

Good News

exchange

Hiroko Holland

**A JOURNEY OF
STRENGTH,
CONFIDENCE,
& COMMUNITY**



**Teaching
Beyond the
Classroom**

Filling needs
and fostering
friendships

LEARNING
curve

ISSUE 3 2024

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good
look



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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.

THE METAL beams *tick, tick, tick* with every inch the cart climbs to the top of the hill. The experienced thrill-seekers in the front cart raise their hands as the coaster inches toward the climax of the ride. Experienced or not, every heart on the ride starts beating faster. *Click.* And the cart takes a dive. The winds move fast, but your stomach drops faster. The speed reaches new levels, then slows with a squeaking halt. The heart rate may still be elevated, but it will come down in due time. The curve may be scary, but mastering it is worth it.

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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GN
MAGAZINE



GOOD NEWS

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
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Photography by Steve Zak

◀ Tressa Sanders



Chamber
MEMBER
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SUITE 1

Mail

Being the Bridge

Volunteer drivers connect local seniors back to their community

By Sara Hook // Photography by Steve Zak

FOR MANY aging adults, losing the ability to drive means becoming isolated from friends and community. It can be challenging to get out of the house regularly when you have to arrange for rides each time or wait for out-of-town family to visit. This issue was identified by Community Life Bridge, and in 2019, thenonprofit set out to fix it in Hendersonville, Gallatin, and all of Sumner County.

Community Life Bridge is a local nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality of life of mature adults in the community. When the organization was formed in 2014, the board researched what unmet needs existed in the Hendersonville community. The director of programs, Christine Martin, said one of those needs was affordable and accessible rides, so the Community Life Ride program was launched in 2019.

“They were looking for needs as far as affordable and accessible — not just having a resource, but having one that our mature adults truly can access,” Martin said. “We started in Hendersonville — one part of the county. Since then, we’ve grown to four other parts of the county, and we have about 100 riders.”

Unlike most transportation programs, riders in Community Life Ride get a one-on-one ride to any location in Sumner County. It could be a doctor’s appointment, grocery run, nail appointment, or meeting friends. With three levels of care, riders can choose whether or not their driver remains with them throughout their trip.

“They don’t just drop you off,” Martin said. “That allows... that relationship, and that trust, and that reliability within the program.”

“We can be a lot of things, but everybody can be kind, and it’s just a way of giving back.”

-Debbie Wilmore

Anyone over 60 can get involved as a rider, with a membership fee of \$25 a year plus \$6 per ride. For many, the ride is the least they get from the program. Betty Callis, who has been with the program since 2019, said she has become friends with many people who have driven her.

“When you get in their car, it’s like you’re going with one of your best friends,” Callis said. “I kind of think they feel like that, too, because we laugh and cut up.”

Those friends have invited her to church, plays, and events — rides that aren’t scheduled but offered. Community Life Ride occasionally organizes events for the riders to meet each other.

“They become your friends, and I really appreciate that cause I love people,” Callis said. “It’s just saving my life, and I thank God for them every day.”

In 2023, Community Life Ride gave, on average, 71 rides per week, making nearly 3,700 in the year. While the program staff filled in gaps as needed, 97 % of those rides were given by volunteers. Anyone can be a driver, as long as they are older than 21 and they all use their own vehicles. While the program requests that each driver give at least two rides a month, Martin said they can choose those rides that fit into their schedule.

“Our average volunteer is probably early retirees, but we have stay-at-home

moms, those who work other jobs, flexible-type jobs, all kinds of different demographics,” Martin said.

As a driver, Debbie Wilmore said volunteering was an encouragement and a joy. She has been with the program since it began in 2019 and has become friends with many of those she has driven.

“I always feel like I get more from them than I give them,” Wilmore said. “It’s not just providing a ride to a destination. We do become good friends, check up on each other occasionally, and just enjoy each other’s company.”

Wilmore joined the program because she enjoyed being around people, which was an excellent way to serve her community.

“We can be a lot of things, but everybody can be kind, and it’s just a way of giving back,” Wilmore said. “Because there’ll come a day not too far in the future that I may be a rider and no longer a driver.”

Community Life Ride has about 65 regular drivers but a waiting list for riders. As the program gains more volunteers, it will be able to serve more of the community.

“We definitely have a continuous flow of interest in being a rider in our program, but the volunteer aspect is where we have the opportunity to just continue to grow and grow and grow,” Martin said. “We will probably never not need volunteers.” GN



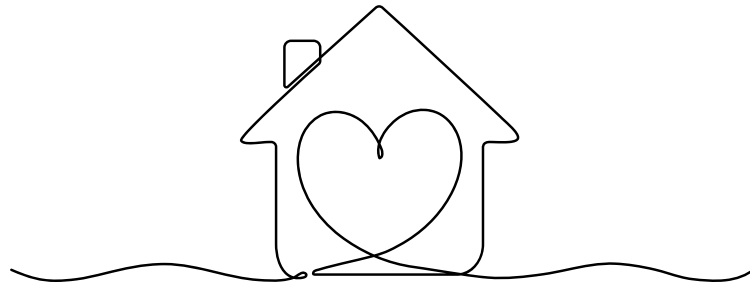
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You've got a friend in me

Local company helps disabled veteran

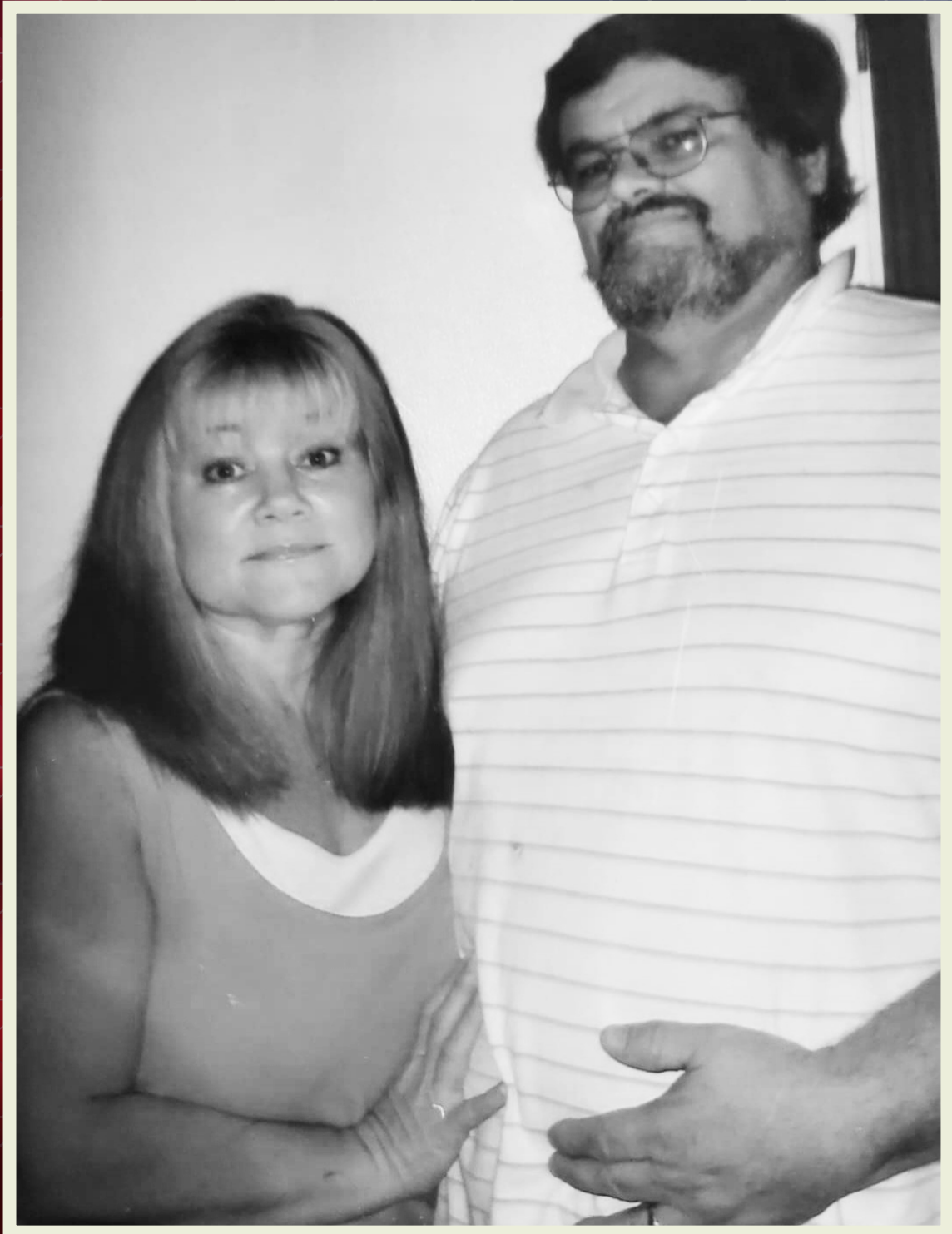
By Amanda E. West // Photos submitted by Fred and Debi Arend

WHEN MUTUAL friends set Debi up with Fred Arend on a blind date almost two decades ago, it was love at first sight. The two were always inseparable, so what Fred did, Debi often did, too. But they never imagined this would mean tragedy could strike them both. In fact, according to a nurse at the hospital where they were both admitted, she'd never seen or heard of something similar ever taking place.

As a retired Navy chief with a ranking of E7, Fred hailed from Washington state. At the time they met, Debi lived in Georgia, so after they tied the knot, they moved several times before finally settling in the mountains of Oregon. Their last move would bring them to Hendersonville, where they purchased a home, allowing Debi to live closer to her son, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. For a moment, her "mama heart" was full.

"I was really missing my family, my son, David, and my daughter, Staci. I have four grandkids and six great-grandkids, and I miss them terribly. My son convinced me to move near him. He said, 'Mama, I won't move away. My kids are growing up and will graduate soon.' Well, I was missing all of it. But shortly after Fred and I settled in Hendersonville, it wasn't but a few months, and my son had to move to South Alabama because of his job."

Before they married in 2004, Fred had been working at Mount Rainier National Park, but shortly after their marriage, a trip to the doctor showed that by the Navy's standards, he was 30% disabled. By 2007, he was considered 100% disabled due to injuries he suffered while in the service. Tragedy struck in July 2023 when Fred suffered a heart attack, followed by a quadruple bypass in August. After serving as Fred's



Fred and Debi Arend



"I was really amazed at the size of the crew they brought. All the guys were just awesome and so considerate. They even picked out my new bathroom flooring. It was all just so incredible. They were very knowledgeable, and I knew my home was in excellent hands."

-Debi Arend

caregiver since they were married, Debi's heart literally broke. She suffered a heart attack in October, requiring four stents. One week before her attack, her daughter, Staci, along with her husband, Chris, had moved to be near her.

"They actually moved here from Texas to help me figure out what to do with my husband after his heart attack. They got here one week before mine hit. So, it couldn't have been any better. The Lord knew what He was doing. He already had it all under control."

While Fred and Debi were both hospitalized, a compassionate neighbor noted that the couple's "honey-do list" was falling behind because of Fred's long-term health situation. They reached out to Mr. Handyman, who completed repairs estimated at \$50,000.

"We were made aware of Mr. Arend's situation by a personal friend and employee of the Hendersonville Chamber of Commerce," said John Gentry from Mr. Handyman/Mr. Rooter. "This was a special project. We try to do one every

year. The owners of Mr. Handyman and Servair, and their immediate field staff, were responsible for the physical work and donated products. At the Arend's job, we concentrated on the most crucial issues: the rotted bathroom floor, leaning backyard fence, fallen gutters, and general yard clean-up. Our company was honored to be able, in some way, to help one of our disabled service members.

"We are a Hendersonville locally owned business serving Sumner, Robertson, Wilson, Cheatham, and portions of Davidson counties," said Gentry. "We are a contractor specializing in small to large repairs to homes and businesses. Because our techs are multi-talented in their skills, our team can do a job where it would take several outside contractors, thus saving our customers fees in most cases. We also owe a special thanks to Good Honest Mechanic. We couldn't have done this without them."

It still amazes Debi when she thinks back to when the trucks and a maid service showed up to revitalize the Arend home.

"I was really amazed at the size of the crew they brought. All the guys were just awesome and so considerate. They even picked out my new bathroom flooring. It was all just so incredible. They were very knowledgeable, and I knew my home was in excellent hands."

Sadly, Fred hasn't been well enough to return home. For two decades, he served in our naval forces, which led to his disability, and now we have a chance to repay a small portion of our debt to him just as Mr. Handyman and their subsidiaries, Servair and Mr. Rooter, did. **GN**

For more information on Mr. Handyman, go to www.mrhandyman.com.



Send cards to:
Fred Arend
C/O Tennessee Valley Veterans Home
345 Compton Rd.
Room #29 West
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Cultivating a *love* of learning

Tressa Sanders ignites the young minds of Jack Anderson Elementary School

By Amanda E. West
Photography by Steve Zak

IN THE bustling corridors of Jack Anderson Elementary (JAE), where young minds tinker, question, and dream, you'll discover a guiding star — Principal Tressa Sanders. Sanders sparks curiosity, cultivates wonder, and ignites a passion in young minds for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

As a child, Sanders dreamed of being a teacher and would often

line her dolls or stuffed animals along the wall and pretend they were her students. She even begged friends to play “school” with her. After she enrolled in college as a pre-pharmacy major, the pull toward education won her back. Now, she’s been an educator for 27 years.

Throughout those years, Sanders has taught second, fourth, fifth, and eighth grades. She’s been an instructional coach and an assistant principal. And since 2017, she’s been the principal of JAE. Sanders has also served on the Tennessee STEM Leadership Committee and was a member of the Governor’s Academy of School Leaders.



"They are my family. I know that sounds cliché, but there is nothing we wouldn't do for each other or our students."

- Tressa Sanders

According to the Tennessee According to the Tennessee Innovation Network, there are currently 26 schools within our state that are designated as STEM Schools, and JAE is one of them.

“I continually collaborate with leaders in Sumner County on various committees and teams to enhance learning opportunities. At JAE, we try to create unique STEM experiences for our students to give them opportunities they might not ordinarily have. We have a mini-farm with chickens and goats. Everyone loves to see the goats peeping in the hallway doors. Our farm club meets twice per week, and families volunteer on the farm during weekends and over breaks.

We have a rose and learning garden, a greenhouse, and multiple grade-level garden beds around campus. Our garden club meets multiple times per week to oversee the greenhouse and main garden. Students learn to create code, use robotics, drones, virtual reality headsets, and create designs using the 3D or laser printers. We are always searching for ways to improve our program and appeal to students’ interests,” explained Sanders.

Sanders surrounds herself with educators; her husband of 25 years, Clay, is also a teacher. Fellow educators introduced the two while Clay was teaching kindergarten at Beech Elementary and Tressa was teaching fourth grade at Nashville Christian School. Their oldest son, Caid, is a junior at Tusculum University, and their daughter, Kylie, is in her sophomore year at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Whitten, their youngest son, is a student at JAE.



"I want them to know they can do anything - or be anything - because they can achieve it, not because they deserve it. I want them to be problem-solvers and show perseverance and determination."

- Tressa Sanders

"Being able to work alongside my children's teachers and watch my own children thrive in Sumner County elementary sministrator, has been the greatest gift. My son is a student at my school. I feel like that is a testament to wanting the best opportunities for students. I want the best for my own child, and I want the best for all kids!"

Tressa believes that as a teacher, there is nothing more rewarding than having the opportunity to impact hundreds of lives positively. For her, this has come full circle now that she serves alongside one of her former fifth-grade students who now teaches at JAE.

In life, we learn that the 17th-century poet John Donne was right when he wrote, "No man is an island." Each of us climbs the ladder of success, supported on the rungs by those who encouraged and sacrificed for us. Tressa credits her achievements to her loving husband and parents who support her no matter what, along with fellow educators who continually challenge her to be a better version of herself.

"The staff at JAE is what makes it so unique. I've never worked anywhere quite like it, and I've worked in some amazing places. They are my family. I know that sounds cliché, but there is nothing we wouldn't do for each other or our students. There is a sense of joy at JAE, even when things are hard. The way the teachers show up for kids and for each other is extraordinary. All of you are my superheroes and the people I admire most."

To her students, Tressa said, "I want my students to have a sense of agency over entitlement. I want them to know they can do anything — or be anything — because they can achieve it, not because they deserve it. I want them to be problem-solvers and show perseverance and determination. I hope I inspire each of you to believe in yourselves and to know there is nothing you can't do." **GN**

FUEL

FOR FOCUS



UNLEASH POTENTIAL IN EVERY BITE

RISE AND shine to breakfasts that fuel minds and bodies alike! Celebrate the power of wholesome, delicious meals to kickstart learning and energize young students. We'll dish up recipes packed with nutrients and flavor, designed to nourish brains, boost focus, and set the stage for successful days. Get ready to explore the incredible connection between good food and great education, one bite at a time! **GN**



Yogurt Parfait

Submitted by Rosina Eicher

1 pkg. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened
1/2 c. powdered sugar
1 box white chocolate pudding mix, 4 oz.
1 c. milk
32 oz. plain yogurt
1 tub whipped topping, 8 oz.
fresh fruit, strawberries, blueberries, etc.
granola, desired amount

In a bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar. Add pudding and milk; mix well. Add yogurt and whipped topping. Layer with fresh fruit and granola in individual clear cups or in 9x13" pan.

Breakfast Pizza

Submitted by Freddie Stewart

1 pkg. crescent rolls, 8 oz.
1 lb. sausage, cooked, crumbled, drained
6 eggs, beaten
1/4 c. milk
2 c. Cheddar cheese, shredded
salt to taste
pepper to taste

Line a pizza pan with crescent rolls. Sprinkle sausage on the dough. In a small mixing bowl, combine eggs and milk. Pour on top of sausage. Top with cheese. Add salt and pepper. Bake at 400° for 18-20 minutes.

Orange Smoothie

Submitted by Mary Mastin

1 c. plain or vanilla yogurt
1/2 c. orange juice
2 T. honey
1 c. fresh fruit, sliced
1/2 c. crushed ice

Place yogurt in a blender. Add orange juice, honey, fruit, and ice. Blend until mixture is smooth. Pour into a tall glass garnished with an orange slice and serve.

*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.

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Our stories are based on submissions from local people.

Submit yours here:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Steve Zak

◀ Janet Ivey-Duensing

HIROKO HOLLAND

A JOURNEY OF STRENGTH, CONFIDENCE, AND COMMUNITY

By Haley Potter // Photography by Steve Zak

“**S**TEP, STEP, and kick,” Hiroko Holland commands her students, her voice resonating across the studio. “Excellent form, now let’s do it again.”

Holland, a former Japanese educator and current martial arts instructor, is not just teaching self-defense; she’s creating a community of empowered individuals. Her journey from a newcomer in the U.S. to the head instructor of Universal Kempo Karate Schools Hendersonville Branch is a prime example of her resilience and dedication to helping others find their strength, both inside and out.

Holland’s journey into martial arts began as a quest for personal safety.

“I actually started this journey taking a women’s self-defense class and then got

myself into it,” she shared.

But it quickly developed into something much deeper — a path to self-awareness and growth.

“How do you be a good human and how to become a better person, as an individual, and grow as a person,” Holland emphasized, revealing her holistic approach to martial arts.

Holland’s teachings are particularly impactful for women and children, who may be more vulnerable in unsafe situations.

“It is so important for females ... knowing that, yes, I can even get away from that bad situation if I want to,” she explained. “That gives you confidence.”

Her classes offer more than just physical training; they are a journey towards self-reliance and empowerment. Confidence is paramount, according to Holland, who



Hiroko Holland

radiates confidence and power herself.

One of Holland's greatest joys is witnessing the personal growth of her students.

"The most important thing for me is being able to witness somebody's personal growth," she said with pride.

The ultimate reward is the transformation she observes — particularly in children going from shy, withdrawn individuals to confident, assertive ones.

"It brings me so much happiness and reminds me of why I do what I do," she said, tears flooding her eyes and gratitude filling her voice.

"I want to give people a safe place to build confidence and strength. I received so much of that from my family and teachers growing up, so it is now my turn to give," she expressed.

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You're always competing with yourself. That is your biggest competitor. Better yourself with each step.

– Hiroko Holland

Holland's impact extends beyond her studio. Her engagement through activities like food drives, clothing drives, and disaster support highlights her commitment to giving back to the community she loves to call home.

"I love the community," she said. "I love being part of it and helping the people who live here in Hendersonville."

The sense of community is nurtured by her family-oriented classes, creating an inclusive and supportive environment.

Holland's teachings stretch far beyond martial arts and self-defense. Her unique background as a teacher in Japan and her understanding of child development mesh together seamlessly with her martial arts instruction.

"We're more than kicking and punching," she acknowledged.

This approach sets her apart, providing a nurturing and holistic environment for teaching. Holland is a mother and feels she has learned so much from the experience.

"Being a mom just teaches you so much about raising kids and dealing with kids, and I'm such a better person because of that, so I can really connect with other moms and parents in general," she said. "I want the best for my kids and for theirs, too, and that is what I am here for."

For Holland, her studio is more than a place for martial arts; it's a sanctuary for personal development.

"I 'want to' provide a safe place for people to belong and grow up together and be better together," she stated passionately.

Her philosophy of constant self-improvement resonates throughout her teachings. Holland's approach is grounded in empathy and understanding, making her loved by her students.

"You're always competing with yourself," she said. "That is your biggest competitor. Better yourself with each step. Make yourself better than a moment before."

This idea of "self-improvement over competition" defines her teaching style. Holland has become a role model for many others who have followed her lead, and it fills her with pride.

Hiroko Holland's story is one of transformation and empowerment. From her humble beginnings in Japan to becoming a symbol of strength and community in Hendersonville, she embodies the spirit of a true martial artist — one who seeks to better not only themselves, but those around them. Her journey and teachings inspire confidence and self-awareness, making her a powerful woman and a remarkable teacher. **GN**





THE POWER OF AFFIRMATION

HOW ONE TEACHER IS CHANGING THE PLANET

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Steve Zak

“**S**CIENCE ISN'T just for the boys, Janet. It's for the girls, too.” This simple statement made in 1978 by fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Ernestine Yarborough forever changed the trajectory of Janet Ivey-Duensing's life.

Referring to Yarborough, Ivey-Duensing said, “She stoked the fires of my dreams with her affirmations. On different occasions, she told me, ‘What a brilliant writer you are!’ or, ‘What an extraordinary thinker you are! You could become a scientist, or an artist, or perhaps both!’”

When it came to science, Mrs. Yarborough encouraged students to incorporate it into everything, including their spelling words. The teacher brought a telescope to the playground on a fall evening when Ivey-Duensing was 10 years old, and she gazed at the stars and planets for the first time.

“I can honestly say it was in Mrs. Yarborough's classroom that I fell head over heels for

the solar system, the stars, and all the planets. I hold steadfastly to the belief that the seeds of my life's mission were sown within those hallowed classroom walls. Her example of what it means to be a teacher and educator is the metric by which I hold myself accountable.”

Following that love of space and science her beloved teacher had inspired, Ivey-Duensing launched “Janet's Planet” 25 years ago. The program airs nationwide on more than 140 public television stations geared toward ages 7-12. It focuses on science, space, history, and health.

Quickly rising to become a staple in children's entertainment and education, she has since received 12 Regional Emmys and five Gracie Awards. She also received an award for an educational video she wrote and produced, titled “Exploring Microgravity.”

During NASA's New Horizon mission, Ivey-Duensing collaborated with Chief Principal Investigator Alan Stern to increase



Janet Ivey-Duensing

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When it comes to the students I've had the privilege of working with, they're nothing short of inspiring. Engaged and eager, they constantly surprise me.

– Janet Ivey-Duensing

educational outreach. Her #DearPluto project garnered international outreach and resulted in letters to the dwarf planet pouring in from all over. Her favorite #DearPluto letter came from a fourth grader, Merrol Hyde, whose letter included the hashtag #WeWantOur9thPlanetBack!

For 15 years, she was also the co-host of “Tennessee’s Wildside.” Additionally, she’s appeared in many commercials, television shows, and film credits. Guests from across the country have joined Ivey-Duensing on stage during her thrilling live performances of “Tour of the Solar System” and “Exploring Microgravity.” As an accomplished author, she has published several books, including a series that celebrates lesser-known female scientists called “Unsung Genius.”

Although her resume overflows with success, awards, and accolades, Ivey-Duensing said that receiving the Permission to Dream Award from the New World Institute, along with receiving the Sally K. Ride Excellence in Education Award from the American Astronautical Society (AAS), is the capstone of her career so far.

“Sally K. Ride was more than an astronaut; she was a pioneer, a hero, and a symbol of possibility for so many — myself included. Witnessing her journey, from the announcement of the first female astronaut candidates to her historic venture into space, was a pivotal moment that



inspired countless individuals — myself among them. Sally Ride’s vision went beyond breaking through the atmosphere; she saw the stars as an opportunity to spark curiosity and passion, especially among young girls in the scientific realm.

“To be acknowledged by the esteemed AAS with an award honoring her legacy feels both surreal and immensely gratifying. It’s a recognition that not only honors my dedication to education but also stands as a tribute to Sally K. Ride’s trailblazing spirit, reminding us all of the limitless potential within the realms of STEM and the



importance of nurturing that curiosity and exploration in future generations.”

Ivey-Duensing is a dedicated volunteer at Jack Anderson Elementary School, where she supports fifth-grade teachers with their yearly Project Based Learning initiatives. Since 2019, with the help of Hunt Brothers Pizza, she has sent 40 students to the United States Space and Rocket Center Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. She hopes to send 14 more this summer.

“When it comes to the students I’ve had the privilege of working with, they’re nothing short of inspiring.

Engaged and eager, they constantly surprise me with their potential and genius ideas. These moments, where I witness their confidence grow or witness their curiosity flourishing, are what keep me dedicated to this work. It’s the potential for these seemingly simple acts to inspire and shape the paths of these incredible students.”

Ivey-Duensing still dreams of going to space. And if she doesn’t make it there, she is certain one of her students will. **GN**

For more information, visit www.janetsplanet.com.

TEACHING SPECIAL PEOPLE AND GAINING FRIENDS FOR LIFE

CINDY HAMBLLEN IS BUILDING LIFELONG BONDS.

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Steve Zak

CINDY HAMBLLEN has dreamed of having “special friends” since she was a little girl. But not just any friends — those who have differing abilities. For the last 45 years, Hamblen has been a special education (SPED) teacher in Sumner County Schools, with 40 of those years at Whitten Elementary, and the last five as the lead instructor for the Project SEARCH program. She has also been the cheer coach for Station Camp High School for the last 15 years and, unbelievably, has also worked for the Hendersonville Parks Department (HPD) since 1979. Clearly, Hamblen sees a need and fills it.

“My whole life has been dedicated to my ‘special friends’ and giving them opportunities at the HPD that didn’t always exist, such as our RAPTORS Special Needs sports program with basketball, baseball, and kickball. I wouldn’t trade that for anything,” says Hamblen. “I have always wanted to teach special education since I was 12 years old. I feel they are so compassionate about life, will always be there for you, and once you get to be a part of their life, they will always be a true and loyal friend. I still have connections with many students that I began teaching back in elementary school as far back as the fall of 1978.”





Cindy Hamblen

Hamblen began working part time in 1979 for the HPD directing the Kiddie Kamp program, and now serves as the recreation program coordinator. She creates activities such as the RAPTORS sports program, which stands for “Reaching Athletic Potential Through Organized Recreational Sports.” She also plans events such as the preschool track meet, Special Needs Easter Egg Hunt, KIDS CLUB summer program, Breakfast with Santa, Special Friends Visit with Santa, and many others.

As the lead instructor for Project SEARCH at Welch College, Hamblen says, “This program is a work-based learning program where special needs students who are aging out, or who have graduated, learn work skills, life skills, and soft skills to prepare for getting a ‘real’ job. It is a one-year program, and we search for jobs for them — hopefully in an area of their interest. It’s a collaboration with Sumner County Schools, Welch College, the ACCESS program, and Voc-Rehab.

We teach students how to handle conflict and how to get along with co-workers, how to interview, budgeting, and help them become responsible adults that are a productive asset in their community. This is year five and most of our student interns have gotten a job, and are still working, or have taken it upon themselves to move to other jobs that they felt were better suited for them.”

Hamblen credits her husband, Henry, and her four children — Dustin, Jordan, Jacob, and Kirby — as well as her assistant for the last 40 years as the reason she has accomplished so much and been able to wear so many hats.

“My biggest cheerleader would be my family, who always let me give my time to the special needs community, and Janet Baucom who was my assistant at Whitten Elementary and has worked by my side not only in the school system but also as my assistant in the summer program through the HPD. She has been my supporter, my friend, my confidant, and the person who always kept me level-headed and in my place, which was a big job. She’s the kindest person and is always thinking of others over herself and gives great advice.

“My biggest academic achievement is taking my desire to work with the special needs community and using it to help shape their lives in so many ways

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My biggest academic achievement is taking my desire to work with the special needs community and using it to help shape their lives in so many ways — yet having them shape my life in many more ways than I could imagine.

– Cindy Hamblen

— yet having them shape my life in many more ways than I could imagine. I’ve loved seeing their parents become friends and confidants as their children socialize and get to have experiences that used to not be available here.”

In 2014, Hamblen was nominated and became a semi-finalist for the Kelly and Michael Live Show for the Top Teacher Award. More recently, she was placed on the Wall of Fame through the HPD. Now that she’s a grandmother of five, with another on the way, Hamblen sees a glimpse of retirement peeking through the clouds. For her, the silver lining will be finding just the right person to continue the work with her “special friends.”

“If you have a desire to work with SPED, jump all in. Know there will be times of discouragement, take advice from fellow teachers, be willing to make changes — the good will outweigh the bad times — and know that with the special needs community, you are making friends for life.” GN







Good News

CHAPTER 3 OF 3

This section of the magazine covers local things to do.

- 38** Community Events
- 42** Charity Listings

Submit a positive story on our website:



goodnewsmags.com

Photography by Hannah Woodcock

◀ Emily Johnson, Beth English, and Danielle Bloom

Monthaven Venetian Masquerade Party - Feb. 10



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Saturday, Feb. 10, 2024, Monthaven Arts and Cultural Center hosted its exquisite Venetian Masquerade Party. Inspired by 13th-century Venetian social culture, guests arrived in creative cocktail attire and unique masks, immersing themselves in artist Mark Kostabi’s “City of Enchantment” exhibit. Partygoers enjoyed Italian tastings and cocktails as well as performances by Mark Kostabi and members of the Nashville Opera. Photographer Kate Deaan photographed guests in a creative Venice scene, and there was a silent auction. All proceeds benefited Monthaven Art and Cultural Center’s arts education and outreach.

1. Rhonda Carson, Carie Marlin, Addy Euvank, and Laurie Lucas. 2. Laura Gifford



3. Ben and Nora Salazar 4. Irene Ericson
5. Nick Riggins 6. Chad Johnson and Walter Chacon

Women Impacting The Community - Feb. 14



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024, the Hendersonville Area Chamber of Commerce hosted its Women Impacting the Community Awards Luncheon at Bluegrass Yacht & Country Club. The event gave female business professionals a chance to gather together, encouraging and empowering each other while building sincere, meaningful relationships that vitalize the community. Leaders were awarded in professional, young professional, nonprofit, civic, health care, and education categories. Speakers included Danielle Bloom, Beth English, and Emily Johnson. There was a special performance by Chloe Goss. Attendees dined on fresh catered salads and delicious desserts.



1. Kathleen Hawkins and Kadi Dark 2. Alyssa Stevens and Brittany Jeffers 3. Kim Thompson, Chera Wilbanks, and Beth English 4. Lisa Anderson and Autumn Ellis 5. Taylor Gary, Jennifer, and Sherry Everett

Tornado Fundraiser for Dwayne and Geneva event - Feb. 17



Photography by Hannah Woodcock

On Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024, Foxhole Lounge at Post 9851 hosted a tornado fundraiser for Geneva Keene and Dwayne Jones. Geneva Keene and Jones are musicians and members of the veteran community who were affected by the December 2023 tornado. The event included live music from Hawkshaw Hawkins Jr., the son of country music legend Jean Shepard and Hawkshaw Hawkins, and Marshal Gentry. Donations were taken at the door, and there was a raffle that included two signed guitars, several pieces of artwork, and various gifts.



1. Valerie Pantaleo 2. Faith James 3. Hawkshaw Hawkins Jr., Jeff Williams, Ramsey Roustom, and Charlie Pate 4. Kent Goodson

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.

HolidayFest of Sumner County Corp.

Organizes events and initiatives to benefit the community.

(615) 517-5714
www.holidayfesttn.org

HomeSafe

Provides safety, support, and resources to people impacted by domestic and sexual abuse.

(615) 452-4315
www.homesafeinc.org

Bows & Ballcaps Inc.

Offers love and support to kids fighting cancer, especially those who have lost their hair from their treatments.

(615) 210-0210
www.bowsandballcaps.com

Vietnam Veterans of America Sumner County Foundation

Focuses on providing services and support to veterans.

(888) 548-0085
www.vva240.com

Jae and Zeke Foundation

Assists families with financial, spiritual, and emotional support.

(615) 400-7943
www.jzfoundation.com

Hendersonville Samaritan Association

Provides emergency assistance to individuals and families in need.

(615) 824-7105
www.tnhsa.org

Sumner County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)

Advocates for abused and neglected children in the court system.

(615) 451-1688
www.sumnercasa.org

Sumner County Anti-Drug Coalition Inc.

Prevents substance abuse and promotes healthy lifestyles.

(615) 461-8243
www.sumnercoalition.org

Habitat for Humanity of Sumner County

Exists to help local families build decent, affordable housing through a nonprofit thrift store and donation center.

(615) 230-3032
www.restoresumner.com

United Way of Sumner County

Collaborates with local nonprofits to address community needs.

(615) 461-8371
www.unitedwaysumner.org

Hendersonville Garden Club

Encourages gardening and beautification efforts through fundraising via The Horticultural Society of Middle Tennessee, a volunteer, nonprofit organization.

(615) 353-6978
<https://hsmtn.org/who-we-are/garden-clubs/>

**National Alliance
on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Sumner and Wilson Counties**

Advocates for mental health awareness
and resources.

(615) 442-6617

www.namisumnerandwilsoncounties.org

**Community Child
Care Services Inc.**

Provides income-based child care
and accepts child care certificates.
Introduces children to a safe, nurturing,
and academically fertile environment.

(615) 824-5060

www.communitychildcarehville.org

See more options or
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to the listing:

Scan the QR code

