to embrace our uniqueness and believe in our own worth. The champions we admire in sports have overcome immense obstacles by remaining steadfast in their self-belief. They have shown us that success is not solely defined by victory but by the strength of character and unwavering belief in oneself.

So, let us ignite the fire within and silence the doubts that linger. Let us cultivate an unshakable faith in our abilities, trusting that our dreams are worthy and attainable. As we rise above the noise of criticism and forge our own paths, we become beacons of inspiration for others, reminding them that they too possess the power to believe in themselves.

In the arena of life, the journey to self-belief is the ultimate victory. It is a testament to our resilience, determination, and unwavering spirit. When we refuse to be swayed by external judgment, we unlock the door to our full potential and pave the way for extraordinary achievements. So, stand tall, believe in yourself, and let the world bear witness to the brilliance that lies within.

As we step into the arena of life with unwavering self-belief, we become the champions of our own destiny, shaping a world where dreams know no limits. **GN**

Savor the

Sweetness
of *Love*



Discover cozy and delicious recipes to brighten your day

By Tina Neeley

IT'S TIME for embracing warmth, love, and the joy of sharing delicious meals with those closest to our hearts. As we endure the lingering winter days, here's a selection of recipes filled with heartfelt comfort. From delightful treats perfect for celebrating Valentine's Day to nourishing dishes that evoke feelings of love and togetherness, indulge in the flavors that bring people together and create lasting memories. Join us as we celebrate from the heart. **GN**



Turtle Cheesecake

Submitted by Tammie Thorpe

1 1/2 c. chocolate wafer cookies, crushed
3 T. butter, melted
2 pkgs. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened
1/2 c. sugar
1 t. vanilla
2 eggs, room temperature
1/2 c. chocolate chips
1/2 c. pecans, chopped
1/2 c. caramel ice cream topping

In a medium mixing bowl, mix wafers and butter. Press into the bottom of a 9" pie pan. In a large mixing bowl, stir cream cheese until smooth. Stir in sugar and vanilla. Add eggs one at a time. Mix until batter is smooth. Pour mix into pie crust. Bake at 325° for 40 minutes or until slightly brown. Let cheesecake cool. While cake is baking, combine chocolate chips, pecans, and caramel topping in a medium bowl. When cake has baked, gently spread mixture over top of cake. Place in refrigerator until cool.

Death by Chocolate

Submitted by Lisa Scott

2 pkgs. chocolate mousse mix
1 lg. pkg. whipped topping
1 pan baked brownies
1/4 c. Kahlua®
8 Heath® bars, crushed
1 c. pecans, chopped

Prepare chocolate mousse as directed. Fold whipped topping into mousse and set aside. Crumble 1/2 of the brownies into a 9x13 baking dish. Sprinkle Kahlua® over brownies. Sprinkle 1/2 of the Heath® bars and the pecans over the brownies. Spread 1/2 chocolate mousse on top. Layer remaining brownies, Heath® bars, and mousse. Chill before serving.

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookies

Submitted by Rose Hamner

1 1/2 c. shortening
2 1/2 c. brown sugar
4 T. milk
2 t. vanilla
2 eggs
3 1/2 c. AP flour
2 t. salt
1 1/2 t. baking soda
1 bag chocolate chips
2 c. pecan pieces

In a large mixing bowl, beat shortening and brown sugar. Add milk, vanilla, and eggs. In a medium mixing bowl, sift together flour, salt, and baking soda. Add to the creamed mixture. Stir in chocolate chips and pecan pieces. Drop by spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes.

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





Good Stories

CHAPTER 2 OF 3

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

- 34 From the Heart
- 36 Love for the USA
- 40 393 Café
- 44 A journey of hope

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Steve Zak

◀ Dillon Carmichael

From the Heart

THE 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 Hendersonville.

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**



Dillon Carmichael



Love for the USA

A rising country star's heartfelt mission to honor the American flag

By Haley Potter
Photography by Steve Zak

DILLON CARMICHAEL, a rising country music artist, has embarked on a mission to spread patriotism and honor the American flag.

“It just lights a fire in me and makes me want to be a better person,” Carmichael said.

Carmichael, known for his powerful country voice and heartfelt songs, is making a name for himself in the music industry. However, he has also dedicated much of his time to a mission close to his heart: hanging American flags in his community. This endeavor is more than just an act of goodwill; it represents a deep-seated love for his country.

“I was driving around one day, and I had a little epiphany moment,” Carmichael said.

“I thought about when I was growing up in Burgin, Kentucky, how nearly every house had an American flag. It was considered abnormal if a house didn't have one. But now, it's different. You don't see as many flags anymore. People are struggling financially or might not have the skills or tools to hang a flag. I thought, ‘Why can't I do something great in my new town [of] Hendersonville?’”

That is exactly what he set out to do after moving to Hendersonville in September 2020, with the inspiration to make a difference locally.

He placed an ad on Facebook, offering to hang American flags for free with no strings attached. To kick-start the



“I think we live in the greatest country in the world, and I think it will continue to be that way for a very long time, hopefully forever.”

- Dillon Carmichael

initiative, he invested \$300 in purchasing American flags and used his own tools to hang them.

“The response was overwhelming, with veterans, disabled individuals, and many others reaching out wanting us to hang an American flag,” Carmichael said.

The overwhelming support deeply moved him, and he subsequently organized several more flag-hanging events, with one notable occasion taking place on Nov. 29.

He hoped to involve local businesses and friends to hang more flags in one day than ever before and far exceeded that goal.

His goal is not only to see smiles on people’s faces but also to pay homage to

those who have served their country and to nurture a sense of patriotism.

Carmichael, who started this initiative in 2020, estimates that he has hung over 40 American flags thus far. However, he acknowledges that his music career temporarily took precedence in 2021, limiting his time for this cause. Yet, his dedication remains unwavering.

“I think we live in the greatest country in the world, and I think it will continue to be that way for a very long time, hopefully forever,” he said.

When asked how people can volunteer or request flag-hanging, Carmichael shared that it has primarily been through personal Facebook

messages and noted he might eventually expand to other forms of communication.

Carmichael encourages others to take similar initiatives. He wants to see this become more widespread and expand beyond Hendersonville.

“My dream with this would be people from Kansas or Florida messaging, ‘Hey, you inspired me to start a group in Florida to go around and hang American flags,’” he said.

Carmichael believes every house deserves to display the American flag.

“There’s no reason why you can’t do this,” he said. “Social media is a powerful tool, and finding local sponsors can help cover the costs of flags,” he shared.

Dillon Carmichael’s passion for his country and community shines brightly through his efforts to honor the American flag. As he continues his journey in the music industry and his mission to promote patriotism, he hopes to inspire others to join him in the cause. **GN**





Nadine Simons



393 Café

Mother-daughter team serves
up a side of kindness

By Amanda E. West

Photography by Steve Zak

THE OWNERS of 393 Café, Tanya McPherson and her mother, Nadine Simons, wholeheartedly believe, “Good food is all the sweeter when it’s shared with good friends.”

For 25 years McPherson watched her father and stepmother run a successful restaurant in Wisconsin, 25 miles east of Milwaukee. She worked for them throughout high school and while attending Western Kentucky University, allowing her to witness firsthand the value a family-owned restaurant adds to the surrounding community.

“We were the place where all the locals came and gathered,” said McPherson. “The same people came in every day. We were

the center of the community.”

After college, McPherson married the love of her life and moved to Hendersonville, closer to her mother and brother.

“Over the past 19 years of living in Hendersonville, we have watched it grow and flourish into the town it is today, but the one thing it still possesses is the small-town feel. Everybody still knows everybody, and locals make it a point to still support locals.”

McPherson comes from a family bursting with entrepreneurs and feels incredibly blessed to wake up each day and work alongside her mother.

“Before we opened, we were always gathering at Mom’s house, and there were always people there. Working together



just seemed natural and normal. I get to spend most days with Mom, and our time together will always be a blessing. We have very defined roles. In the beginning, we were there from open to close while we learned our business. Now, she focuses on the day-to-day office work and is generally there only on weekends, while I'm there daily running the operation," said McPherson.

At the café, old friends gather over comfort food, and new friendships blossom like the rows of yellow daffodils springing up along the roadside. Every day is a clean slate waiting to be filled with great food, new friends, and unforgettable memories.

"Mom and I have watched relationships grow and flourish. The camaraderie that happens each day between the people who come in and our staff gives us the most amazing feeling. Our dedicated team is a huge part of our success. Most staff have been with us for two years or more.

Several have been with us for over five years. They build relationships with our customers just as much as Mom and I do, which is amazing! Each day, we are excited to see who is going to come through our door. Maybe a first-timer or one of our regulars. We love that our customers have literally become some of our very best friends."

After only being open a short time, McPherson began pondering how she could help encourage local public school teachers.

"Everything is always about the kids. I thought, 'What about those who are teaching our kids?'"

This question birthed the idea for their annual teacher swag bags. McPherson created a post on Facebook and pitched the

idea. After listening to suggestions about what teachers most commonly purchase for their classrooms using their own money, she tallied up the costs. She asked her mom if they could afford to cover the expenses themselves.

"After creating the post, people began generously donating items and money. We've now grown into our sixth year, and the number of people offering to help is overwhelming. The bags get better and better. I've even had companies sponsor the gift bags the items go into, which covers a huge expense. Most people in Hendersonville want to help and give back to our community."

Nine months into their adventure, they began providing a traditional meal to everyone who dines with them on Thanksgiving Day. On average, they provide 250 people with a warm smile and their own instant family.

"I had this feeling that Mom and I could help," said McPherson. "We've been so blessed to enjoy family, friends, and loved ones during Thanksgiving ourselves. Everyone deserves that. Even if it's only one day, nobody should be alone. It's truly

one of the most rewarding days we have."

In 2020, when store shelves were empty, the mother-daughter team happily sourced items from their regular distributors to help locals in need. "We never imagined selling 600 rolls of toilet paper in a day. We just did what we did to keep helping people." GN

Breakfast, brunch, and lunch are served Tuesday-Sunday with a side of kindness. OPENING SOON! They invite everyone to come sit at their newest table in Gallatin. For more information, go to www.cafe393.com.

"Food brings people together in good times and in bad times."

- Tanya McPherson





Ameerah Briefki

A Journey of Hope ♥

Ameera Briefki's odyssey
from war-torn Iraq to the
tranquility of Tennessee

By Paige Cushman
Photography by Steve Zak

AT THE tender age of 19, Ameera Briefki embarked on a life-altering journey, fleeing the war-torn landscapes of Iraq with her Kurdish mother and siblings.

"I was living from war to war, literally all my life," she reflects.

In 1980, when Briefki was still a toddler, Iraq and Iran entered into an eight-year war. In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, prompting

the start of the year-long Gulf War. Just as the dust had seemingly settled, the Kurds held an uprising.

"The Kurdish people decided to have a revolution to take over their land," she said. "That was a horrible experience for me because we had to run to the mountains and leave all our houses."

The tipping point came in 1996 when a Civil War began with the Kurds. Briefki



and her mother, sister, and brother made a resolute decision — it was time to leave.

“Getting out of [Iraq] was just like a relief,” she said.

From finding refuge in Istanbul to making friends in Jordan, each step forward came with its challenges. Yet, even in adversity, Briefki found solace.

“We stayed together,” she said. “We just stayed strong from all that, and we just moved on and forgot about the bad experiences because we had hope that we were going to a better place — like a peaceful place.”

Their initial plan was to move to the UK, where her half-brothers lived, but when that didn’t work out, they applied to the United Nations for relocation. They were chosen to move to the United States and arrived in 2001.

“When we arrived at the LA Airport, we were so anxious, and it was a big, [huge] world, a whole different world,” she said. “When I look at it, I don’t even believe it’s been all these years. Sometimes it feels like yesterday for us.”

Briefki and her tight-knit family lived in California for seven years. At the age of 25, she and her siblings started college. Shortly after arriving in the U.S., Briefki married, and she and her husband had a baby girl in 2002.

“From what I’ve seen and what I went through, I wanted my daughter’s life to just not be like mine,” Briefki said. “This country is full of opportunities, and she is really smart and a really hard worker. So I had to make sure that at least I gave her peace of mind so she can be successful in her life.”

She and her family moved to the Nashville area in 2008.

“There’s a big population of Kurdish people [in Middle Tennessee],” she said. “They even call it small Kurdistan. They are all in Nashville.”

Briefki’s life took an unexpected turn in 2013 when her husband passed away in Saudi Arabia. The circumstances surrounding his death remain shrouded in mystery. His death certificate said he had just quit breathing.

“He was all by himself, not even with his family,” she said. “So nobody knows what happened. I didn’t even know what to feel. I just felt so bad that nobody was with him. I guess that is how it is in life — we are not in control.”

Following a year in Dallas, which wasn’t a good fit for Briefki, one of her friends brought her to Hendersonville in 2014. She instantly fell in love.

“It’s so peaceful,” she said. “The people are so important, and when I came here, they were so friendly.”

“We stayed together. We just stayed strong from all that, and we just moved on and forgot about the bad experiences because we had hope that we were going to a better place — like a peaceful place.”

- Ameera Briefki

Though she works as a medical courier, Briefki dedicated most of her time and energy to her daughter after her husband’s passing.

“From what I see, I don’t regret my decision,” she said. “She is really doing so well. She got a scholarship to get into Belmont. Every semester, she’s at the top of the Dean’s list, and she’s getting into research programs now. I’m really so proud of her.”

While California and Dallas presented their challenges, Hendersonville welcomed Briefki with open arms. She went back to Iraq to visit once, but she said it just didn’t feel like home.

“Since then, I haven’t had any interest to go back or just visit,” she said. “This here is my country. And honestly, even when I went there to visit, I kind of missed here immediately. I feel like I belong here.” **GN**



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?

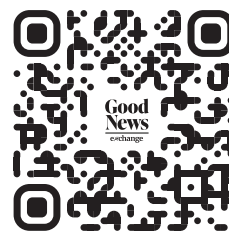
Currently, our dedicated team of magazine writers and editors is hard at work crafting stories under themes like "Charity Spotlight," "The Learning Curve," and "Shop Local." We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is "**Independence.**"

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 or scan the QR code. Share your stories with us, and let's continue spreading the Good News together.







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

Photography by Hannah Woodcock

◀ Barry Abernathy, Todd Philips, Zeb Snyder,
Jim VanCleve, and Darrell Webb

Holly Jolly Artisan Market - Dec. 2-23, 2023



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

The Streets at Indian Lake held their annual Holly Jolly Artisan Market from Dec. 2 to Dec. 23. The market featured a variety of vendors selling unique and handmade items, making it a great place to find holiday gifts.



1. Skye Bustin 2. Hannah Carlile 3. Dr. Jeremy Kozuh and Drew Elgation 4. Alexi Major 5. Luys Malta 6. Jennifer Berry

Appalachian Road Show - Dec. 17, 2023



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Dec. 17, Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center in Hendersonville hosted two sold-out Bluebird-style live music shows featuring The Appalachian Roadshow. Guests enjoyed intimate performances by the award-winning quintet while savoring spirited beverages and Appalachian-inspired snacks like pecan pie.



1. Danielle Smith 2. Ray Salza
3. Barry Abernathy, Todd Philips, Zeb Snyder, Jim VanCleve, and Darrell Webb

Kissmas Christmas Party and Record Show - Dec. 17, 2023



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Dec. 17, 2023, Jimbo's Records hosted its third annual Kissmas Story Christmas Party and Record Show at Half Batch Brewing in Hendersonville, featuring vendors like Grendel's Choice Vinyl, Elevator Vinyl, Motorsoule Vintage, and Jimbo's Records. Guests enjoyed craft beer while shopping for the best records and original art, including tie-dyed clothing by Hippy Dave's and unique art on records by Off The Wall Murals.

1. Meagan Armes 2. Ryan Frizzell



3. Mick Robinson 4. Tom George

EVENTS CALENDAR

February 1

5:00 pm Nashville Boat Show in Hendersonville
TNT Watersports
1089 W. Main St.
Hendersonville

See all the latest and greatest boats and shop the best gear. The event runs all weekend.

February 6

11:30 pm Hendersonville Chamber Luncheon:
Bluegrass Yacht and Country Club
550 Johnny Cash Pkwy.
Hendersonville

Join the chamber for our monthly luncheon on Feb. 6 and hear from our guest speaker, Edsel Charles.

February 7

12:00 pm LEADS Exchange
100 Country Club Dr.
Ste. 104
Hendersonville

Build chamber relationships, generate sales leads, and expand your network. Free for members, and \$10 for non-members.

February 14

11:00 am Women Impacting the Community Awards Banquet
Bluegrass Yacht and Country Club
550 Johnny Cash Pkwy.
Hendersonville

The Hendersonville Women Impacting the Community event celebrates and empowers women, featuring inspiring speakers, awards, prizes, and a “kick off your heels” moment.

Get a good look



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.

Good News exchange



February 16

5:30 pm Daddy-Daughter Banquet

First Baptist Church
106 Bluegrass Commons Blvd.
Hendersonville

Girls in K-5th grade and their dads or father figures are invited for a special night out. Tickets cost \$40 per couple and \$10 for each additional daughter or adult.

February 25

2:00 pm Paint your Pet

Painting with a Twist
206 Indian Lake Blvd. #9
Hendersonville

We will sketch your pet ahead of time, and then show you how to paint it! Please send us a clear photo of your pet (only one per canvas) to studio315@paintingwithatwist.com at least three days prior. Costs \$59-\$69 a person.

February 27

11:30 am Summer Young Professionals Luncheon

Chamber Event Center
300 Indian Lake Blvd.
Suite D160
Hendersonville

This event offers young professionals the opportunity to collaborate with emerging business owners, professionals, and community leaders.



For more events and to submit an event visit:
www.GoodNewsMags.com/events
 or call (800) 247-7318

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We can spread Good News because of our generous advertisers. They help make our world a little brighter. We encourage you to do business with them.

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Good News Magazine not only lets you reach your audience directly, it's also a way to build brand recognition and positive associations over time. Placing your ad alongside engaging, positive stories means it's much more likely to be seen and well received.

Our beautiful design and community focus result in a premium publication that readers keep in their home for long periods of time — leading to more views of your ad.



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During the month of December the United Way of Sumner County worked tirelessly to provide support to people and businesses affected by the tornado on December 9th.



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