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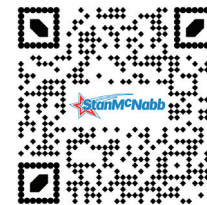
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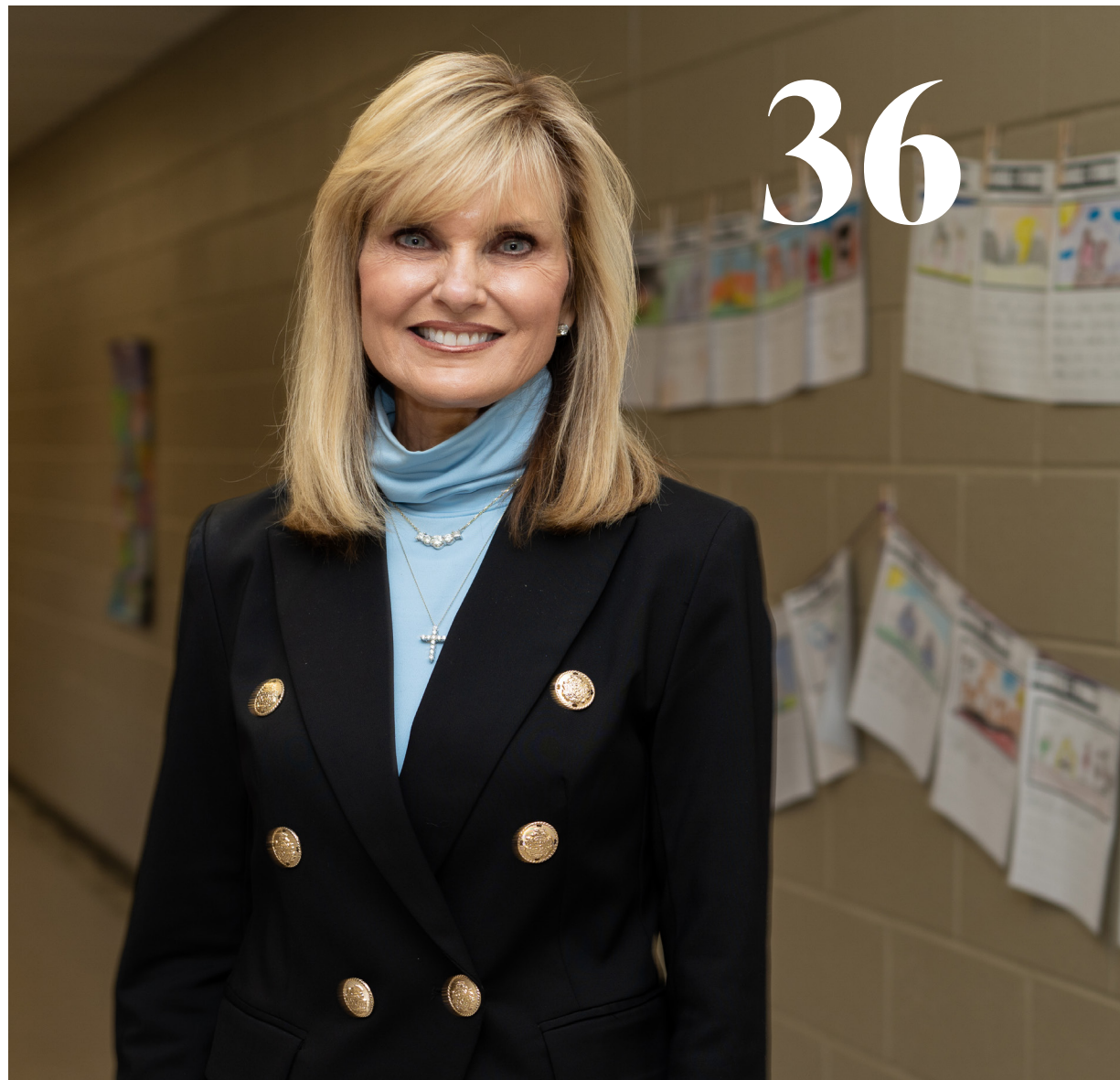
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Ahead of the Curve

The thrill of the learning curve coaster makes the ride to the future worth it.

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Like turning in a test, the scary part is over. Now all you can do is wait.

“Please raise your hands,” the conductor in uniform announces over the ride’s speaker system.

Our educators are the conductors of this exhilarating ride, guiding our children over the peaks and through the valleys with wisdom, patience, and an unwavering commitment to progress. To be “ahead of the curve” is to lead, to innovate, to blaze trails where others will follow. It’s a place where our local educators stand not just by profession but by calling. With each lesson they teach and every question they encourage, they’re not only transferring knowledge — they’re transforming the future, one curious mind at a time.

In this issue, we celebrate the torchbearers of the classroom, who keep the flame of enlightenment dancing even in the strongest winds of change. They map the topography of young minds and chart courses that will navigate them through life’s myriad complexities. These are the mentors who recognize that the steepest part of the curve is often where the most learning takes place, where character is built, and where perseverance is learned.

Thank you, educators, for every moment spent drafting the blueprint of intellect and character within the halls of learning. You are the architects who draw out the talents within our youth, nurturing not just scholars, but citizens of the world. Your classrooms are incubators for innovation, where “ahead of the curve” isn’t just a measure of academic pace, but a holistic approach to fostering leaders, thinkers, and dreamers.

With gratitude and admiration, we dedicate this issue to you — may you always lead the charge, and may your students always be inspired to stay ahead of the curve. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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**VP OF SALES** Ken Holtzinger  
**LEAD LAYOUT ARTIST** Brianna Brubaker  
**SENIOR LAYOUT ARTIST** Melissa Davis  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS** Ashleigh Newnes, Brooke Snyder  
**FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHERS** Amanda Guy, Adin Parks, Sarah Bussard, Chad Barrett, Robin Fast, Gretchen Clark  
**LEAD WRITER** Tina Neeley  
**STORY WRITER** Jeriah Brumfield  
**FREELANCE WRITERS** Amanda West, Sara Hook, Paige Cushman, Kali Bradford, Gabriel Huff, Dave Lenehan, Richard Klin  
**FOOD CRITIC** Tabitha Buckner  
**STORY COORDINATOR** Haley Potter  
**PROOFREADER** Michelle Harwell  
**JR. PROOFREADER** Kaitlin Rettig  
**LEAD PRINT AD DESIGNER** Todd Pitts  
**PRINT AD DESIGNER** Ben Adams  
**JR. LAYOUT ARTIST** Jane Morrell  
**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** Cindy Baldhoff, Faith Cashion, Amanda Cox, Kevin Hines, Mark Mahagan, Kevin Maples, Janet Mullins, Sissy Smith, Sandra Thomas

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# GOOD NEWS

## CHAPTER 1 OF 3

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

- 14** Healing hearts by herding horses
- 20** Lisa Beasley: The culinary heart of Tullahoma
- 26** From darkness to dawn

Submit a positive story on our website:



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Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Jenny Beasley Bryson, Lisa Beasley, and Amy Beasley Watson



# HEALING HEARTS

## *by herding horses*

Pharmacist by day,  
horse whisperer by night

By Amanda E. West // Photos submitted by Leanne Hale

**E**IGHT-YEAR-OLD LEANNE Hale and her sister, Gina, dreamed of owning horses. Little did Leanne know that this dream would win her championships as a horsewoman and ignite a philanthropic journey. She lives according to this John Wayne quote: "Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway."

Her love of the sport and the animal it honors are deep-seated in fond childhood memories.



Leanne Hale









“To my parents’ surprise, my sister and I were both born loving horses. I remember my father saying he would have to feed the horse after we grew tired of him. But that day never came. We taught ourselves how to ride and used to spend the night in our barn that our father built for us. I started competing in 2011 and found out I had a lot to learn. Since then, I’ve attended many riding clinics and have watched countless learning videos,” shared Leanne, highlighting that learning and evolving are constants in sportsmanship.

Born and raised in Tullahoma, Leanne’s roots run deep. Currently, she and her husband, Brent, own a small farm. Recently, they purchased a larger piece of property in Normandy so she could continue to train horses and help her beloved mustangs, a type of free-roaming horse, find forever homes.

“My husband and I both graduated from Tullahoma High School. He played on the football team and, in 1987, went to the state semifinals. On the baseball team, he was state runner-up in 1986. My father, Les Crosby, worked at the [Arnold] Air Force Base for over 30 years, and my mother, Kay, was president of the

Women’s Club. I’m a pharmacist by trade with a degree from Auburn University. I especially enjoy working with untouched mustangs, but I love all animals. We have cats, dogs, and six horses.”

Whether in the arena or out, Leanne has always loved to compete. At Tullahoma High School, she set records in the long jump category in 1984 and the high jump category in 1986. Leanne ran track and cross-country and was an avid basketball player for four years. She earned the Bob Hammers Award for Girl Athlete of the Year in 1985 and 1986.

In 2016, Leanne and her quarter horse, Jigsaw, were invited to compete in the prestigious Calgary Stampede in Alberta, Canada, which attracts millions of visitors each July. For the last 100 years, the Calgary Stampede has been known as the “greatest outdoor show on Earth.”

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“The Calgary Stampede Cowboy Up Challenge is by invitation only for the top 10 riders from all over





“I always want to share my knowledge about how I put a particular emphasis on the groundwork aspect of training a horse. I believe it’s the most important part, as it keeps the rider and the horse safer.”

-Leanne Hale

the world. So far, I’ve placed third twice, and we’ll see how I do when I return this year,” she speculated.

Leanne faced challenges during her first journey across the country. The water pump on her truck gave out in South Dakota, and on the way home to Tennessee, the transmission did the same in Wyoming. Even this couldn’t squelch her determination and the genuine love she holds for mustangs.

In 2023, Leanne competed in the Extreme Cowboy Race World Show in Glen Rose, Texas, and won first place. Countries from all over the globe attended, including Canada, Belgium, Israel, Australia, France, Italy, and Sweden. Incredibly, she’s also won several national titles, including the Reserve World Champion, which she has won five times.

“This is a timed obstacle course in which time is very important. There are 13 obstacles that are judged, and they factor time into the total score. Every course is different, and you don’t know what the obstacles will be until just before the race. They could be jumping, crossing raised bridges, roping, working cows, pole bending, crossing narrow

bridges, turns, stops, reining maneuvers, lunging, riding bareback, and even water obstacles. Almost anything goes. We’ve even had a fire jump at one of our world shows!”

To help find homes for the free-roaming horses, Leanne has also competed in the 100-Day Mustang Challenge. Participants in this competition choose an untouched wild mustang and have 100 days to train the horse before competing. Leanne placed fourth and took first place in the Lead Line Trail Challenge. The newly-trained horses are auctioned off to pre-approved bidders, guaranteeing each mustang will move on to greener pastures.

“I always want to share my knowledge about how I put a particular emphasis on the groundwork aspect of training a horse. I believe it’s the most important part, as it keeps the rider and the horse safer.” GN

*Save the date: The Extreme Mustang Makeover is coming to Middle Tennessee at Williamson County Ag Expo Park on June 22, 2024. For more information, visit [www.mustangheritagefoundation.org](http://www.mustangheritagefoundation.org).*



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# LISA BEASLEY: THE CULINARY HEART OF TULLAHOMA





## Cooking up community connections

By Haley Potter // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**I**N THE warm, sunlit kitchen of Just Like Granny's in Tullahoma, magic is made. Lisa Beasley is a symbol of Southern hospitality, her hands lovingly preparing dishes steeped in tradition and comfort. Inviting aromas of rich, savory gravies and sweet, spiced pies fill the air. The sizzle of butter in a cast-iron skillet matches the sweet melody of simmering sauces while golden cornbread rises in the oven. Every slice, dice, and stir by Beasley is made with a love that transcends her cooking, turning each meal into the warm embrace of a Southern home-cooked meal for all to enjoy.

Beasley is a mother, widow, grandmother, and a leader in her loving community. She has taken pieces of her family heritage and the deep-rooted history of

Tullahoma as inspiration to create her business.

Beasley's culinary journey began when she was 18, catering for her family and friends. Her business, nurtured by early life influences — particularly her grandmother — blossomed into a full-service catering enterprise. Just Like Granny's is distinct for its personal touch and commitment to presentation and decor. Beasley's approach is deeply personal, preferring to stay and ensure each guest's happiness rather than the typical 'drop and run' method.

The naming of Just Like Granny's was a heartfelt tribute to the woman who inspired Beasley's culinary path.

"My granny was my dad's mother and was the one that, over the years, taught me how to cook," Beasley recalled.

This connection to her grandmother's cooking is more than nostalgia; it's a standard of quality and warmth.

She shares a pivotal moment, remembering fondly the genesis of the name:

"I remember one year at Thanksgiving, my uncle Joe said, 'Your food tastes just like Granny's.' And that was about the same time my catering business was really at its busiest point, and I thought, 'Well, that's what we'll call it.'"





*“I don’t want someone to tell me what I can eat. So I’m not gonna tell someone else what they can eat.”*

**- Lisa Beasley**

That was the moment Just Like Granny’s got its precious and fitting name. As we all can attest, there is nothing quite like the nostalgia and taste of your grandmother’s home-cooked meals.

This family-oriented spirit extends beyond Just Like Granny’s. Beasley’s daughters, Jenny Bryson and Amy Watson, are successful business owners in Tullahoma. Bryson, a beauty stylist, runs The Glam Room. Watson, a nationally recognized hearing instrument specialist, owns Watson Hearing Services, operating an office in Tullahoma and a satellite office in Winchester. The entrepreneurial drive in this family is clear, as Beasley has been both a mentor and an inspiration to her daughters.



“They have also been an inspiration to me,” Beasley says with pride. “It’s been inspiring to other people, but it’s such a blessing to me as a mother to see them be able to do that.”

In addition to her culinary endeavors, Beasley is a notable figure in her community, serving on the board of the Tullahoma Sports Council and organizing its Hall of Fame banquet. Her deep community roots, commitment to family and friends, and strong work ethic, inherited from her father and grandmother, make her beloved in Tullahoma.

Beasley’s unique approach to catering — not working from a set menu but crafting

personalized culinary experiences based on clients’ visions — sets Just Like Granny’s apart.

“I like to think that my food is good. I learned to cook from a true old Southern cook and a lot of people will call and ask if I can send a copy of the menu. And I say, you know, ‘I don’t work from a menu.’ I don’t want someone to tell me what I can eat. So I’m not gonna tell someone else what they can eat.”

Beasley sits down with customers individually to hear their vision and make a unique catering menu from scratch.

“We’ve done everything from soup bars, taco bars, Italian feasts, and all kinds

of things — just about anything you can imagine we’ve done,” she explains proudly.

Beasley believes in making each event unique, turning each gathering into a memorable experience.

Just Like Granny’s is more than a catering business; it’s a reflection of Lisa Beasley’s heart and soul. Her dedication to her family, business, and community paints a story of resilience, love, and the enduring power of good food and strong family ties. Beasley and Just Like Granny’s are symbols of the warmth and neighborliness that make Tullahoma a special place to call home. **GN**

Amy Beasley Watson, ▶  
Lisa Beasley, and Jenny  
Beasley Bryson





# Share something good ♡♡



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# IMAGINE

The clock was ticking. Thursday's news began the countdown to blindness for him. If the cataract wasn't removed by Monday, the ocular pressure would kill the optic nerve, and there'd be no turning back. But there could be no surgery unless payment was guaranteed, and he didn't have the money to save his sight.

# IMAGINE

She sat patiently, waiting for them to place her in her arms. They told her the baby's hair was dark, and her eyes were blue. As she pulled the swaddled baby close, the fragrance of new life was tangible. Her new grandchild was perfect; she was sure of it, but she longed to see the sweet little nose and ten fingers and toes for herself.

# IMAGINE

A women's shelter was her safe haven, but it was time to provide for herself and return to the rhythm of life. Yet the home was more than a refuge from the man who didn't cherish her; it was where the shadows, though present, didn't scare her. Cataracts clouded her future and left little options for supporting herself. But how could she afford to have them removed without a job?

# IMAGINE

He was thankful for the verses he knew by heart but missed reading them for himself. Audiobooks were a blessing, but he longed to see the words, to open his Bible and turn its delicate pages to his favorite chapter and verse. In his mind's eye, he could see the cover, worn with age and use, drawing strength as he traced the leather's veins.





# FROM DARKNESS TO DAWN: A nonprofit's journey to restore **VISION**

By Tina Neeley  
Photos submitted by MTLSS  
and Velva Walker



# MIDDLE TENNESSEE LIONS SIGHT SERVICE

aids in the restoration of vision for the disadvantaged.

## A LONGING FULFILLED, A NEED MET

**T**HE DESPERATE man received his emergency cataract surgery on Friday, saving his sight. The grandmother saw her grandchild following the removal of her cataracts. The woman in the shelter? Yes, she, too, received the restoration of sight. And the man longing to read his Bible did just that using a low-vision machine now placed in his home.

These stories and other sight-saving services are possible thanks to Middle Tennessee Lions Sight Service (MTLSS). The organization provides financial assistance for cataract surgeries and tools for restoring sight and transforming lives. It's a combined project involving 80 Lions Clubs from Districts 12I and 12S covering 30 counties, including Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, and Lincoln.

Dianne Corlew, executive director of MTLSS, said, "Cataracts don't just affect the elderly. Cataracts affect one in six people over 40 in the United States and are the most significant cause of vision loss and the leading cause of blindness in the world. We feel cataract surgery is the best way to

aid the restoration of vision for the disadvantaged and hopefully make a dent in the leading cause of blindness."

MTLSS raises funds for its projects through local Lions Clubs and individual Lions' donations, but public and corporate funding will increase the reach of the services to those who need it most.

The annual Golf Ball Drop held in July raises funds through ticket sales. For every \$5 donation, a numbered golf ball is added to those poured out on drop day. One is drawn, and the winner receives 10% of the funds raised. Last year's event raised \$12,902. Tickets go on sale in April, and more information may be found on [MTLSS.org](http://MTLSS.org).



Cliff Swoape ▲



Danny Croley, Bill Thomison, Martha Wolf, and George Putman ▲



## KNIGHTS OF THE BLIND

Helen Keller shared at the 1925 Lions Club International Convention, “Try to imagine how you would feel if you were suddenly stricken blind today. In that dark world, wouldn’t you be glad if a friend took you by the hand and said, ‘Come with me, and I will teach you how to do some of the things you used to do when you could see?’ I appeal to you Lions, you who have your sight, your hearing, you who are strong and brave and kind. Will you not constitute yourselves Knights of the Blind in this crusade against darkness?”

The Lions accepted Keller’s challenge and continue to work globally and locally to change lives and save vision. You can help, too.

Presales are underway for a specialty Crusade Against Darkness license plate to raise additional funds and offer more services. Its design might surprise you.

“Our new license plate displays the Jolly Roger, a black flag with skull and crossbones, because pirates used the same symbol to remind their victims that things could be worse if they did not cooperate,” said Corlew. “So, too, blindness will get worse if we don’t rally together and cooperate with one another. Our new license plate will declare to the world that we at MTLSS intend to annihilate blindness, one eye at a time.”

To show your support for MTLSS with the club’s specialty plate, go to [MTLSS.org](http://MTLSS.org).

## LET THERE BE LIGHT

Providing cataract surgeries is a joint effort.

Lion Chris Ross, vice president of the MTLSS and past president of the Fayetteville Lions Club, said, “We have a great working relationship with Murfreesboro Medical Clinic and Vanderbilt University, our main surgery centers. Murfreesboro Medical Clinic ophthalmologists Dr. Frank Drowota (also a Lion), Dr. Ryan Drumright, and Dr. Brent Farmer provide their services at a reduced cost, and we pay the surgical center and anesthesia fees. We have an application process, and if they meet the requirements and aren’t insured, we’re going to take care of that person.”

All applications must be submitted through the Lions Clubs serving each applicant’s community.

For those battling the effects of macular degeneration, MTLSS offers a lifeline in the form of closed-circuit television, also known as a video magnifier. These tabletop devices enlarge text and images placed under magnifiers, displaying the items on a large screen. The invaluable tools provide a window to the world, allowing individuals to continue reading, pursuing hobbies, and maintaining independence.

MTLSS and area Lions Clubs remain committed to Keller’s charge as “Knights of the Blind in a crusade against darkness.” The unwavering dedication and selfless acts of kindness testify to the transformative power of human compassion, illuminating lives and restoring hope one vision at a time. **GN**

*To donate, apply for services, or obtain more information, visit [mtlss.org](http://mtlss.org) or call (629) 335-2757.*





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# Good Stories

## CHAPTER 2 OF 3

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

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- 40 Creating community space for STEM
- 44 Unveiling the universe

Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



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

Photography by Brooke Snyder

◀ Meghan Morris

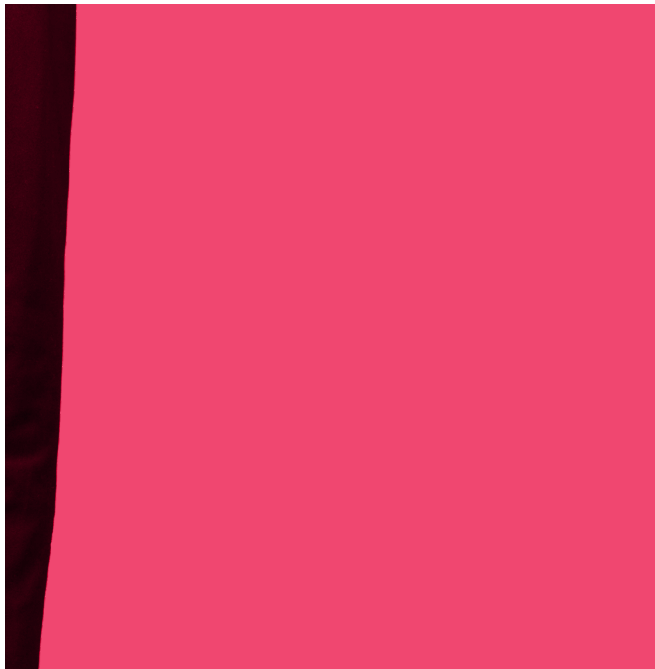




# LEARNING curve









# IGNITING THE FIRE IN OTHERS

## PRINCIPAL MARY GILBERT FOSTERS SUCCESS AT ROBERT E. LEE ELEMENTARY.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**T**ULLAHOMA HAS many remarkable teachers and administrators. Robert E. Lee Elementary helps make that statement true. Principal Mary Gilbert has worked in the school system for 41 years as a music teacher, counselor, classroom teacher, and administrator. Her work has helped the elementary school and its students thrive.

Robert E. Lee Elementary was honored as one of Tullahoma's Finest Elementary Schools, one of America's Healthiest Schools, and a Purple Star School. Gilbert said the success is because of the staff, students, district, families, and the community.

"It takes a collective effort from the community, CEO business partners with the chamber of commerce, community reading

buddies, parents, and educators to provide the best possible education to our students. With the support of our community, we can continue to challenge our students today and help them realize their full potential for a limitless tomorrow."

It would not have been possible without Gilbert's experience and hard work. Gilbert discovered a passion for teaching while studying pre-law and graduated with a bachelor's in music education. She earned her master's in curriculum and instruction and an education specialist degree in administration and supervision. She also became a certified school counselor.

In the decades since, she has worked in Knox County, the city of Manchester, and all four of Tullahoma's elementary schools.





Mary Gilbert

“As I have faced both successes and challenges throughout my career, I have learned to trust in God’s plan and to use every experience as an opportunity for growth,” Gilbert said.

In her quest to grow as an educator, she has been a part of the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, the TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement, and the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network.

“You never, ever stop learning,” Gilbert said. “You can always learn something, grow, improve, and look at ways to work smarter, not harder, and look at ways to give our children the very best.”

Gilbert has spread her message across Tennessee through state and national

66

**Our children need us; they are the future, and we’re very blessed to be able to serve them and be called educators.**

– Mary Gilbert



conferences. In addition to learning, she has presented and trained at the Innovative Schools Summit, the Music City Social Emotional Learning Conference, the TN School Counselor and Administrator Leadership Institute, the TN Coordinated School Health Conference, the TN School Counselors Conference, the Trauma Informed Educators Network, the Power of Engagement Summit, and Future Ready Schools webinars.

Her focus has been on social-emotional learning.

“That’s probably the most impactful, is really sharing what we’re doing at our school. Talking about our everyday practices and how they unfold throughout each day, and what it looks like at the various grade levels, K-5.”

Robert E. Lee Elementary has implemented “Harmony Meet Up and Buddy Up.” Students meet at the beginning of the school day to share and connect with others before splitting into pairs for collaboration time with their buddy. Robert E. Lee Elementary fifth graders are also given extra responsibilities as mentors. Fifth graders greet their kindergarten buddies in the morning, walk with them, read with them, and participate in various educational activities.

The result, Gilbert said, is that students are eager to be at school, wary of being late, and motivated to get assignments completed early. Educators across different grade levels have reported improvement in their students’ attitudes and sense of belonging. Fifth graders have seen fewer peer conflicts, tardies, and absences.

“Now there’s this ‘buddy up’ system in place, there’s the accountability. We’re seeing a lot of positives with improved academics as we are providing opportunities to better meet the social-emotional needs of each child.”

The teachers and administrators at Robert E. Lee Elementary work hard to create a positive, welcoming, and safe learning environment. As a principal, Gilbert said she recognizes the educator’s critical role in a child’s life. She is committed to supporting her teachers and staff through each day’s unique challenges and collaborating effectively with the students, their families, and school staff.



▲ Sandy Klonaris, Mary Gilbert, Abby, Khloe, Cara, Haven, Jiya, and Peyton

“We have a lot of rockstar teachers that are amazing, and our children need us now more than ever. They look up to us to set an example, provide support so they can turn their dreams into realities, believe in their potential to succeed, advocate for them, have high expectations which they can strive to achieve, and instill a growth mindset.”

Although she has been working for 41 years, Gilbert said she loves her job and believes in the work ahead of her. When she decides to retire, she wants to leave a legacy as someone who treated her students like they were her own.

“[I] want to be remembered as someone who really cared, someone who inspired, someone who is passionate but willing to do whatever it took to really look beyond and move our students forward. I hope I can be remembered as a shining light that positively inspired others and ignited the fire in others to keep it going because education is important work. Our children need us; they are the future, and we’re very blessed to be able to serve them and be called educators.” GN







# CREATING COMMUNITY SPACE FOR STEM

## A JOURNEY FROM CHILDHOOD CURIOSITY TO COSMIC CONQUESTS.

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Brooke Snyder and  
submitted by Gary Flandro and Laura Horton

**D**R. GARY Flandro's father drove him to an observatory to see the moon as a young boy. When he was six, his mother gave him the book "Wonders of the Heavens." He read it from cover to cover. These introductions to STEM at an early age created an insatiable thirst, propelling him toward a lifetime of studying the cosmos.

"As a youngster, I was interested in anything having to do with airplanes, space flight, robots, and astronomy. I built model airplanes starting at age 8 and have never stopped. I constructed a small telescope in 1941. The glider developments that started in Germany after World War I fascinated me, and, of course, was fascinated by the rocket developments by Dr. Werner von Braun during World War II. It was natural for me to seek educational resources in science and engineering later. At first, I wanted to be an airplane pilot, then an astronomer, then an archeologist, and later a rocket scientist. In one

way or another, I have succeeded in achieving these dreams," said Dr. Flandro.

Born March 30, 1934, in Salt Lake City, Utah, Dr. Flandro is a world-renowned American aerospace engineer and scientist who has lived in Tullahoma since 1991. He held the Boling Chair of Excellence in Space Propulsion at the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI) until his retirement. He is also a co-owner and chief engineer for Gloyer-Taylor Laboratories in Tullahoma. Dr. Flandro previously served as the department chairman of engineering at Southern Utah University. He was a professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Utah until he moved to the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Flandro holds a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from the University of Utah and a master's. Additionally, he holds a doctorate in aeronautics from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech).





**Dr. Gary Flandro**



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**Never let other people discourage you from working on your own ideas and goals.**

– Dr. Gary Flandro

In the summer of 1964, while working at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, he was assigned to study techniques for exploring the outer planets of the solar system (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune). Dr. Flandro made a remarkable discovery during his study, finding that using the “gravity assist” technique would reduce the duration of a mission to these outer planets from 40 years to less than 10.

When Voyager I and Voyager II were launched in 1977 and named the “Grand Tour Mission,” NASA used Dr. Flandro’s discovery to its advantage, awarding him the NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal in 1998. Inspired by the Voyager successes, the 1989 Galileo Jupiter orbiter, the 1997 Cassini Saturn orbiter, and the 2006 New Horizons mission that arrived on Pluto in 2015 became possible thanks to Dr. Flandro’s earlier work.

Over the years, Dr. Flandro has held many distinguished titles, such as being named a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in 2008. He has authored and co-authored books, spoke at technical meetings, and conducted engineering short courses for UTSI. His alma mater, Caltech, awarded him the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2018. In October 2023, UTSI received a gracious donation of 13 historically unique model airplanes built by Dr. Flandro, and in turn, honored him for his lifetime of contributions.



When asked about his accomplishments and how others can achieve their dreams, Dr. Flandro said, “Study the accomplishments of individuals you admire — study the manner by which these persons succeeded in achieving their goals. Don’t hesitate to ask for help from others that you can identify as role models. Look for educational programs that have a natural appeal to you. Never allow others to discourage you from developing your own ideas and goals.”

Dr. Flandro believes that STEM programs are vital for students and fuel a lifetime of learning.

“My own history is an example of why the STEM program is a vital key to the educational goals of the United States of America.”





He also credits his mother for keeping him focused on the future.

“My life is an example of what a poor fellow from Utah can achieve by hard work and determination.”

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the U.S. National Science Foundation created the acronym for STEM in 2001, stressing the links between prosperity and “knowledge-intensive jobs,” such as those in STEM. Arnold Engineering Development Complex has partnered with the Hands-On Science Center in Tullahoma to provide interactive programs for homeschoolers, teachers, and local students. **GN**

*To learn more about local STEM programs, visit [www.arnold.af.mil/About-Us/STEM/](http://www.arnold.af.mil/About-Us/STEM/)*





# UNVEILING THE UNIVERSE

## STEM INITIATIVES INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION.

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**T**EN YEARS ago, Franklin County native Meghan Morris began her first day of work in the dining hall of the University of Tennessee Space Institute (UTSI). After earning an associate degree, she began working under the executive administrative assistant. Then Morris obtained her bachelor's in human services, her boss retired, and she stepped seamlessly into the position.

Two years ago, her role changed when she became the communication and marketing special events coordinator for UTSI. In this position, Morris landed her dream job. She can cater to the community and encourage an early love for learning by visiting local schools with a mobile planetarium. She ignites minds by hosting STEM competitions, where wide-eyed students launch homemade water rockets. She also offers tours to prospective high schoolers, government officials, and industrial visitors.

“We offer a variety of STEM activities, including hobby rocket and water rocket building, hands-on STEM crafts, mechanical engineering building sets, Van de Graaff demonstrations, and a mobile planetarium,” said Morris.

“UTSI's mission is to provide education and research that benefits the people of Tennessee and promotes the economic growth and well-being of our region. Our STEM outreach is directly tied to that objective as we try to







Meghan Morris



support our local school systems in the preparation and inspiration of kids who will eventually play a vital role in science-and-technology-related careers — hopefully in our area — that contribute to both their individual and our region’s economic security.”

During the summer, UTSI offers weeklong STEM day camps for eighth through 11th graders, funded by the Office of Naval Research. According to Morris, participants learn rocketry, hypersonics, additive manufacturing, artificial intelligence, 3D printing exercises, wind tunnel exercises, and take part in a paper airplane challenge.

Throughout the week, campers receive instruction from students enrolled at UTSI and Alabama A&M University, and on the final two days of the camp, go on field trips to tour the campuses of their instructors.

UTSI, with the help of Morris, also hosts two days of professional development for local junior and high school teachers. The focus is on STEM activities easily implemented in classrooms. These personal development classes focus on hypersonics and rocketry, the importance of aerospace and defense in our community, and offer grant writing resources, guest speakers, and tours. There are also panel discussions with current graduate students, all funded by the Office of Naval Research.

“For students studying undergraduate degrees in engineering and relevant science majors, we also offer a summer internship program that has drawn students from all over the country. It’s very competitive. We have around 200 applications annually, and approximately 25 positions, but we try to ensure that qualified local students who can commute from home and not take a place in our dorms have a chance to participate first.”

Teachers in and around Coffee County can take advantage of these wonderful programs offered by Morris, including the mobile planetarium geared toward elementary students. As a single mother of two, Morris believes that hands-on activities, such as those offered through their partnership with the Hands-On Science Center, are a great way to immerse children in STEM naturally and nourish a love for learning that continues into adulthood.

“STEM is important because it is such a huge and growing field, and it’s only going to continue to grow and change. These kids need this kind of exposure so they can see all the awesome possibilities of careers in the STEM field, and the exposure needs to start when

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**Being a part of an organization that encourages community involvement to educate young minds is priceless.**

– Meghan Morris

they are young. Developing and supporting great STEM education gives back to the community in terms of drawing high-paying technology-intensive industries. When those types of jobs are created, they also bring the additional benefits of supporting jobs in the supply chain and services.”

Morris also schedules an annual Star Party each fall on the campus of UTSI, which is free and open to the public.

“We open the observatory to view the starry sky and any other celestial bodies visible. We have STEM activities set up in the lobby, movies playing in the auditorium, and provide refreshments. This is always a favorite for the community.”

Morris is thankful to be able to touch lives through STEM.

“Working for UTSI has truly changed my life and given me opportunities to grow professionally. I never thought I’d be working with such brilliant people or working with the community like I do. In my opinion, I have the most fun and rewarding job here. Being a part of an organization that encourages community involvement to educate young minds is priceless.” GN

*For more information, visit [www.utsi.edu](http://www.utsi.edu).*







education that comes with celebrating Dairy as father Steve, his and his wife Kara family started dairy when they moved to Tennessee. It's a way to get behind the scenes, in agriculture. It's a way to get on many people's minds. High-energy, high-producing farmers do a lot of work in terms of raising and caring for cattle, being on the road, and wearing safety gear. It goes into dairy farming. The Nash family started in 2020. "We'd al-



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- 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 “Shop Local,” “Independence,” and “Dreams Come True.” We are excited to announce the next theme needing story submissions is **“Where Champions are Made.”**

### **What we seek in Where Champions are Made stories:**

We are looking for local athletes with inspiring stories. Do you have a family member or friend who shines on the court or field? We want to tell your story! Our next sports issue will include players, coaches, and those who lift our athletes to new heights.

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

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











# GoodTimes

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

Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

◀ Gerald and Marcia Melton



# Tullahoma Chamber - Feb. 2



Photography by Brooke Snyder

The Tullahoma Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Membership Celebration. Tullahoma packed the house for great food and even better company. Awards were given to nine deserving candidates for the year of 2023.



1. Emilie Sisk and Georges Martin 2. Dr. Catherine Stephens  
3. Amanda Nauman and Morgan Hasty 4. Katie Anderson, Katy Riddle, Tisha Fritz, and Hope Nunley



# 'Something Rotten' - The Musical - Feb. 17



Photography by Ashleigh Newnes

On Saturday, Feb. 17, Tullahoma residents enjoyed watching the cast of the musical "Something Rotten" at South Jackson Performing Arts Center.



1. Rosemary Crabtree 2. Haley and Greg Ray 3. Paris Putnam, Anna Brockman, Skyle Wannamaker, and Robin Keel  
4. Erica Petersen and Alex Baldwin 5. Robin Throneberry and Samuel Walker 6. Danny Carpenter, Beth Thames, and Evelyn Champion



# INSPIRE MORE GOOD

Donate or volunteer at your local charities and nonprofits.

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.

## **Tulahoma Fine Arts Center**

Promoting arts and culture, offering classes, exhibitions, and performances.

(931) 455-1234  
[www.tulahomaart.org](http://www.tulahomaart.org)

## **Come To The Table Inc.**

Addressing food insecurity as a faith-based nonprofit by providing free hot meals on Tuesdays.

[info@cometothetabletn.org](mailto:info@cometothetabletn.org)  
[www.cometothetabletn.org](http://www.cometothetabletn.org)

## **Coffee County Meals on Wheels**

Delivers nutritious meals to homebound seniors. Volunteers play a crucial role.

<https://www.schra.us/services/elderly-resources>

## **Tulahoma Animal Shelter**

Rescuing and caring for animals, promoting pet adoption and responsible pet ownership.

(931) 454-9580  
[www.tulahoma.petfinder.com](http://www.tulahoma.petfinder.com)

## **United Way of Highway 55**

Supporting various local causes, and collaborating with other nonprofits.

(931) 455-5678  
[www.highway55unitedway.org](http://www.highway55unitedway.org)

## **Highland Rim Habitat for Humanity**

Serving alongside community members and businesses to build affordable homes for eligible families.

(931) 393-2383  
[www.hrhhf.org](http://www.hrhhf.org)

## **Hands-On Science Center Inc.**

Engaging children in science and technology, offering interactive exhibits and workshops.

(931) 455-8387  
[www.hosc.org](http://www.hosc.org)

## **Coffee County Humane Society**

Promoting the public interest in the general welfare and humane treatment of animals to prevent suffering, neglect, and abuse.

(931) 728-0903  
[www.coffeehumane.org](http://www.coffeehumane.org)

## **Tulahoma Soccer Association Inc.**

Promoting soccer and sportsmanship by organizing leagues and tournaments.

[tsaboard@tulahomasoccer.org](mailto:tsaboard@tulahomasoccer.org)  
[www.tulahomasoccer.org](http://www.tulahomasoccer.org)

## **Partners for Healing**

Providing free primary health care to low-income individuals, who are working but uninsured.

(931) 455-5014  
[www.partnersforhealing.org](http://www.partnersforhealing.org)





### **Coffee County Children's Advocacy Center**

Providing support and resources for children who have experienced abuse or trauma, working closely with law enforcement and other agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

(931) 723-8888  
[www.coffeecountycac.org](http://www.coffeecountycac.org)

### **Good Samaritan of Tullahoma**

Providing a way for churches of all denominations, local businesses, and citizens to work together to have a centralized location to provide assistance to those in need or in crisis situations.

(931) 455-7353  
[www.goodsamaritanoftullahoma.org](http://www.goodsamaritanoftullahoma.org)

See more options or  
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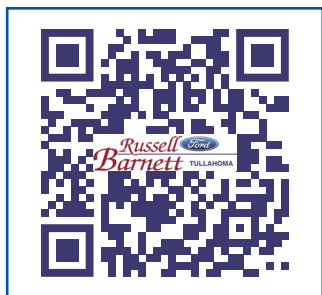


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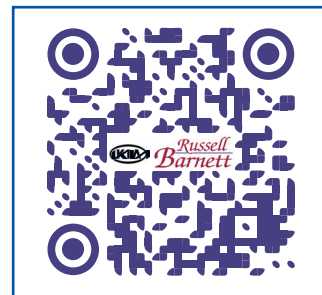
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