

Good News

exchange

Alison Hardy

**Making
Connections
and Finding
Community**

CHARITY SP TLIGHT

ISSUE 2 2024

A PUBLICATION OF
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education that comes
celebrating Dairy
his father Steve, his
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Magazine Overview

Positive stories in three chapters

Each magazine is full of positive, uplifting stories of people, businesses, and events in the community. Through submissions by our readers, we are able to discover and share stories of all the good happening in your area.



Good Living

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

- ✔ Health Care News
- ✔ School News
- ✔ Business News
- ✔ Local Government News



Good Stories

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

- ✔ People
- ✔ Businesses
- ✔ Nonprofits



Good Times

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

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- ✔ Event photos
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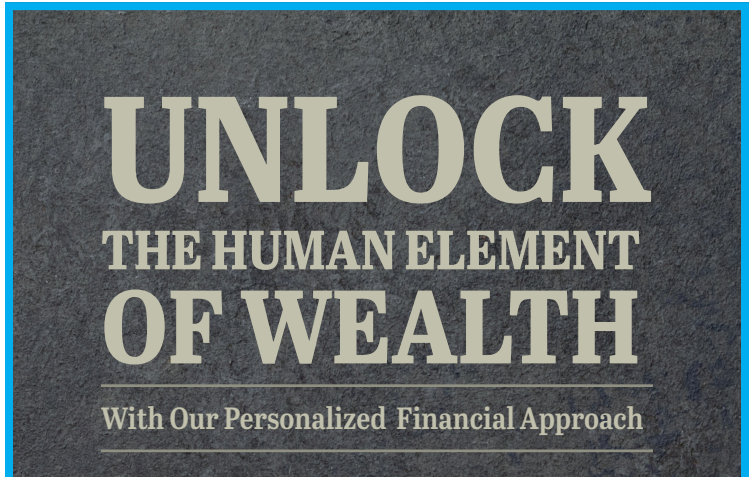
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**Inspire
more good**

**Boost
community
pride**

**Build stronger
communities**

**Encourage
local spending**



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in the magazine

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Heartbeats of Our Hometown

We celebrate the silent heroes among us.

IN THE quiet corners around us, away from negativity, thrive the true heartbeats of our community — the local charities and the selfless individuals who support them. It's in these spaces, often unnoticed, where the most profound acts of kindness blossom, nurturing the soul of our town the way gentle rain nourishes our earth.

These charities are the sturdy bridges over turbulent waters for many among us. Behind each food drive, each fundraiser, and each helping hand are people like those featured in this issue. They are the pillars of our community, often foregoing recognition and reward, driven by a simple yet powerful desire to make a difference. These are our neighbors, our friends, perhaps even strangers, who embody the purest form of love — giving without expecting anything in return.

The beneficiaries of these charities are not just faceless names on a list. They are people with hopes and dreams, often finding themselves in situations beyond their control. The support they receive is more than just material aid; it's a message that they are not forgotten. Their community stands with them in hours of need.

This cycle of giving and receiving creates a harmony that resonates through our streets, echoing in the laughter of children at a community center or the grateful smiles at a food pantry. It's a reminder that, in the hustle of everyday life, the most impactful moments are often the quiet acts of kindness.

Good News Magazine thanks you for keeping our hometown's heart beating. GN

Wesley Bryant,
MANAGING EDITOR

From our publishing partner



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GOOD NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY Exchange Media Group, Inc.

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GOOD NEWS

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Photography by Sarah Bussard

◀ Patricia Franklin

Hagen Allred and the Lynchburg Hillcats

HIT ALTRUISM

OUT OF THE

Hitting home runs and lending helping hands

By Richard Klin // Photography by Sarah Bussard

HAGEN ALLRED, originally from Staunton, entered Liberty University's sports management program with a dream. The program required an internship with 400 hours of work experience. Lynchburg's minor league baseball team, the Hillcats, offered him a ticket operations internship, which he happily accepted. Then circumstances, as they often do, changed.

"Halfway through that season," Allred remembers, "several full-time staff members quit. Our offices were already extremely small. We were already one of the smallest front offices in minor league baseball. That hurt. And so our president at the time pulled me into his office and said, 'Hey, I need you to step up.'"

The 400-hour internship transformed into a full-time position. Once the October 2022 season ended, Allred became the Hillcats' senior account executive.

Currently the director of sales for the Hillcats, Allred is immersed in the Community Champions program. Liberty Mountain Medical Group sponsors the program. According to the MLB's website, the program's initiative is to "recognize youth groups who have shown exceptional levels of hard work, determination, leadership, and sportsmanship." The children are provided free tickets and recognized for their accomplishments on the field.

"I called over 50 youth organizations in Lynchburg and the surrounding area and told them, 'This [is]

PARK

Hagen
Allred

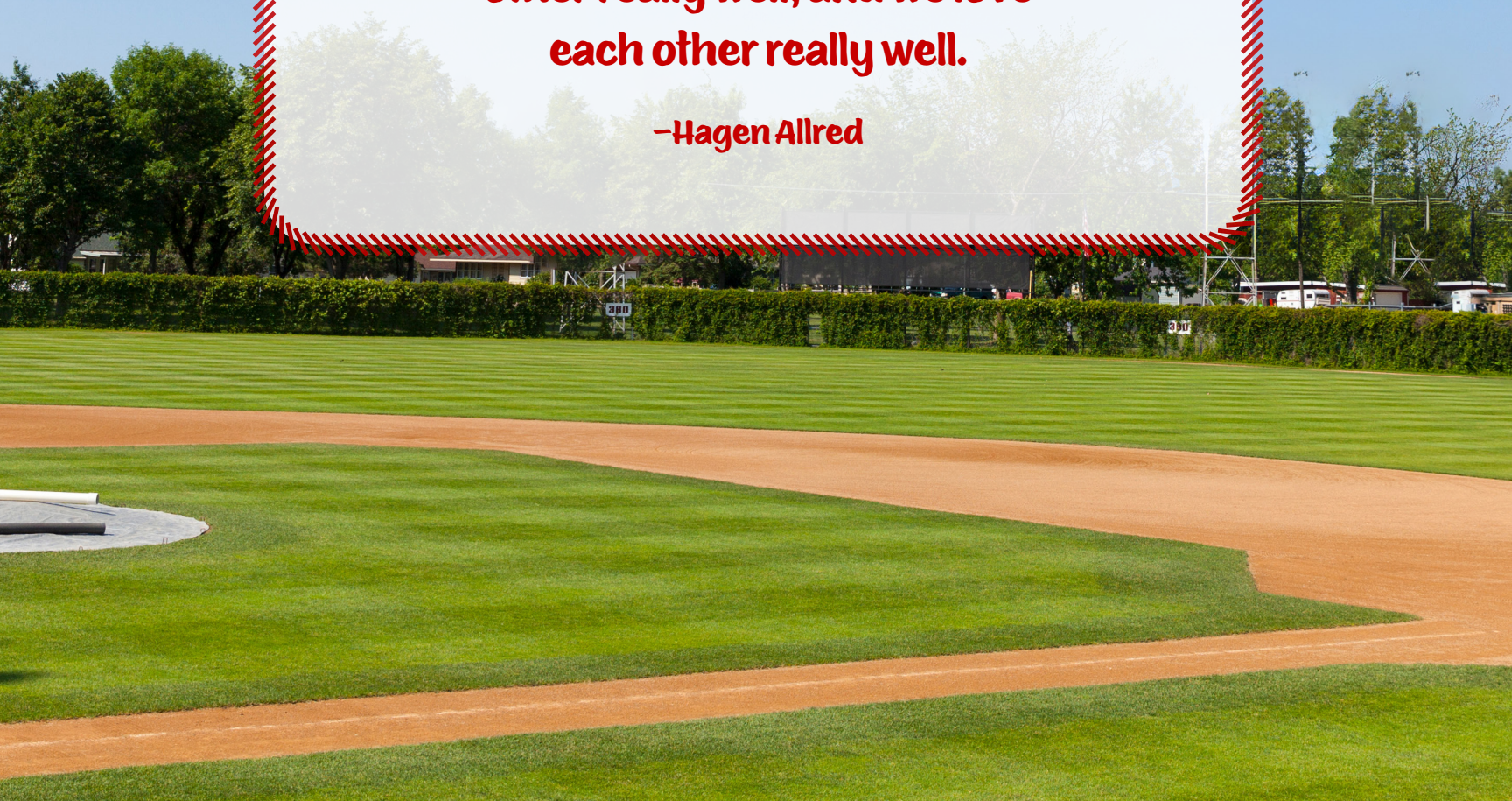


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I called over 50 youth organizations in Lynchburg and the surrounding area and told them, 'This [is] completely sponsored. If you sign up, we'll honor you on the field.' That's one of the biggest reasons I'm still here and working for the Hillcats. We serve each other really well, and we love each other really well.

-Hagen Allred



completely sponsored. If you sign up, we'll honor you on the field.' That's one of the biggest reasons I'm still here and working for the Hillcats. We serve each other really well, and we love each other really well."

Carefully choosing which groups will be honored can be daunting, as many organizations are deserving. Luckily, there is a system in place.

"I came across the SHARE Greater Lynchburg [of the Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation] website, which has around 175 nonprofits, giving you details of who is in charge and [how to reach them]. I started really thinking about what we could do with the nonprofits. There are so many groups that [request] donations. And sometimes it's hard — we really want to be able to do all that. We're heavily involved in our community."

The procedure is to pair with various nonprofits and coordinate fundraisers, bettering the community one partnership at a time. Organizations sell tickets to the Hillcats' games and get plenty in return.

Nonprofits not only get to attend games, but they also benefit from a comprehensive marketing campaign created for them. They design the package with enjoyable incentives to motivate groups to sell as many game tickets as possible. For instance, last year, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library sold more than 450 tickets, which resulted in their organization making around \$2,000. Typically, two to three nonprofits are invited for each game, and with the Hillcats having a total of 66 games, there are plenty of opportunities for participation and fundraising.

Last year, the Community Champions program donated \$40,000 in revenue. With its fun-filled, popcorn-scented atmosphere, baseball games are the most natural venue for fundraising, leading the program to succeed. Allred, though, is not unaware of the Hillcats' underlying issues.

"A lot of college-aged people have no idea that we exist."



Allred admits that even he was unaware of the team's presence in the community before the program began.

"I went to Liberty, and until I applied for the internship here and had my interview, I had driven past this stadium three or four times and just never knew what it was. I thought it was a football field, which is what a lot of people think."

To Allred, this just means there is room for growth and expansion, starting with the fact that Lynchburg has rallied around the Community Champions program.

The Lynchburg community is brimming with citizens and organizations eager to make a lasting impact.

When the winds of change blow ferociously, stand tall in the face of it. You never know who may end up standing by your side. **GN**

For more information on the Hillcats and the Community Champions program, visit www.milb.com/lynchburg.

education that comes with celebrating Dairy Day. Steve and his wife Kara and his wife Kara family started dairy in Tennessee. It's a way to be behind the scenes, agriculture. It's not on many people's minds. High-energy, high-productivity farmers do a lot of work in terms of raising cattle, being careful of cattle, being careful of problems, and wear-

work goes into dairy. The Nash family of 2020. "We'd al-



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FUELING BODIES AND SOULS

Foster Fuels has been spreading
warmth for over 100 years.

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Sarah Bussard

IN 1919, WWI Veteran L.H. Foster began delivering flour, ice, and five-gallon cans of lamp oil using an ox-drawn cart to provide for the needs of his neighbors. Over 100 years later, his business, now known as Foster Fuels, continues looking out for its neighbors as a staple in the community. During Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Foster Fuels delivered emergency propane to the Northeast. Over the years, the company has faithfully supplied fuel to Haiti, Puerto Rico, and areas in the States following devastating hurricanes.

From that humble ox-cart to a leader in the fuel industry, the company provides propane, heating oil, diesel, and gasoline

to residential, commercial, agricultural, and government contractors. Through their Foster Foundation, Foster Fuels sponsors local sports leagues, participates in events, and helps raise awareness of charitable organizations within the community, such as Children's Miracle Network. The company also provides funding that gives at-risk youth a camping experience through Camp New Joy and their newest summer camp, the Thomas Road Outpost.

"Foster Foundation is the philanthropic arm of outreach contributing to the communities where we live and work," said Jennnifer Bryant-

“

These warm coats create confidence, comfort, and safety from the elements for countless people in communities served by Foster Fuels.

-Jennifer Bryant-Foster

Foster. “The Foster Foundation is involved in advocacy efforts with an emphasis on education, women and families, veterans, and the arts. Over the last three years, the foundation has raised over \$150,000 for the Mustaches 4 Kids fundraiser.”

During the blustery winter months of 2019, Bryant-Foster visited a local school, and her heart ached at the number of children she saw without warm coats. Like previous charitable-minded Fosters, she jumped into action and began texting friends and family, pleading for donations of their gently used coats. When Bryant-

Foster returned home that evening, she was astonished — and pleasantly pleased — to find at least 20 coats on her front porch. By the end of that year, she had collected, freshly laundered, and donated over 400 coats through her “Spread the Warmth” campaign.

“That sparked an effort that’s evolved into a heartwarming success story of what’s become a full-fledged annual operation at the Foster Fuels Foundation,” said Bryant-Foster.

“The foundation offices now boast a bank of commercial washers and dryers, showcasing Fosters’ commitment to making a difference in the lives of those in need. Collection containers made their way into all Foster Fuels showrooms and to local community business partners. In 2020, a COVID-19 year, the foundation collected over 900 coats. In 2022, this campaign achieved a significant milestone by donating over 3,500 coats to school students and local community foundations impacting adults and families facing cold weather hardships. These warm coats create confidence, comfort, and safety from the elements for countless people in communities served by Foster Fuels.”

According to Foster Fuels, the recipients from their most recent Spread the Warmth initiative included 31 schools and 21 separate charities. Since the community has so graciously rallied



▲ Van Arpornrat, Jennifer Bryant-Foster, Cameron Anctil, Justin Hamilton, and Jason Cox





around its mission, Foster Fuels has increased its annual goal to 5,000 coats and believes that with the community's help, its collection boxes will overflow year after year.

Foster Fuels provides collection boxes at their facilities year-round, and from October through January, dozens of businesses become drop-off points, providing more convenient access for everyone in the community.

“We are so fortunate to have such incredible partners that support our annual drive to give coats back to

those in need. To see the confidence and smiles on children's faces as they are wearing the comfort, safety, and warmth of a coat is something many of us take for granted. Witnessing these children out in the fresh air, playing with peers, is our biggest reward. We can all make a difference in someone else's life. Simple acts sometimes mean more than acts of grandeur. Every single person who puts a coat in one of our collection boxes is making a big difference in someone else's life.”

Bryant-Foster said that Foster Fuels is proud to be a part of the community.

“Lynchburg is very fortunate to have a lot of great nonprofits run by [many amazing people with] a passion for what they are doing and a heart for the folks they are serving. We have so many people in our small community wanting to make it better as a whole. What better life lesson can we share with our children than we can make things better when we all work together?” GN

For more information, go to www.fosterfuels.com/spreadthewarmth.

The Lighthouse Community Center

A BEACON OF HOPE FOR THOUSANDS

By Amanda E. West
Photography by Sarah Bussard

*"Just give yourself
a chance. Give
yourself a break.
Life is possible."*

- Patricia Franklin

FRESH OFF the heels of the American Civil War, 1869 was a tumultuous time for our nation. For Maurice Moore, a tycoon in the tobacco industry, it was time to inhabit his newly constructed mansion overlooking Lynchburg. The home had gained a reputation since breaking ground in 1866. Naysayers nicknamed his home on Church Street "Moore's Folly" because of the steep grade and improbable location.

Moore couldn't have known that almost 100 years later, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would dream of a "Beloved Community" where poverty, hunger, and homelessness would no longer exist. Nor could he have known that King's dream would manifest in 2004 as the Lighthouse Community Center, with "Moore's Folly" as its home base. What many considered a grave mistake had transformed into a beacon of light reaching thousands.

In 2023 alone, the Lighthouse Community Center provided food to over 20,000 hungry individuals and provided on-site primary health care through Lighthouse Community Health Services. It opened Light-



Patricia Franklin



▲ Terrick Moyer, Finny Mathew, Wendell Franklin, Martha Brown, and Patricia Franklin

*"However you start off,
whatever you went through,
it doesn't have to be your
finish. Whatever your family
went through — you can
change, and your life can
get better."*

– Patricia Franklin

house Pharmacy, offering door-to-door delivery. Additionally, U.S. Veterans without homes received supportive housing and wraparound therapeutic services.

Lighthouse Community Center is a haven for helping community members register and restore voting rights. The organization advocates for bicycles for mobility and transportation through Move-Up, offering services such as free rides to work, drug court, or other necessary appointments. Dedicated partners, like Focus Point Mental Health and Promise Ranch, supply mental health counseling, crisis stabilization services, and equine therapy.

In 2020, when the world was slamming doors shut, the Lighthouse Community Center was opening them.



It established the Lighthouse Beloved Community Land Trust through its nonprofit, the FARRR Foundation. Ninety acres of land were purchased with the radical vision to provide affordable, sustainable, and energy-efficient housing where lower-income families could finally attain their dreams of home ownership and escape generational poverty. Homeowners in the Beloved Community will have access to wraparound support services.

For 30 years, Patricia Franklin battled addiction. After years spent partially incarcerated, Franklin desired to take back control. The Lighthouse Community Center helped transform her life. Recently, Franklin celebrated her ninth anniversary “clean, saved, and sober.” Now, she is a matriarch in her family and her church.

“The people I hung around with, the places I went, and the things I did were all part of my addiction. I kept doing the things that kept me in my addiction for so long because I was comfortable. When you’re comfortable, it’s hard to change. Lighthouse Community Center helped me get my life back,” shared Franklin.

Franklin now volunteers at Lighthouse Community Center and is a peer support specialist working toward certification. She also runs the Lynchburg Democracy Center as a voting rights advocate, helping citizens restore their rights and register to vote. Additionally, Franklin manages a state digital peer support line for struggling youth.

“I don’t try to preach to them. I’ll just say what I have to say. And there are certain things I just can’t participate in, even with my own family. I’m just not willing to go back to who I was in no kind of way. I have no control over other people, but I can control what I do. If anybody needs help and they want to know the way out, I’ll support them any way I can while they’re trying to get their life back together.”

Franklin struggled with reading before. But after returning to school, she’s become an avid reader, especially of the Bible.

“If I don’t keep the Lord and my recovery first, I’m doomed. I know I’ll go back to what I used to do, and I don’t want to go back to that life,” said Franklin.

When it’s all said and done, the legacy that Franklin hopes to leave behind for others is for them to understand that “their end doesn’t have to be the same as their beginning.”

“However you start off, whatever you went through, it doesn’t have to be your finish. Whatever your family went through — you can change, and your life can get better. I want people to know that they can make it no matter what. You don’t have to do drugs for the rest of your life because you started off like that. You don’t have to not apply yourself because you didn’t finish school. We can grow, and we can do better. I hope others look at me and know they can change and be whoever they want to be. Just give yourself a chance. Give yourself a break. Life is possible.” GN

For more information, visit www.thehbcc.org.





Share the love

Nourishing communities, one casserole at a time

THE ACT of preparing a homemade meal transcends the boundaries of sustenance; it becomes a gesture of empathy, a tangible expression of care that resonates deeply with those facing adversity. Amidst the chaos of life's struggles, a warm, home-cooked dish can offer solace and a brief respite, reminding recipients that they are not alone. The significance lies not only in the nourishment provided but also in the emotional sustenance offered through the time and effort dedicated to creating something heartfelt. In sharing the simple yet profound act of cooking, individuals forge connections, cultivate understanding, and sow the seeds of resilience, fostering a sense of communal support that can uplift spirits and inspire hope in the midst of life's trials. **GN**

Golden Potato Casserole

Submitted by Donna Simmons

6 med. potatoes, peeled and sliced
2 med. white onions, peeled and sliced
1 can mushroom soup
1 soup can milk
1/2 stick butter
salt and pepper, to taste

Arrange potatoes and onions in layers in a 1 1/2 qt. casserole dish. Add soup and milk to casserole. Slice butter and place over the top of mixture. Add salt and pepper. Bake in 350° oven for 1 hour and 30 minutes or until potatoes are fork-tender.

Sunday Morning Casserole

Submitted by Doris Kiddey

2 slices white bread, cubed
1 lb. ground mild sausage, cooked, drained
6 eggs, beaten
2 c. milk
1 t. dry mustard
1/2 t. salt
pinch of pepper
1 1/2 c. red potatoes, unpeeled, cooked
1 1/2 c. cheddar and Monterey Jack
cheese, grated

Place bread in a 8x11 inch casserole dish. Add sausage. In a medium mixing bowl, combine eggs, milk, mustard, salt, and pepper. Pour over sausage. Layer potatoes and cheese over mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake casserole at 350° for 30 minutes, or until set.

Broccoli and Cheese Casserole

Submitted by Martha McDaniel

2 boxes frozen chopped broccoli, cooked and drained
1 stick butter
1/2 lb. Velveeta® cheese
1/2 pkg. butter flavored crackers, crushed

Place cooked broccoli into a greased casserole dish. Chop 1/2 stick of butter and the cheese into small pieces. Stir these into the broccoli. In a small bowl melt remaining butter and mix with cracker crumbs. Place on top of broccoli mixture. Bake 25 to 30 minutes at 350°.

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

Savoring Italy

A culinary journey through
the heart of flavor

*S*ABELLA'S ITALIAN Trattoria was the perfect place to visit in Lynchburg on a Saturday night. The family-owned and operated restaurant contained couples enjoying a date night and families laughing over a delicious meal.

We started our dinner with fried oysters, served with an aioli flavored with Old Bay seasoning, which was to die for. It was the perfect appetizer for our table for two as we awaited our entrees. With soft, dim lighting and music playing quietly in the background, the atmosphere was as enjoyable as the food. Speaking of, it felt like our food was ready in no time!

My husband ordered the blackened cod with Calabrian chile served with spicy pearl couscous, which our waiter highly recommended. The cod was cooked perfectly and seasoned well; the couscous added just the right amount of heat. With a colorful plate full of incredible flavors, my husband thought his meal was the best.

My choice for the evening was the chicken piccata, which currently sits as my favorite meal in Lynchburg. The combination of pan-seared chicken with artichokes, capers, and polenta was





the best bite of the evening. The different textures and flavors work so well together, and the hint of citrus in the meal creates an incredible balance. It's so exquisite that there won't be any leftovers to take home.

We ended our date night by sharing a bowl of passion fruit sorbet. I would make a reservation exclusively to get this sorbet — it was sweet, tart, and refreshing. The personable service, the cozy and classy environment, and the decadent food make visiting Isabella's Italian Trattoria an incredible dining experience. We left happy, full of tasty food, and ready to make our next reservation. GN

GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Lynchburg. This month Grace Hayes visited Isabella's Italian Trattoria.

ISABELLA'S ITALIAN TRATTORIA

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Lynchburg, VA 24503
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“Great magazine for shopping and eating LOCAL! Thank you for publishing useful information on our little community.”

“This magazine allows owners to share what is closest to their hearts while showcasing their products. Plus the customer service Good News offers is outstanding. The magazine is very well put together, well polished, neat, and very inviting. I look forward to each one!”

“The content of the magazine is wholesome and seems to support a good cause. It is much preferable to other advertising sources because it seems to build up the community, rather than solely profit from it.”

“Good News is a great magazine, and it is delivered to many people, probably more than the local newspaper. I look all the way through and read most of it. It is the best place to advertise.”





Good Stories

CHAPTER 2 OF 3

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

- 38** The heart and hands of hope
- 42** 'No one walks alone'
- 46** Making connections and finding community

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Sarah Bussard

◀ Alison Hardy

CHA

S P  T

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RITTY LIGHT

**"It's not how much we give, but how
much love we put into giving."**

- Mother Teresa



THE HEART AND HANDS OF HOPE

TANIA CONNER'S JOURNEY WITH FREEDOM 4/24

By Haley Potter

Photography by Sarah Bussard

AS TANIA Conner stands among fellow parents at her child's athletic event in Lynchburg, she spends a moment collecting her thoughts. Like those around her, her mind rotates between ordinary ruminations of impending weather, hopes of victory, and the well-being of her children. Lingering in the backdrop of her everyday concerns is awareness of a silent war. Reminders of the grim reality of human trafficking are everywhere, forcing the worries to the forefront.

Conner is a silhouette of courage and compassion. She is a soldier assisting in hidden battles fought by voiceless victims of human trafficking alongside Freedom 4/24.

Her journey with Freedom 4/24, an organization committed to the prevention and restoration of stolen lives, began with a heart-wrenching epiphany.

"I had taken a trip with my husband to Greece," Conner recalled, her voice tinged with the raw emotion of that transformative



ADOBE STOCK



“I do believe there’s a ripple effect. [Spreading awareness] can impact lives, even the ones you don’t see.”

- Tania Conner

experience. Walking through the red-light district, she faced a stark reality. “These women shouldn’t be here. They shouldn’t be bought and sold. No one should be.” This realization was the genesis of her commitment to the cause.

“Traffickers will target those who are vulnerable,” she explained.

Conner’s voice resonated with a deep understanding of the indiscriminate nature of this global issue. Her words painted a vivid image of the lurking dangers that prey on the unsuspecting.

Conner describes the harsh reality, emphasizing that traffickers exploit vulnerability mercilessly, regardless of “age, gender, social status, or where you live.”

“This can come in the form of a [promise of employment], a romantic tactic, [exploitation of] loneliness, unhealthy relationships, being online without boundaries, [involvement in] gangs, drugs, homelessness, foster care, former sexual abuse, [the need for] money or debt bonds, [the] normalization of [the] sex industry,” Conner said, highlighting examples of situations where innocence or ignorance are used as currency.

Conner has been a symbol of hope and action. From coordinating with law enforcement to make care bags for survivors to simply raising awareness on an uncomfortable topic, her efforts paint a picture of a woman driven by compassion.



She recounted running a 50-mile marathon as one of the many ways she has brought awareness to Freedom 4/24, echoing the emotional marathon she undertakes daily in her fight against trafficking. Conner speaks passionately about Freedom 4/24's mission, highlighting its dual focus on prevention and restoration.

“Prevention is challenging, but so much easier than [helping restore the life of] someone who's been exploited or victimized.”

Her involvement in the organization's prevention education curriculum, a pioneering initiative, reflects the power of awareness and education. Conner has taken trips to partner homes in areas such as West Virginia and Thailand. These are voyages into the heart of human suffering and resilience.

“Building relationships, meeting the girls — it is life-changing,” she reflected, her voice a mixture of sorrow and hope.

Her connection with survivors of human trafficking is clear. Each encounter is a reminder of the individual lives caught in this tragic web. Conner's story is not just about her work but a passionate plea for collective action. She urges the community to recognize the relevance of trafficking.

“It can happen anywhere, anytime, anyhow. No ZIP code in this world is immune to trafficking,” she pointed out.



▲ Beheatherlyn Kirby, Jaclyn Blackford, Tania Conner, Joy Cover, and Lauren McQuillan

Her call to action is clear, emphasizing the importance of being vigilant and aware of the red flags in our communities. The emotional core of Conner's journey with Freedom 4/24 is captured in reflections on the impact of its work.

"I do believe there's a ripple effect. [Spreading awareness] can impact lives, even the ones you don't see."

Conner has emphasized that she wants to help as many people as possible, even if it's one person at a time. This belief in the

transformative power of small actions is the essence of her commitment.

As Conner's story with Freedom 4/24 continues to unfold, it serves as a reminder of the power of hope, the resilience of the human spirit, and the continuous fight against the darkness of human trafficking. **GN**

For more information on how to support Freedom 4/24's mission, visit www.freedom424.org or call (434) 582-4517.

'NO ONE WALKS ALONE.'

A LOCAL ORGANIZATION, LOVE HEALS,
OFFERS HELP THROUGH HARD TIMES.



**“Our goal is to advocate
or walk alongside people
because we believe no
one should walk through
hardship alone.”**

- Courtney Green

*By Kali Bradford
Photography by Sarah Bussard*

BELOVED CHILDREN'S television host Mister Rogers was known for doing good for others. For nearly four decades, he visited homes via the television with his half-hour-long program, "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." Through his work, he shared with viewers of all ages ways they could be kind and helpful to each other.

Rogers was always looking for good in times of darkness. He would often recall the important lesson he had learned from his mother.

"When I was a boy and would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Courtney Green took that sentiment to heart. She and her team of dedicated helpers work tirelessly to ensure that no one has to experience hardship alone.

Green is the founder and executive director of Love Heals. Love Heals is a nonprofit that "walks alongside individuals experiencing hardship by connecting communities, coordinating care, and covering costs."



▲ Sarah Nelson

Though they've only been operating as an official nonprofit for about a year, Green and her group have worked for six years to walk alongside those needing a helping hand.

"Unofficially, we started in 2018. I was a bartender out of school, and this all got started to help a friend. The year prior, my friend had been diagnosed with breast cancer. I had a part, of sorts, in her journey from seeing the diagnosis happen, the biopsies and treatments, along with all the life changes that come with a diagnosis. She had asked if I could pray for her because she didn't have enough funds for an upcoming treatment. And while

I, of course, said yes, I wanted to do more. Looking back, I was living out what Love Heals is now to my friend at that time,” Green explained.

To help during a challenging time, Green and some friends recruited four local bands to perform in a benefit concert, with all the proceeds going to help with her friend’s medical bills. Green’s friend was present to share her story with the audience. The event’s success led to more benefits.

“Helping her turned into randomly doing things for people over the next four years. We’ve been doing benefit events for people as a fun side project and donating 100% of the funds raised to them. As we have grown over the years, we knew we wanted to make our work more official.”

While Green was glad to be able to do something for her friend, she had not foreseen the interest that would follow after holding such an event.

“People began to ask when the next one would be held. Initially, I was unsure of why people were interested. There wasn’t anything spectacular about it or different. However, after we did that first event in November of 2018, we spent some time discussing people’s interest in it. We realized two things. One was that people liked that 100% of their ticket went to the person and wasn’t going to any kind of overhead. We paid for that ourselves, out of pocket, through extra shifts. The other was that my friend personally shared her story through cancer, and people seemed to resonate with that. We kept getting bands that weren’t just someone playing the guitar but offered a full-blown concert experience as best as we could afford. Everything started connecting,” Green recalled.

That connection has now solidified, becoming a nonprofit. While Green and her staff are still learning the ropes, the organization is making headway.

“Realistically, we’re just getting started as an actual legitimate organization with real databases, systems, software, and the ability to run payroll,” said Green.

“I wouldn’t say we have it perfected, but the model is there, and it’s clear. We’ve expanded beyond just doing concerts. Our goal is to advocate or walk alongside people because we believe no one should walk through hardship alone. And each person’s story is different. How do we best care for each individual? We’re figuring out what [it] looks like to walk alongside our beneficiaries and coordinate care for them beyond just handing them money.”

Green stated that this is only the beginning of what Love Heals has planned for the Lynchburg community.

“I’m proud of the work we’ve done so far. We’ve helped eight people since we’ve existed. I think in the next five years, we will be across the East Coast. Everything we’re doing, whether it’s programs such as ‘Coffee for Caregivers,’ a monthly program where we provide caregivers with free coffee at local coffee shops, our benefit worship nights in partnership with local churches, or new benefits or programs, I think each has the power to bring communities together in different parts of the state.

“Everything we do is getting made into a standard operating procedure so that we can multiply impact. This empowers others from different parts of the country to help members of their communities share their





Sarah Nelson, Kyle West, and Courtney Green

stories and receive support. So, at the bare minimum, I think we'll be on the East Coast. I don't think there's a reason we wouldn't be across the country having people host their events and help people in their communities." GN

To learn more about Love Heals, visit the organization online at www.weareloveheals.org.



Kyle West

ONS TO HOMELESSNESS

Est. 1994



“A big part of my job is helping people make connections they didn’t have before. If they fall into trouble again, they know who to call or who in the community can help them before they end up homeless again.”

- Alison Hardy

MAKING CONNECTIONS AND FINDING COMMUNITY

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, MIRIAM'S HOUSE HELPS LYNCHBURG FAMILIES FIND THEIR FEET.

By Sara Hook

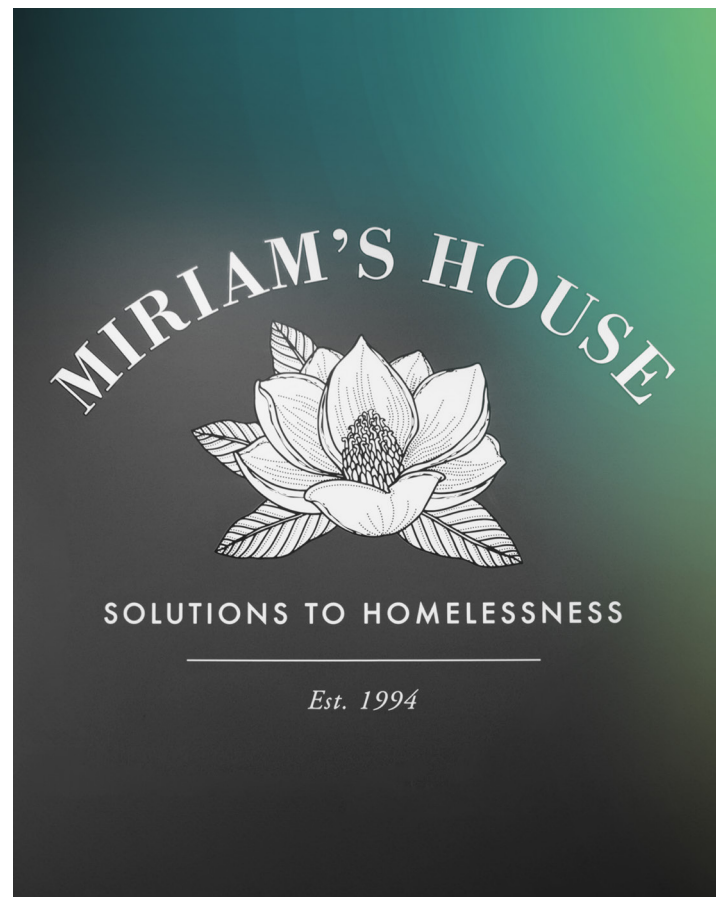
Photography by Sarah Bussard

WHEN DISASTER strikes, causing families to experience homelessness, Miriam's House is there to help them get back on their feet. The nonprofit was founded in 1994 to provide housing for women and families without homes. Since then, the program has grown exponentially, expanding to serve homeless youth and chronically homeless individuals in the Lynchburg community.

Housing Case Manager Alison Hardy said Miriam's House served 66 people in their first year. In 2022, they served 462; in 2023, that number rose to 538.

As the name suggests, Miriam's House focuses on housing, collaborating with the community to provide other essentials. Other organizations in Lynchburg provide food resources, career help, clothing, education, and mental health services.

"We definitely don't do what we do in a silo. We focus on housing. We always say





we want to do housing really well, and we want other organizations to do their jobs really well. So we work closely with a bunch of different nonprofits who can help,” Hardy explained.

Part of Hardy’s job as a case manager is to connect people with resources that can help them sustain their housing and rebuild their lives.

“I get to see how well we work together alongside the community. It really is an honor and a privilege, I think, and I’m grateful for the community support.”

While everyone deserves a safe place to sleep at night, Hardy said the concept of ‘home’ is bigger than that.

“The idea of home is so deeply personal and special, and I think so many of our folks have lost that. Over half of our families are fleeing domestic violence, so maybe they left a bad idea of home, and to [help] people create home again, whether that’s a good idea of home or [to] start fresh, getting to play just a small part of that is such an honor,” she shared.

The results speak for themselves. After one year, 98% of individuals assisted are no longer without a home. Hardy said the reason for the success is that homelessness is because of a lack of relationships as well as a lack of financial resources.

“A big part of my job is helping people make connections they didn’t have before. If they fall into trouble again, they know who to call or who in the community can help them before they end up homeless again.”

Housing is offered without conditions, and each client is connected with other resources needed to sustain housing and rebuild their life.

“Most of our folks never return to homelessness! They really just take on their lives.”

Miriam’s House aims to serve 100% of families without homes in Lynchburg. According to the organization’s 2023-2025 strategic plan, this can be done by connecting families with stable, affordable housing and providing the skills and support that lead to self-sufficiency.

“We want to end family homelessness, which doesn’t mean that people will never be homeless — that would be a great goal, but we’re not quite there yet. Our hope is that we would serve every family that becomes homeless, to quickly get them into housing and make homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring,” said Hardy.

Miriam’s House has been steadily increasing the number of people it can serve. Since 2012, their capacity has increased by 612%. The team is working hard to empower the community and end homelessness.

Hardy said Miriam’s House and the Lynchburg community share the goal of ending homelessness.

“Everybody has a part in it somehow. Be involved in helping our community’s most vulnerable.” GN



**“Everybody has a part in it
somehow. Be involved in
helping our community’s
most vulnerable.”**

- Alison Hardy

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?

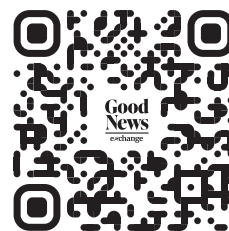
Currently, our dedicated team of magazine writers and editors is hard at work crafting stories under themes like “The Learning Curve,” “Shop Local,” and “Independence.” We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is “**Dreams Come True.**”

What we seek in Dreams Come True stories:

Do you have a neighbor who's chasing big dreams? Maybe someone is starting their own business, or a local musician is lighting up the stage? We're looking for hometown heroes making their mark. If you know someone turning dreams into reality right here in our community, we'd love to hear about it. Share their story with us!

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.

54 Community Events

56 Charity Listings

58 Advertiser Index

Submit a positive story
on our website:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Sarah Bussard

◀ Joelle England and Blair Bradsher

Church Street Bridal Prom Sale - Jan. 2024 - March 2024



Photography by Sarah Bussard

From January until the end of March, Church Street Bridal is running its prom sale event. With a variety of beautiful gowns, the shop aims to provide the community with affordable dresses for the prom season. All funds from sales will be donated to the YWCA's sexual assault and domestic violence recovery and awareness programs.



1. Joelle England 2. Blair Bradsher

Snow Days - Jan. 15-19



Photos submitted by folks in our community

In Lynchburg, snow transformed the city into a lively winter wonderland and beckoned both kids and adults outdoors to enjoy the blanket of snow and time off from school. Laughter and hot chocolate replaced lockers and homework to create a relaxing respite from routine.



INSPIRE MORE GOOD

Donate or volunteer at your
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Good News Magazine's mission is to build stronger communities through positive stories. We encourage you to donate and volunteer at local nonprofits to spread more good in your community.

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A safe place where young people are engaged to use the performing arts to ask questions, develop answers, perform with purpose, and change the world around them.

(434) 515-2103
www.welcometothelistening.org

Lynchburg Grows

Works with the community to provide access to healthy food and afford purposeful jobs to people with disabilities.

(434) 846-5665
www.lynchburggrows.org

Miriam's House

Provides solutions to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring in the Lynchburg community.

(434) 847-1101
www.miriamshouseprogram.org

Lynchburg Daily Bread

Offering meals and support to those experiencing homelessness.

(434) 845-5703
www.lynchburgdailybread.com

Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Inc.

Fighting hunger and providing food assistance to those in need.

(434) 845-4099
www.brafb.org

Amazement Square

Offering four floors of hands-on, interactive exhibits designed to make learning fun for children. Additionally, it is the only museum in Virginia to be named a Certified Autism Center.

(434) 845-1888
www.amazementsquare.org

Freedom 4/24

Aims to prevent and end sexual exploitation and trafficking locally and globally.

(434) 582-4517
www.freedom424.org

YWCA of Central Virginia

Advocating for racial justice, women's empowerment, and social change.

(434) 847-7751
www.ywcacva.org

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lynchburg

Empowering youth through programs and activities.

(434) 846-1111
www.bgclynchburg.org

Lynchburg Humane Society

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www.lynchburghumane.org



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The Learning Curve

ISSUE 3 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content..... 1/29/24
 Advertising2/29/24
 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
 Advertising4/4/24
 Mailed to Homes.....4/20/24



Where Champions are Made

ISSUE 8 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....7/1/24
 Advertising8/1/24
 Mailed to Homes.....8/17/24



Vacation in Lynchburg

ISSUE 5 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....4/2/24
 Advertising5/2/24
 Mailed to Homes..... 5/18/24



From Farm to Table

ISSUE 9 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....8/5/24
 Advertising9/5/24
 Mailed to Homes.....9/21/24



Independence

ISSUE 6 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....5/6/24
 Advertising6/6/24
 Mailed to Homes.....6/22/24



Our Heroes

ISSUE 10 2024

Deadlines

Sponsored Content.....9/3/24
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 Mailed to Homes.....10/17/24



Kevin Maples

Publishing Partner

Join us in building stronger communities through positive, local stories. Reach an engaged audience eager to support your business. It is the perfect time to plan your marketing budget wisely and set up a successful year for your business. Reserve your spot in our magazine today!

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