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exchange

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From the Heart

ISSUE 1 2024

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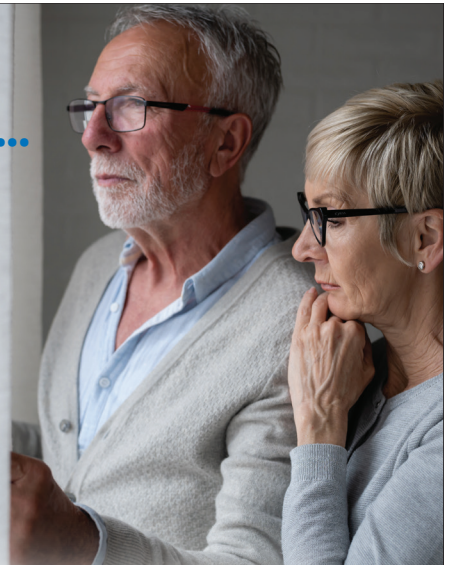


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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

From our
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GoodLiving

CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

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Submit a positive story on our website:



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Photography by Chad Barrett

◀ Herbert and Carole Maynard

NOSTALGIA ON WHEELS



“POPS”
BOB JACOBS

POPS AND HIS GOOD HUMOR ICE CREAM TRUCKS

BY PAIGE CUSHMAN // PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY ROBERT JACOBS

IN THE heart of Lynchburg, a retired real estate broker, affectionately known as "Pops," orchestrates a sweet revolution, one ice cream bar at a time. Armed with two iconic Good Humor ice cream trucks, each boasting a proud history of 55 to 57 years, Bob Jacobs is turning back the clock to fulfill a childhood dream while slinging ice cream out of relics.

Growing up in Baltimore, Pops was no stranger to the allure of ice cream trucks. The melodic jingles and the promise of sweet, icy treats rolling down the neighborhood streets left an indelible mark on his childhood.

"I grew up seeing these ice cream trucks in Baltimore. They would always come down the street, and I always liked them. And when I retired, I always wanted one," he said.

Retirement allowed him to turn this dream into a reality, and he seized it wholeheartedly.

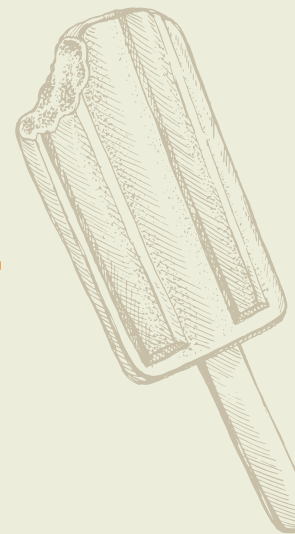
GOOD HUMOR, GOOD HISTORY

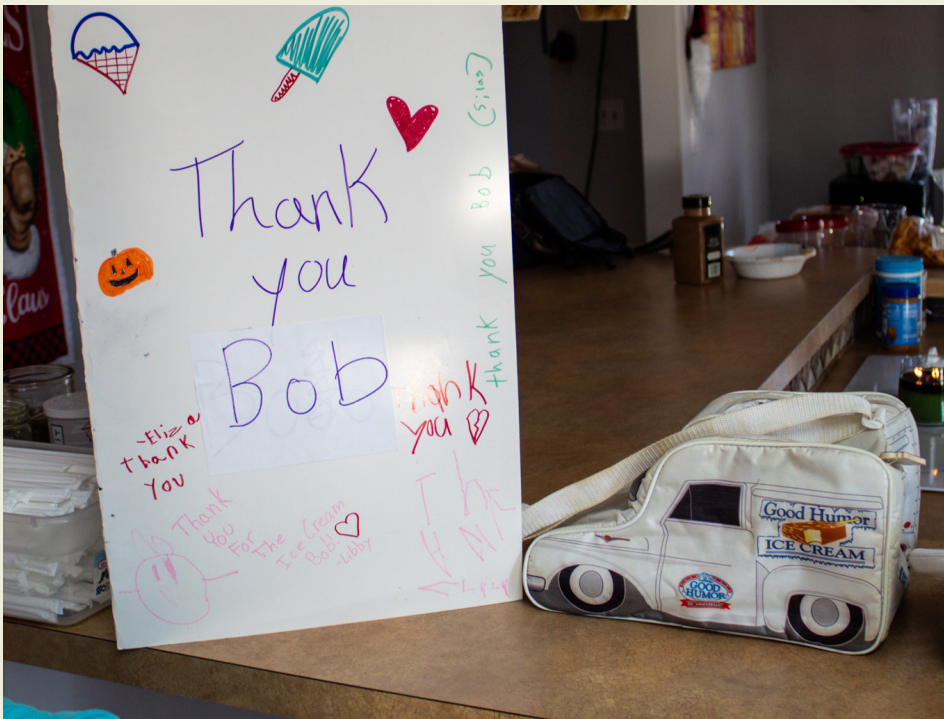
Pops doesn't represent Good Humor's history for the fun of it. He represents its history because he resonates with it.

Good Humor began in 1920 when confectioner Harry Burt created a chocolate coating for ice cream. At first, Burt's daughter found the treat too messy. His son suggested freezing sticks used for Jolly Boy Suckers into the ice cream, giving birth to a convenient handle for the dessert.

Shortly after creating the Good Humor Bar, Burt equipped 12 street vending trucks with freezers and bells, creating a summer tradition he knew would outlive him.

"I think, just to me, it's a kind of success story," Pops said. He explained that he was just a guy in the 1920s who created some ice cream flavors and put together some trucks to start a business that is now a million-dollar company, Lever Brothers.





The bells used in the Good Humor trucks often had their own unique stories, with the first set originating from Burt's son's bobsled. Good Humor Bars have been sold out of an array of vehicles, from tricycles to pushcarts to the iconic ice cream trucks that grace Lynchburg's streets today — all by friendly men in black and white captain's hats.

MODERN NOSTALGIA

Pops is the kind of guy who can stand behind a story of innovation, family values, and hard work — especially one that ends in ice cream.

"I dress up as the Good Humor man. I have a white hat, red and white shirt, black bow tie, and white pants. So when I go out, I'm actually going out as the Good Humor man," he said.

The intention is clear — to serve ice cream and transport his customers back in time to when the Good Humor man was more than an ice cream vendor — when he was a cherished part of the neighborhood.

"Back in the day, with the Good Humor company, you had to actually go through a class to learn how to greet people, how to tip your hat to the ladies, how to salute the gentleman when they came, and how to get the kids across the street — that kind of stuff," Pops said.

The trucks aren't easy to come by. In 1976, when Good Humor sold its fleet, there were around 2,000 trucks in the country, according to Pops. Now, there's about a hundred left.

After looking for quite some time, Pops bought the trucks in 2021, fulfilling a childhood dream after retiring as a real estate broker at 66. For the past year, he has dedicated his days to his passion: delighting children and serving sweet nostalgia to older residents who fondly remember the Good Humor trucks from their childhoods.

"Last year, I did pretty much four or five days a week," he said. "But this year, I've had a lot of trouble with the trucks. I've had to put motors and transmissions in 'em, new brakes. You name it, I had to do to it."

Nevertheless, Pops persisted.



A SHARED EXPERIENCE

Lynchburg's response to Pops' sweet endeavor has been nothing short of heartwarming. Children light up when they see the Good Humor trucks, and parents and grandparents fondly recall their own childhood experiences.

"I've had one lady [who] got an ice cream and started crying because it brought back such good memories," he said. "People say, 'I love what you're doing. Thank you for doing that — for bringing something like that back. That's something we need.'"

As summer ended, he said he donated

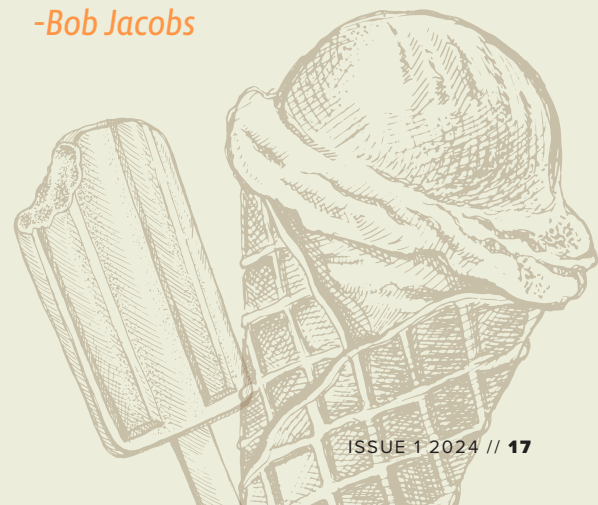
his remaining stock of Good Humor ice cream (about a thousand pieces) to the community. But not because he's done being a Good Humor man. He only gives away his remaining stock so that he can start with the freshest, highest-quality products next summer.

For Pops, this endeavor is not about making money but keeping the old and creating new memories.

"I don't do it to make money. I don't mind making money, but it's something that I enjoy doing," he said. "The response I get from the kids and the older people [is] something I really enjoy." GN

"I've had one lady [who] got an ice cream and started crying because it brought back such good memories. People say, 'I love what you're doing.'"

-Bob Jacobs





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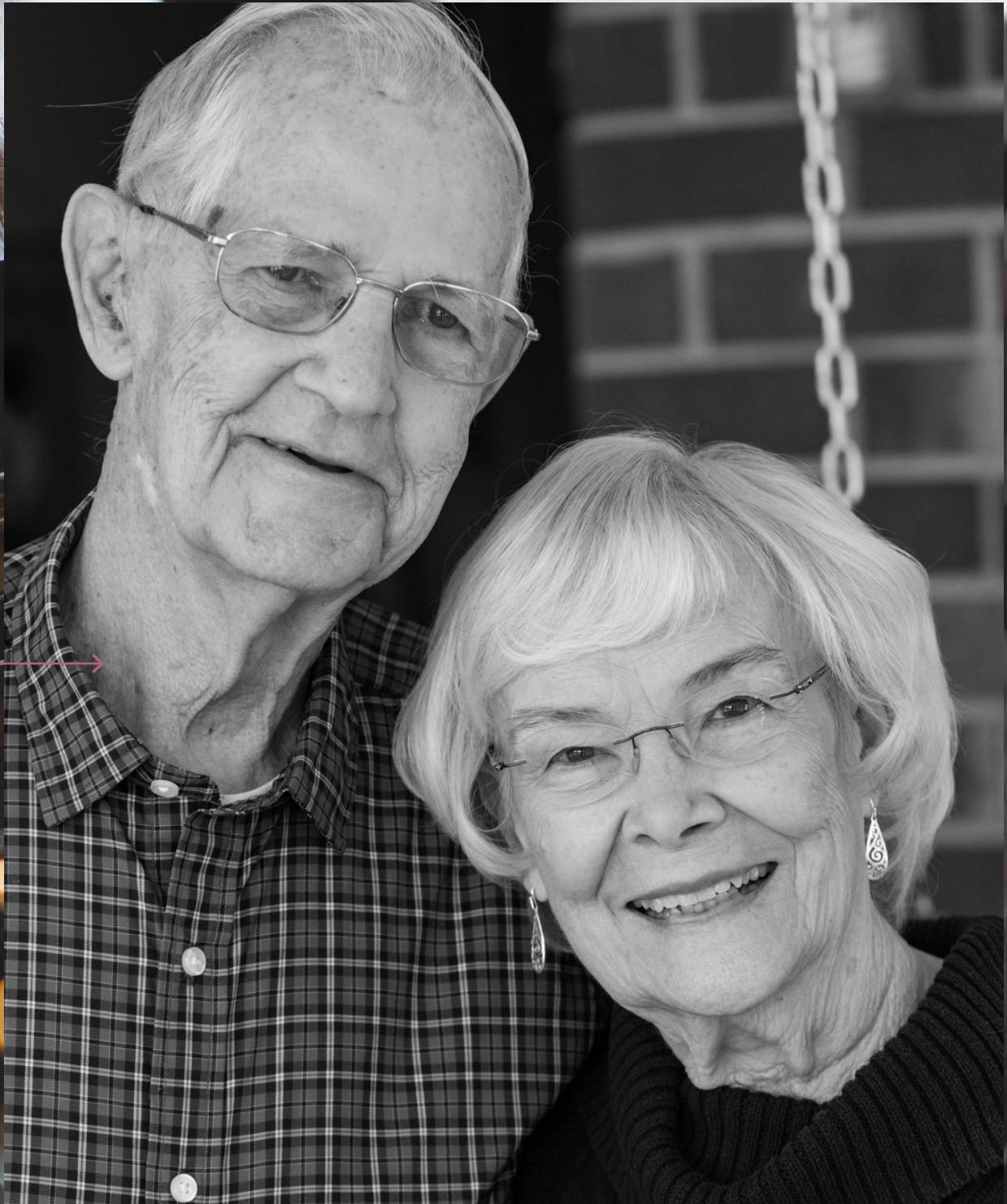
HERBERT & CAROLE MAYNARD'S
ENDURING LOVE STORY

By Belle Butler // Photography by Chad Barrett

IN A world where the winds of change often test relationships, Herbert and Carole Maynard's relationship is a testament to enduring love and unwavering commitment. Sixty-five years of marriage is no small feat. As the Maynards reflect on the journey that has brought and kept them together, it becomes evident that their love story is extraordinary.

As a young man, Herbert had a clear vision of his future — a roadmap to success and a predetermined path to marriage. However, life took an unexpected turn when he had a spiritual awakening that reshaped his perspective. Suddenly, Herbert was no longer making decisions in isolation; he had divine guidance.







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While in the Navy, Herbert's family moved to Florida, and after leaving the military, he would follow them there. In the halls of the 5th Avenue Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, Florida, his lifelong passion for music became the bridge that connected him with a young lady named Carole. Little did he know, she was the one with whom he would build a love, family, and home for the rest of his life.



We don't want to romanticize a real-life story. Every couple goes through hard times. Divorce was not an option for us because we trusted God to put us together, and we trust him each day. God is the anchor.

-Carole Maynard

Reflecting on those early days, Carole recalls being captivated by Herbert's sophistication and worldly experiences. United by their shared love for music, they embarked on a journey of double dates and group activities like roller skating and drive-in movies. Eventually, their connection deepened into single dates, laying the foundation for a love that would withstand the test of time.

Their love endured a year of separation when Herbert attended Wingate University in North Carolina, but the distance only strengthened their bond. The love letters they exchanged daily during this separation became a cherished testimony of their commitment and would be read by their daughter at a heartwarming celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Eventually, they would attend Carson Newman University together, in what Carole recalls as a different era when dorm mothers frowned on hand-holding.

After they were engaged, married, and had two daughters, Herbert was called to his first full-time church position in South Miami, Florida, where they would welcome their third daughter. Carole remembers being thrilled because their whole family was in Florida.

1965 had taken a significant turn when Herbert was called to serve in the West Lynchburg Baptist Church in Virginia. The move was bittersweet for Carole, and she recalls leaving Miami for Lynchburg; "I put my brakes on [during] the whole trip because I didn't want to leave the family. As God would have it, I wouldn't go back and change a thing."

Carole would go on to become an integral member of the church in the Women's Ministry's activities, where both she and Herbert are still active members.

Herbert said they love the people and the church when asked what they appreciate about Lynchburg.

"We absolutely love Lynchburg," he said. "Lynchburg is a comfort town. It's not so busy that people don't have time for one another. People are friendly, and we have enjoyed every bit of it. We have raised our girls here, and they have enjoyed the social atmosphere of a city that is just a good place to live. We can't complain about anything. People are loving, caring, and friendly. Our church is the hub of everything." Both Herbert and Carole expressed their deep appreciation for Lynchburg, citing the friendly people, their welcoming church, and a sense of community, making it a comforting haven.

When asked about the glue that has held their marriage together for 65 years, Herbert and Carole emphatically attribute it to their relationship with the Lord. Their faith is not merely a facet of their lives; it is the anchor that has weathered challenges and has provided unwavering stability.

Carole said, "We don't want to romanticize a real-life story. Every couple goes through hard times. Divorce was not an option for us because we trusted God to put us together, and we trust him each day. God is the anchor."

The Maynards' love story is one of devotion, commitment, and faith. Their beautiful family and profound connection to the Lynchburg community testify to the power of enduring love. In a world that often seems chaotic and unpredictable, their 65-year marriage symbolizes hope, reminding us all that love, faith, and community connection can withstand the test of time. **GN**

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Brittany Kate Hoover



A selfless soul saves four lives.

By Amanda E. West // Photos submitted by Vivian Hoover

BRITTANY KATE Hoover saved four lives through organ donation, and she gave sight to two others through the gift of her corneas,” said her mom, Vivian. “I want everyone to know what a hero she is and how selfless she was in her final moments.” Brittany was a registered organ donor and, on March 26, 2022, died unexpectedly at the age of 32 from cardiac arrest. Although in shock over the sudden loss of their beloved daughter, granddaughter, sister, and friend, Brittany’s family honored her last wish to “pay it forward.” During her life, she established meaningful friendships, was selfless when it came to others, and was a devoted friend to animals, especially stray cats, so her decision to give life was no surprise.

Brittany was originally from Virginia Beach and, at a young age, began helping in a florist shop owned by her family. Her mother recalls, “By the age of 6, she could name every flower.” She graduated from Tallwood High School, where she was an

avid soccer player and an assistant Little League coach. After being accepted into the Job Corps program, she learned the skills needed to work for Food Lion after her move to Lynchburg. Her genuine smile, pure spirit, and willingness to go above and beyond made Brittany a valuable employee and friend to everyone who walked through the doors.

“March 24 started like a normal day. I got up and went to a job interview, but something didn’t feel quite right,” said her mom, Vivian. “Brittany usually texted me every night, and when I called later that day, someone told me she was in the intensive care unit at Lynchburg Memorial Hospital, three hours away.” When they arrived at the hospital, a caring nurse from Lifenet Health told them Brittany was an organ donor. “She’d shown no interest in getting her driver’s license, which is where most people check the box to become a donor, so we didn’t know.”



Brittany Hoover's grandmother, Charlene Wessler with Brittany

“

Brittany Kate Hoover saved four lives through organ donation, and she gave sight to two others through the gift of her corneas. I want everyone to know what a hero she is and how selfless she was in her final moments.

-Vivian Hoover





“

There were signs all along the way that we were doing the right thing. Brittany’s favorite movie was “The Little Mermaid,” and the LifeNet Health nurse assigned to her was named Ariel, just like the main character. That was just one of many signs that kept moving us forward.

-Vivian Hoover

▲ Brittany’s sister, Courtney Johnson, Brittany, and her mother, Vivian Hoover

The next day, Brittany’s mother was in awe as she emerged from the elevator for the honorable “walk of life.” As she walked behind her daughter’s hospital bed, nurses, doctors, and strangers lined the hallways to pay their last respects. Even with all the support, it was the hardest walk she had ever had to walk. “There were signs all along the way that we were doing the right thing. Brittany’s favorite movie was “The Little Mermaid,” and the LifeNet Health nurse assigned to her was named Ariel, just like the main character. That was just one of many signs that kept moving us forward.”

LifeNet Health talked the family through every step of the process and informed them of every important detail. “Brittany donated both corneas,

her heart, both kidneys, her liver, 121 tissue samples, and her thyroid. We found out later, as our family left the hospital at 3 a.m. to head home, those who would receive her organs were arriving. As an end took place for us, a new beginning was happening for them.”

Vivian has received letters from three of the recipients and has met two of them in person, which has helped her healing journey through the loss of her oldest daughter. “It’s the gift that keeps on giving,” she said, when a recent letter from the recipient of one of Brittany’s kidneys shared that he and his wife are now expecting their first child. The recipient of her other kidney is 17, and before surgery, his entire family moved from North Carolina to Washington D.C. so he could be added to the transplant list. According to his last update, he is back home and recovering well, and life has returned to normal. The person who received Brittany’s heart battled heart failure for over a year, and doctors just broke the news she

had 24 hours to live when the call came. She’s in her 50s and assured us she will do everything possible to keep Brittany’s heart healthy. She goes to the gym, and she swims. Brittany loved sunflowers, so she filled a vase with them for her mantle to honor her.

On Jan. 1, 2023, a colorful flora-graph of Brittany was created from coffee beans and strawberry seeds for the 134th celebration of the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California, and attached to the “Lifting Each Other Up” float representing Donate Life America. The hospital in Lynchburg also included Brittany’s name in the Ripples of Hope memorial. **GN**

Register to be a donor at www.donatelife.net or www.lifenethealth.org.





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.

- 36 From the Heart
- 38 Building connections
- 42 From struggles to strength
- 46 A thousand little miracles

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Sarah Bussard

◀ Professor Alissa Keith

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 Lynchburg.

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**





Myke Barron

Building Connections

The heart of ‘Lynchburg’s Living Room’

By Richard Klin
Photography by Sarah Bussard

MYKE BARRON moved from Texas to Lynchburg around five years ago and is part of the collaborative team that runs the White Hart coffeehouse and eatery. The inviting space has earned the name “Lynchburg’s Living Room,” and it certainly lives up to its reputation.

Barron and his partners took over the White Hart in early 2020, just when

COVID shut down businesses. They had intended the White Hart to be a hub of outreach and community involvement and did not let the pandemic stop them.

“We were like, ‘What are we going to do?’” he remembers. “One of the first things we did as a team was donate food through a nonprofit we work with. We cooked hot meals for people and worked with churches

to distribute hot meals — around 10,000 hot meals in about three months. And we got some other downtown restaurants involved in that effort. Our focus then was the need for food through the pandemic.”

Barron had spent time in Guatemala, where he became acquainted with people with a little coffee spot. “I was blown away by the enthusiasm that was around coffee. I got hooked on it that way, just as a product,” said Barron.

“A business model of some kind is one of the most sustainable ways, and perhaps the best way, to impact and develop communities all around the world. You’re creating jobs, and you’re providing a market for products that are already being made.”

With the connections he had in the coffee world, not just in Guatemala but in Peru and Nepal, the White Hart was the most logical progression.

“We called it ‘Lynchburg’s Living Room,’ a name that was actually given to it before we even got here. And you think about what a living room is. If you’re invited into a living room, you belong there. It’s a place of belonging. It’s a place where you can let your guard down, be yourself, and be comfortable. You talk about meaningful things, you laugh together, you spend time together, you play games — whatever it might be. We definitely see our space like that. We even curate events that generate that atmosphere.”

The White Hart has a lot to offer. “We have a strong connection to the artists’ community. We really push behind artists, whether it’s visual art that hangs on our wall, or spoken word or poetry.”

Lynchburg itself is of many minds. In a world where political differences cause separation, the White Hart brings people together. “You have these two worlds, this dichotomy, and I love that there’s that kind of clash in a way because I think there’s a lot of room for growth on both sides when you have that. Something’s always challenging the other, which can get out of hand. But because of that, it’s very difficult to create a space where everyone belongs when there are such strong opinions against what other people think. And to be able to host events and have public forums, we’ve even had political discussions and things like that in our space. Making connections is a gift — to be able to help people talk about things that are very hard to talk about and who are on opposite sides of the issue.

“When we came in, we didn’t pick sides. We like to push the envelope a little bit to get people to think outside of their comfort zone and to push against their bubble a little bit. So there’s a mixed bag.”

The White Hart has a wonderful array of coffee and food, all enhanced by the visually pleasing surroundings. Spending time there is a pleasant experience.

“And that’s what we push with. We want to invite people along. Come with us. Be on the adventure with us. Let’s engage in this process together. Let’s go find something real together.”

- Myke Barron

“I’m big on why,” Barron reiterates. “I want to know why we’re doing what we’re doing. It doesn’t take much to knock you off if you don’t have a clear why. You’re distracted, you’re meandering, and you’re aimless.”

Even the term ‘white hart’ is a definite statement: a symbol of pursuit for something real, like a chase for adventure.

“And that’s what we push with. We want to invite people along. Come with us. Be on the adventure with us. Let’s engage in this process together. Let’s go find something real together.” GN

<https://www.thewhitehart.cafe>





Ashley Beesley and Samantha Simmons



From Struggles to Strength

Dream Forge offers a cooperative space and a helping hand.

By Richard Klin
Photography by Chad Barrett

SAMANTHA SIMMONS was forced to provide the bulk of the family income when her husband became ill. She now runs a successful bookkeeping business. Ashley Beesley, the owner of Sweet Indulgence Bakery, took her personal history of surviving abuse and used her business to reach out to trauma survivors. Together, they are launching Dream Forge, an innovative, hybrid site that aims to empower women in the workforce.

Simmons and Beesley knew each other via the Central Virginia Business Coalition (CVABC). Simmons said, “We both knew we wanted to start a third entity. We knew we needed to go nonprofit with this because of the greater community need that we both saw. We really wanted it to become supportive community outreach.”

Dream Forge is a physical space that Simmons and Beesley look to rent out for many purposes. “We want to do programs,



as well as a collaborative workspace,” said Simmons. It will be a blend of the book-keeping expertise of Simmons and Beesley’s skill at running a bakery. “We’re going to have a ghost kitchen designed for in-house bakers or food trucks to rent out. It’s just turned into this giant thing,” she concludes with justifiable enthusiasm.

“I’m really excited about all the programs we intend on implementing and the plans we’re working on,” said Beesley. There will be programs that will partner with high schools. It will pull in 15- and 16-year-olds to come in and work in all the different businesses in this collaborative space. Whether it’s filing, being an apprentice, or whatever it might be, the goal is not so much what they’re doing. The goal is to teach skills that will instill confidence because confident children are less likely to become victims of abuse.

“We both understand that the rebuild process is multi-faceted, and it can’t be put inside a box,” Beesley concludes. “There’s a box, but it’s got flexible sides!”

This is a crucial matter to Beesley, who has faced many struggles. “If I had someone who came along and told 15-year-old or 16-year-old me that I was more than the situation I was in, that I was a child of God, I was loved, and I did not need to find my approval in [mankind], I probably would have taken a very different path than what I did that got me in that situation that I had to fight so hard to get out of.” Beesley is positioned to help others run a profitable business and be mindful of making the community better.

“Sweet Indulgence does a lot of community outreach. We’re not a nonprofit but a for-profit bakery, but most of our profits go back into the community. The idea is to

have that community support there. Teaching people how to do that effectively and not hurt your bottom line is important. That took me a long time to learn because I had a hard time saying no. You just want to say yes to every person who comes through that door. That’s not financially sustainable.”

Beesley said, “Dream Forge’s current focus is to get our offices and kitchen spaces rented out so we can bring this income in and start implementing these programs.”

Simmons envisions classes in social media, small business accounting and strategy, and a mentorship program. There will be lots of assistance from CVABC.

“We’re both moms, and with that comes a special sensitivity to women in the workplace. Most of the women in the workforce today are moms. I can’t count the times we’ve brought our children to work with us,” said Simmons. Dream Forge will have a safe room for children to hang out.

Safety for all is a chief priority, according to Simmons. “Everyone will have their own spaces and their own doors. All the

doors will be locked, and everybody will have a lock and key code. Everything is secured. We’re able to offer that security that we as survivors so badly needed.”

Dream Forge looks to be up and running in 2024. “We’re looking for those who want to partner with us right now and help us get started,” said Simmons. “We know exactly what we want to implement for the most part. Ashley and I are incredibly flexible because that’s what life has required of us. We can pivot.”

Difficult circumstances can be inevitable. Going through it alone, though, is not an inevitability. And this is where Dream Forge steps in. **GN**

Information on Dream Forge can be found at <https://www.forgingdreams.org>.

“I’m really excited about all the programs we intend on implementing and the plans we’re working on.”

- Samantha Simmons



Professor Alissa Keith



A Thousand Little Miracles

A University
of Lynchburg
student's journey
from Taliban
oppression to
higher education

By Paige Cushman
Photography by
Sarah Bussard

NELSON MANDELA famously said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” The story of University of Lynchburg student Shukria Rezayi (not her real name, for security) paints a powerful picture of what Afghani women will do to wield such a weapon.

Girls College, an organization navigating against the oppressive tide of Taliban rule, has become a beacon of hope for Afghan women seeking to pursue higher education.

In January 2023, Alissa Keith, an English professor at the University of Lynchburg, stumbled upon an Instagram story calling for help. A friend of a friend was working with Girls College and was looking for volunteers to assist Afghan women with college entrance essays. This struck a chord with Keith, aligning perfectly with

her expertise in teaching English and her passion for helping disenfranchised youth. Little did she know that this encounter would lead her to Rezayi, a resilient young woman determined to defy the narrative the Taliban had written for her.

“At the time, I didn’t know anything about the international student process, much less the process needed for an Afghan woman who has more hurdles than the average international student to attend an American university,” Keith said.

At the time, the Taliban did not allow women to attend any type of higher education. In the year since, they have banned education for women over the third grade.

“There’s no university education, and they’ve also banned women from being in public spaces,” Keith said. “So they’re not allowed to go to their public parks, they’re



“In Afghanistan, I didn’t know what my future could be, but now I’m much closer to my goal, and it’s just perfect.”

- Shukria Rezayi

not allowed to work out at gyms, they’re not allowed to exercise, and so the crackdown is just more and more and more.”

Girls College allows Afghan women to find education, against the Taliban’s orders. When Keith got involved, she thought she’d just be helping students write essays. It wasn’t long until she was all-in on Rezayi and her pursuit of higher education.

Back in Afghanistan, Rezayi’s dreams were being shackled by always-evolving restrictions.

“You don’t have any opportunity there,” Rezayi said. “When the Taliban came, I became hopeless. I was so sad. I was crying at night. Deep in my heart, it was broken inside me.”

However, lives can now and forever be changed. Girls College will create a future for countless women, and Keith will be here standing with open arms to put hearts back together. GN

To help young women like Shukria, contact Alissa Keith at keithar@lynchburg.edu.



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?

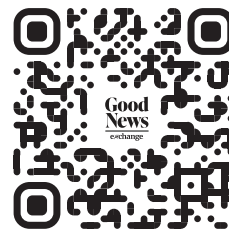
Currently, our dedicated team of magazine writers and editors is hard at work crafting stories under themes like "Charity Spotlight," "The Learning Curve," and "Shop Local." We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is "**Independence.**"

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.







Good Times

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

54 Community Events

56 Events Calendar

58 Advertiser Index

Submit a positive story
on our website:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Sarah Bussard

◀ Christen Brunstetter, Libby Gatzke, Angie Kraje, Ted Kraje, Bayley Lindevaldsen, Josh Lindevaldsen, Brooke Owens, Scott Rankins, and Alexa Rodgers

'Tis the Season Holiday Concert - Dec. 16-17



Photography by Sarah Bussard

On Dec. 16 and 17, Commerce Street Theater in downtown Lynchburg presented their Second Annual Holiday Concert - 'Tis the Season. With cast members from their local community volunteers and a special appearance by The Seven Hills Chorus, audiences were immersed in classic Christmas tunes, new holiday favorites, and a fun sing-along. Celebrating romance, family, winter, community, the nativity, the young at heart, and hope, Commerce Street Theater brought joy to the local community during this special holiday season.

1. Ted Kraje 2. Scott Rankins, Libby Gatzke, and Alexa Rodgers 3. Ted and Angie Kraje 4. Alexa Rodgers 5. Christen Brunstetter

25 Days of Christmas Formal Dress Sale Event - Dec.1-31



Photography by Sarah Bussard

For the entire month of December, Church Street Bridal held their 25 Days of Christmas Formal Dress Sale Event. With all dresses priced at \$25, the shop aimed to provide the community with affordable dresses just in time for the holiday season. As per the structure of this amazing nonprofit organization, all sales went back to help fund the YWCA's sexual assault and domestic violence recovery and awareness programs.



1. Liz Mahan, Joelle England, Blair Bradsher, and Emily Cloud 2. Joelle England, Emily Cloud, Liz Mahan, and Blair Bradsher
3. Joelle England 4. Blair Bradsher and Liz Mahan

EVENTS CALENDAR

February 2

5:00 pm First Fridays
Academy Center
of the Arts
600 Main St.
Lynchburg

Join the Academy Center every first Friday of the month as we unveil our latest art exhibits, featuring an array of local, regional and national artists presenting their works in various mediums.

February 3

8:00 am Lynchburg Community Market
1219 Main St.
Lynchburg

This is a weekly community market featuring various local products and foods.

February 4

12:00 pm Lynchburg Bridal Expo
The Virginian Hotel
712 Church St.
Lynchburg

Meet 45 wedding pros, plan, sample, and win prizes, including a honeymoon from Travel Lovers. Brides attend free; guests pay \$10. Register at www.lynchburgbridalexpo.com.

3:00 pm Callisto Quartet & Viano Quartet Concert
University of Lynchburg
1501 Lakeside Dr.
Lynchburg

This is a local concert in Lynchburg featuring the Callisto Quartet and Viano Quartet.

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 10

10:00 am Third Annual Big Game 5K Run/Walk
 Percival's Island
 Natural Area
 1600 Concord Turnpike
 Lynchburg

5:30 pm Daddy-Daughter Dance: Sensory Friendly Experience
 Lynchburg City Armory
 1200 Church St.
 Lynchburg

This is an event for young girls and their dad or other father figures to experience a special night out for just the two of them.

February 11

6:30 pm Love and the LSO - Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra
 The Virginian Hotel
 712 Church St.
 Lynchburg

Community members are invited to enjoy a Valentine's weekend event with the LSO's big band, featuring swing music and great food.

For more events and to submit an event visit:

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



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Soundz Hearing - Central Virginia.....	4		

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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.

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month is a way to ob-
behind the scenes,
agriculture.
light on many people
energy, high-pro-
farmers do a lot of
in terms of raising
care of cattle, being
problems, and wear-
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of 2020. "We'd al-

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Charity Spotlight

ISSUE 2 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	1/1/24
Advertising.....	2/1/24
Mailed to Homes.....	2/17/24



Independence

ISSUE 6 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	5/6/24
Advertising.....	6/6/24
Mailed to Homes.....	6/22/24



The Learning Curve

ISSUE 3 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	1/29/24
Advertising.....	2/29/24
Mailed to Homes.....	3/16/24



Dreams Come True

ISSUE 7 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	6/3/24
Advertising.....	7/3/24
Mailed to Homes.....	7/20/24



Shop Local

ISSUE 4 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	3/4/24
Advertising.....	4/4/24
Mailed to Homes.....	4/20/24



Where Champions are Made

ISSUE 8 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	7/1/24
Advertising.....	8/1/24
Mailed to Homes.....	8/17/24



Vacation in Lynchburg

ISSUE 5 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	4/2/24
Advertising.....	5/2/24
Mailed to Homes.....	5/18/24



From Farm to Table

ISSUE 9 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....	8/5/24
Advertising.....	9/5/24
Mailed to Homes.....	9/21/24



Kevin Maples

Publishing Partner

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