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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Chasing a shooting star

Dreams come true in our hometown.

WHEN I was 8, I wanted to be a teacher. I remember my third grade teacher clicking the chalk on the green board on the wall. And when I was 9, I wanted to be a director. My parents bought me a camera for Christmas, and my cousins and I would recreate our favorite movies in the yard. When I was 11, I wanted to be a writer. I remember classmates telling me how terrible my stories were. While they probably weren't, it felt like a crowd of kids surrounding me, pointing and laughing. I went home and ripped the pages over and over, trying to hold back tears. I thought, "No one will ever read another word I write." The 11-year-old me was wrong. My story — my dream — didn't end there; it was just the beginning. Today, I can offer you living proof that the wildest dreams do come true.

Our dreams are like shooting stars across the night sky. They're beautiful; they're exciting. We think, "How in the world does that work?" And we spend our entire lives chasing that shooting star. We spend every day, step after step, trying to make our dreams come true. Dreams don't always take off into space like a rocket. Sometimes, we land too hard. Sometimes, we never get off the launchpad. Thankfully, we have the launchpad we need. Our hometown is a place where dreams come true, and this issue of Good News Magazine is living proof of that.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." The goal of this issue is to prove your dreams are beautiful and the future is brightly dazzling. The truth is, the shooting star has always been inside us — we just had to realize it. GN

Wesley Bryant,  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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**‘Let your  
faith be  
bigger than  
your fear.’**

**Megan Ashley**





# Megan Ashley's belief carried her through multiple battles with cancer.

By Kali Bradford  
Photography by Brooke Snyder



**A**DVERSITY CAN come in many forms — from personal setbacks, financial struggles, loss of loved ones, and unexpected obstacles to health issues. While adversity is an inevitable part of the human experience, how we respond to it shapes our character and resilience.

Lincoln County native Megan Ashley is no stranger to adversity. As a two-time cancer survivor, Megan has endured several obstacles during her 29 years of life. However, thanks to her faith and determination, she has conquered each of them and allowed each to contribute to helping mold her into the positive and life-loving person she is today.

## The obstacle of cancer

Pregnancy is one of the most joyous times in a woman's life. The excitement of welcoming a new life along with becoming a mother is almost indescribable in the joy it holds.

It was a time of joy for Megan and her husband, Kaleob, who were expecting for the first time.

Just as Megan began her second trimester, she was diagnosed with Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma — non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma (NHL).

The American Cancer Society states that NHL is one of the most common cancers in the United States, accounting for about 4% of all cancers. Overall, the likelihood that a man will develop NHL in his lifetime is about 1 in 42, and for a woman, the risk is about 1 in 52. Many factors can affect each person's risk.



▲ Megan, Canaan, and Kaleob Ashley

**“With the trust that I had in God and the peace that he instilled in me, I firmly believe that is how I was able to get through treatment both mentally and physically.”**

- Megan Ashley

NHL can occur at any age. It is one of the more common cancers among children, teens, and young adults. Still, the risk of developing NHL increases throughout life, and more than half of people are 65 or older when they are first diagnosed.

For Megan, this was a shock in several ways. This wasn't her first experience with this type of cancer. At the age of 9, she was diagnosed with the same kind of cancer. After undergoing extensive treatment, it was ruled she had beaten it. Over 20 years later, she was facing the same battle again.

“We couldn't believe it. It was a shock,” said Megan. “They couldn't even call it a relapse since it had been so many years. My oncologist, who is one of the best, had never seen my type of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in a pregnant person. Usually, it's breast cancer.”

## **Faith sets the course**

Finally understanding her diagnosis, Megan said the next step was treatment and beating it. Moving forward, she would look to her faith in God as a way to help her through this difficult time.

“When we found [out] it was cancer, it was extreme shock,” she said. “I was very emotional. I was 14 weeks pregnant. But during that time, I felt this overwhelming sense of peace that came over me. I cannot explain to you the peace I had when we got the official diagnosis. I felt it was God saying, ‘Megan, I've got you. I have this perfect plan for you. Things are going to go smoothly. It's going to be OK. You just have to trust me. I have a perfect plan.’”



Megan would also have to battle through several other unknowns while going through treatment during her pregnancy. After a follow-up with her OB-GYN, a blood test revealed that her unborn child had tested positive for trisomy 18.

Also known as Edwards syndrome, it is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of a third copy of all or part of chromosome 18. Many parts of the body are affected. Babies are often born small and have heart defects. Other features include a small head, small jaw, clenched fists with overlapping fingers, and severe intellectual disability.

During this trying time, Megan's faith continued to hold strong. After meeting with a genetics counselor and having an ultrasound, the counselor believed everything looked in good order with the baby.

"At that point, everything was looking OK with Canaan," said Megan. "He didn't show signs of trisomy 18 at the time, but they couldn't rule out anything without an amniocentesis or unless he was born and they could physically see him."

With her faith intact, Megan continued to move forward, undergoing eight rounds of chemotherapy. She said she felt her faith was integral to how she was able to get through those long, grueling months of treatment.

"I never doubted in my mind that things were going to be OK," she said. "Now, I didn't know what 'OK' meant. With the trust that I had in God and the peace that he instilled in me, I firmly believe that is how I was able to get through treatment both mentally and physically. But it could have been a thousand times worse if I had not placed my trust in God fully."

Megan's son, Canaan, was born at 33 weeks with 10 fingers and 10 toes, much to the joy of his parents.

"He came out like screaming and all of the things," she said. "He did spend almost three weeks in the NICU [neonatal intensive care unit], but that's due to his early arrival. And they wanted to make sure things were developing as they should. The folks in the NICU were great."

Megan would undergo a few additional treatments following Canaan's birth. The treatments were successful, and she found herself on the other side of her battle.

## Moving forward

Now officially a year in remission, Megan continues to hold that same resiliency and strong sense of faith.

"I know there's a plan. I'm just following this plan," she said. "My outlook on life now is really being present in the moment and not worrying about tomorrow. Because worrying will keep you from enjoying what you're doing right now."

When sharing her amazing and faith-filled story, Megan wants others to understand that cancer is just one chapter. However, she hopes that anyone facing a challenge in life will turn to their faith and find strength in believing in a higher power.

"I have learned that I need to dig deeper with my faith and just continue to fully rely on God. I hope others cling to their faith when faced with challenges in life." GN





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A row of classic cars with their hoods open at a car show. The cars are parked on an asphalt surface with green trees in the background. The cars are in various colors, including red, white, and blue. The hoods are propped open, revealing the engines. The scene is bright and sunny.

# *Cruisin'* FOR A CURE

***Car enthusiasts gather to support  
the fight against Huntington's disease.***

*By Sara Hook // Photos submitted by Jaclyn LaFleur*







**D**OZENS OF cars — from old classics to Corvettes fresh off the car lot — line The Rock Family Worship Center parking lot. The smell of food trucks permeates the air as people inspect the many craft vendors around the lot. Everyone is there for one purpose — to support a cure for Huntington’s disease.

This year was the ninth annual Cruisin’ For a Cure for Huntington’s Disease, and the car show was undoubtedly successful. The sponsors, donations, and 78 registered vehicles raised around \$13,000, all of which went directly to the Tennessee Chapter of the Huntington’s Disease Society of America (HDSA). However, the event is more than just a fundraiser for many involved, including founder Felicia Riner.

Riner became involved in the fight against Huntington’s disease after her husband and two children were diagnosed with the condition. When her eldest was first diagnosed, they became advocates, working to tell people about the disease and trying to be as involved and proactive as they could. As part of that advocacy work, Cruisin’ For a Cure was started. The theme, Riner said, came from her eldest’s passion for cars.



**Jared Ellis**



**Cheryl Damron**

“As a teenager, I never knew what he was going to come home driving. He would literally meet somebody in [a] parking lot, swap titles, and come home with a different car,” Riner said. “So we said, ‘What better way to do this than to have a car show.’”

Cruisin’ For a Cure raises money to fight Huntington’s disease and raises awareness of the disease and its effects.

“We want [attendees] to have a better understanding of this disease because it is so rare,” Riner said. “There [are] only about 41,000 people in the United States that have Huntington’s disease, and only 10% of those have what my boys have — which is the juvenile form.”

Those affected by Huntington’s disease may have slurred speech, stumble, or have mood swings, among other symptoms. Ri-



ner said seeing those effects can look a lot like drunkenness but is, in fact, like having Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Lou Gehrig's disease all at once. Having a better understanding of such diseases can help people be more compassionate, something Riner said she hopes people learn from attending her event.

"I just want people to have a better understanding [and] to learn to be compassionate — not just for individuals affected by Huntington's disease but individuals who are facing something," Riner said. "We're all facing something — everybody in life has something that they have to deal with — and if nothing else, I just want there to be this awareness of compassion toward each other and what others are going through."

Many have stepped up and done just that. The car show community has especially gotten involved by helping Riner set up the first event and offering suggestions on how to expand it. Those suggestions have helped Cruisin' For a Cure grow from 28 cars and \$3,000 to what it is today.

Part of that growth has also been due to the event's sponsors. Cruisin' For a Cure has many sponsors throughout Fayetteville — some who donate, and some, like Our Place Diner and Bakery, donate a percentage of its sales on the day of the car show. Riner said several of the sponsors have been a part of the fundraiser for years and years.

"We have such an amazing community here in Lincoln County. People have gone above and beyond any of our expectations," Riner said. "The community that we live in is like [no] other."

Those sponsors will likely continue to donate for years, as Cruisin' For a Cure has no intention of ending until a cure is found. In the meantime, people like Riner and communities like Fayetteville keep the fight for compassion and healing alive. **GN**

*For more information on the Tennessee Chapter of HDSA, go to [tennessee.hdsa.org](http://tennessee.hdsa.org). To get involved with next year's Cruisin' For a Cure, contact Felicia Riner at (931) 993-6718 or email [feliciariner@gmail.com](mailto:feliciariner@gmail.com).*



**Keith, Felicia, and Greg Riner**





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# 'NOBODY CARES. WORK HARDER!'

Fayettenam Fun Runners  
changed a local man's life.

By Amanda E. West // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**T**HE MOTTO, “Nobody cares. Work harder!” — made popular by podcast host, author, and endurance trainer Cameron Hanes — may sound harsh to some, but to Jon Bradford, those words were the motivation he needed two years ago to finally seize control of his health. He’s now lost 150 pounds! After dropping the first 75 pounds, Bradford jogged miles out of his comfort zone and joined the Fayetteenam Fun Runners club, where he discovered a love for running. He now enjoys it so much that he challenged himself on New Year’s Eve to run east from the Giles County line through Lincoln County until he crossed into Franklin County.



A portrait of a man with a beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a dark grey t-shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a wooden door. In the top right corner, there is a large orange graphic element with black brushstrokes.

**JON  
BRADFORD**

***NOBODY CARES.  
WORK HARDER!***





*"It's not about how fast or how far you can run. It's about getting out there and getting started. You never know what you're capable of if you never start."*

-Jon Bradford

"When I first started walking and running, I noticed the group on Facebook," said Bradford. "I saw what they were doing, and I was extremely intimidated. When I went to my first group run on Jan. 4, 2023, I was absolutely scared. I sat in my car with butterflies in my stomach, too scared to even open the door. I mustered [up] the courage. As soon as I stepped out, I heard, 'Morning!' Even though it was only one word spoken — it said a million things at once. I knew at that moment my life was about to change."

The group met at the Lincoln County square, chatted for a few minutes, and then set out for their run. After a few yards, Bradford's feet ached, and his heart was pounding.

"I managed to make it a quarter of a mile — then I had to stop and walk. To my surprise, others started walking as well. Some kept going until they were almost out of sight, but then they doubled back to check on me. This continued until we finished, and everyone made it back to their cars. They didn't care that I was slow or walking. It was at this point the motto 'Nobody cares. Work harder!' finally sunk in. I'd found what I'd been searching for. I was the one judging my lack of fitness level and abilities — not them. They were there to help me work harder."

Fayettenam Fun Runners has provided Bradford with a group of friends from every walk of life who help keep him accountable. During the work week, members are small business owners, accountants, engineers, fitness coaches, teachers, and others from every nook and cranny of Lincoln County. The collective mission of the group is to promote overall well-being and inclusion for





▲ Christy Freehauf, Jon Bradford, Jim Donaldson, and Chris Poarch

everyone, no matter their fitness level. Each week, they meet by the theatre and often grab a coffee at Java Road after they've finished. Summer Southern started the group in 2022, and it now has close to 250 members.

"This group has saved my life and my family. Let's face it — it isn't necessarily fun to run, but it provides me with an opportunity to have a win and do something hard every day. When I'm on a rest period, or my schedule doesn't allow time to run, my mental health deteriorates quickly. Right now, running is — and hopefully will forever be — an important part of my life."

Bradford added, "It's not about how fast or how far you can run — it's about getting out there and getting started. You never know what you're capable of if you never start. I would've never imagined that one of my dreams come true would be something like running. Some might even say I'm crazy [because] that one thing I dream about is spending six, eight, 10, or 12 hours or more running. I'm not sure if I can muster [up] the mental,

physical, and spiritual strength to accomplish it. But who knows what else I may be able to accomplish? It's also a win if I can use it to inspire my three boys."

Bradford has set a personal goal to complete four ultramarathons this year, and on New Year's Eve 2024 — you guessed it — he plans to run from one end of the county to the other again.

"I still struggle with my weight. I'm still a heavy guy, but I'm determined not to let that define my life. I really no longer look at the scale. At this point, I do still have weight loss goals, but my mental health is what I've chosen to focus more on. Actually, I've learned to focus on mental, physical, and spiritual health. At different times throughout the year, I focus more on different aspects depending on my short-term goals at the time." GN

*Find the group on Facebook at Fayettevill Fun Runners for more information.*









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# Enjoy the season's first fruits and vegetables.

**A**S THE warm summer sun shines high in the Southern sky, it's time to embrace the vibrant flavors of the season. Our July recipes showcase the best of summer's produce, from juicy peaches and crisp cucumbers to sweet corn and zucchini.

Whether you're hosting a backyard gathering or enjoying a quiet evening at home, these dishes will have you savoring the tastes of the season. From refreshing salads and grilled favorites to fruity desserts, let's dig into the simple pleasures of summer together! **GN**



## Strawberry Pretzel Salad

*In memory of Pat Hopper*

2 c. pretzels, crushed  
4 T. sugar  
3/4 c. margarine, softened  
1 pkg. cream cheese, 8 oz., softened  
1 c. sugar  
1 container whipped topping, 8 oz.  
1 lg. pkg. strawberry gelatin  
1 1/2 - 2 c. boiling water  
2 pkgs., strawberries, frozen, slightly thawed, 10 oz.

In a large bowl, mix together pretzels, 4 T. of sugar, and margarine. Pat pretzel mixture in a 9x13 baking dish. Bake at 400° for 6 minutes. Cool. In a mixing bowl, mix cream cheese, and 1 cup of sugar. Fold in whipped topping. Spread over pretzel crust. In a separate bowl, mix strawberry gelatin with boiling water. Stir until dissolved. Add frozen strawberries. Refrigerate until gelatin starts to thicken slightly. Stir, then pour over cream cheese layer and refrigerate until set.

## Peachy Blueberry Cobbler

*Submitted by Louella Turner*

1 c. sugar  
2 t. baking powder  
1 c. AP flour  
1 t. salt  
1 c. milk  
1/2 c. butter, melted  
3 med. peaches, peeled, sliced, lightly sugared  
2/3 c. fresh blueberries  
vanilla ice cream, optional

In a medium mixing bowl, combine sugar, baking powder, flour, and salt. In a small mixing bowl, combine milk and butter. Pour over sugar mixture. Mix until smooth. Pour into a greased 12x8x2 glass baking dish. Spread peaches evenly over the top of butter. Sprinkle with blueberries. Bake at 350° for 50 minutes or until batter rises through the fruit and top is golden brown. Serve cobbler warm and topped with vanilla ice cream, if desired.

## Fresh Summer Salsa

*Submitted by Marguerite Eddins*

1 habanero chili pepper, seeded, minced  
4 lg. plum tomatoes, chopped  
2 T. vinegar  
1 t. sugar  
1/2 t. salt  
1 med. cucumber, peeled, diced  
1 c. fresh cilantro, finely chopped  
2 T. olive oil  
1 t. ground cumin  
tortilla chips, for serving

In a small mixing bowl, combine pepper, tomatoes, vinegar, sugar, salt, cucumber, cilantro, olive oil, and cumin. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Serve with tortilla chips.



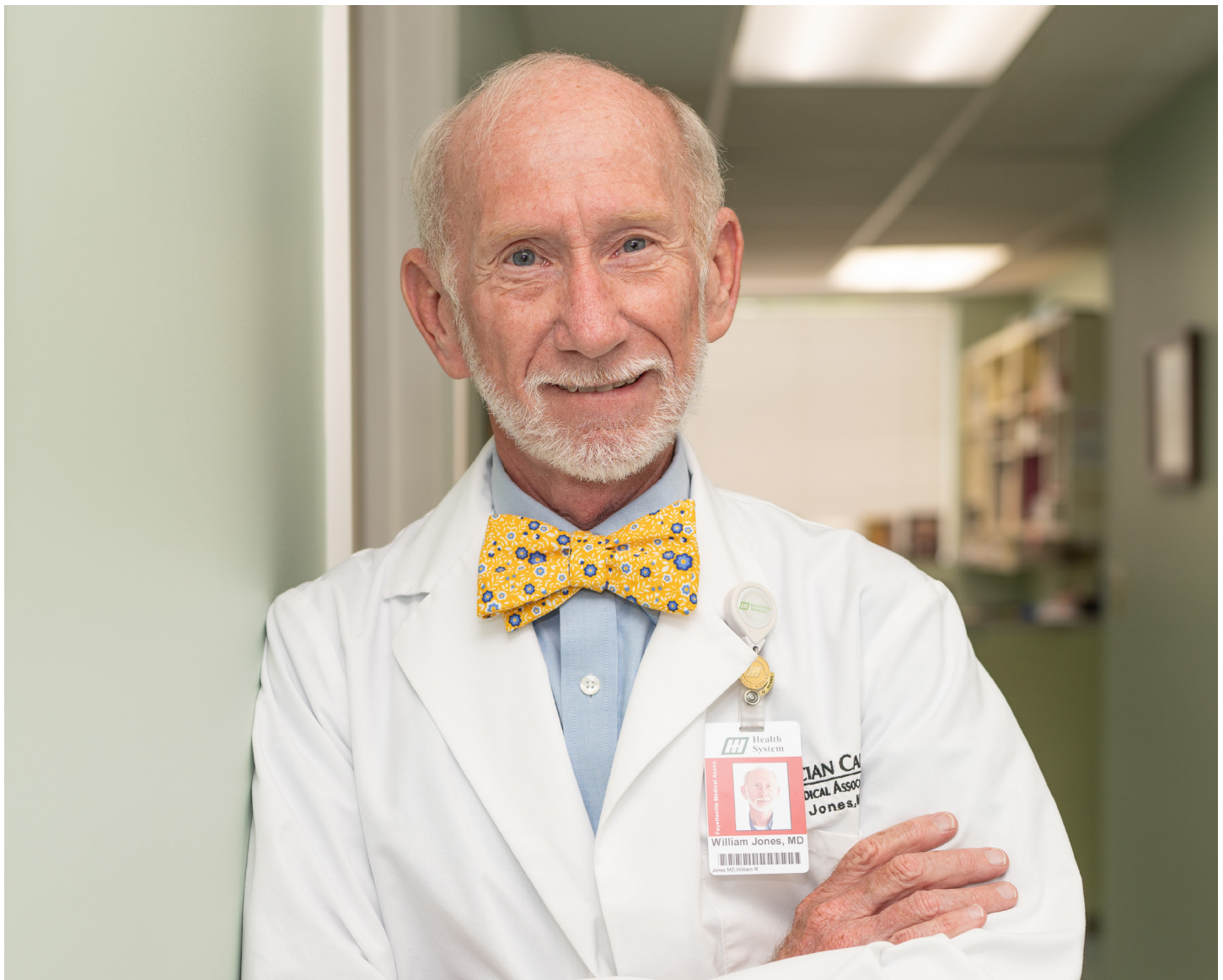


# 44 Years of Being Loved in the Community | Lincoln Health recognizes Dr. Jones for quality patient care.

By Haley Potter // Photography by Brooke Snyder

**I**N AN age where technology often overshadows personal connections, our community's very own Dr. William R. Jones remains a shining example of genuine human warmth and compassion.

For 44 years, Dr. Jones has made his own career dreams come true in Lincoln County, practicing medicine with a warmth and dedication that has touched countless lives. His journey shows the power of personal connections in the field of health care.





Dr. Jones, who returned to his hometown in 1980 after years of rigorous training, reflects on his decision with deep gratitude. “It’s just been a wonderful experience to come home and serve my county here, Lincoln County. It’s just a dream come true when you think about it for me,” he said, his voice filled with genuine emotion.

Growing up in this close-knit community, Dr. Jones’ roots run deep. After completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, he pursued medical school at the University of Tennessee-Memphis, followed by a residency in Huntsville, Alabama. His journey brought him back to the place he calls home, where he and his wife started their family.

For Dr. Jones, the essence of his practice lies in the relationships he has made over the decades. “When you stay this long, you get to where your patients become your friends and family. I tell my patients when they have an issue, ‘We’re in this together.’ You get so close to your patients,” he shared. This bond is clear as he reminisces deeply about stories from the 44 years he has been in practice, like the one about a patient he first saw on his second day of practice, who remains under his care to this day.

Despite the challenges that have come with the evolution of medicine, particularly the transition to electronic medical records, Dr. Jones has remained committed to saving the personal touch that defines his practice. He spends weekends and early mornings preparing for the week ahead, ensuring he knows his patients’ histories and needs intimately. “I hope to spend quality time with the patient, not the screen,” he emphasized, highlighting the lengths he goes to in order to maintain the focus on his patients.

This dedication is rooted in the values instilled in him by his family. Dr. Jones speaks fondly of his parents

and siblings, who inspired his strong work ethic. “My work ethic came from my parents and my older siblings. I owe that to my father, my mother, and my older brothers and sisters,” he said. Their influence has been a guiding force throughout his career, pushing him to be the best he can be.

Dr. Jones also credits his wife, Rebecca, for his success. Married for almost 50 years, Rebecca’s support has, in his opinion, gotten Dr. Jones through even the toughest days. “She has sacrificed a lot to allow me to pursue my dream,” he acknowledged.

Throughout his career, Dr. Jones has faced numerous challenges, including the sudden death of his partner four years ago. Yet the strength of the com-

munity and the support of his colleagues have helped him get through these difficult times.

In reflecting on his career, Dr. Jones expressed a deep sense of fulfillment.

“You just learn to love the people you’re with, and they learn to love you. It’s just part of life here,” he said. His story is not just one of medical expertise but of genuine care and compassion.

As Dr. Jones continues to serve the community, his legacy is one of dedication, personal connection, and heartfelt care. Dr. Jones reminds us of the power of personal touch in health care. His story is the perfect example of the profound impact one person can have on a community, and Lincoln County is undoubtedly richer for having him. **GN**





*Allie Heffington Isbell*

# PAINT AND PERSEVERANCE

Family, farm life, and faith pave the roads of Allie Heffington Isbell's dreams.

By Tina Neeley  
Photography by Brooke Snyder

**P**ERSISTENCE AND perseverance are brushstrokes on the canvas of Allie Heffington Isbell's life. In her sunlit studio, Allie's art, inspired by rural life, features Hereford, Longhorn, and Highland cows in floral fields. These pieces find homes as wall art, prints, and various items in her showroom, sharing space with other wildlife and gentle creatures typical of the region. Seasonal art and decor with a touch of whimsy lighten spirits and spaces. It's all in a historic storefront, an ideal backdrop for Isbell's creative work and vintage charm.

It's here that she can also see behind her and dream into the future.



"I started dreaming of an art career when I was very young. [It was] not always what others would call a practical dream, but I was pretty persistent that it was what I was going to do," Isbell said confidently.

Her earliest artistic whispers weren't wildflowers and trucker-capped Herefords but dresses. That interest provided the kinetic energy for a lifetime of art, the first colors on the palette of her journey to painting the life she loves.

"I believe that was just one of the ways I fell in love with being creative," she shared.

Dreams take flight when they ride on wings of support. From the encouragement of her high









school art teacher to the full investment of her parents in her dream, Isbell made art part of her everyday life. The focus of her paintings grew as she did into a light-hearted reflection of her childhood and her life today.

She pointed out, “As you can see in my art, I’m a farm girl at heart. I am inspired by my rural surroundings and love to paint farm animals the most. When I started painting to sell my work, I loved to paint cows, and that catapulted me into learning more about my style and how I liked to paint. To this day, I love to paint cows more than any other

animal, and I don’t plan to stop. My husband and I have a small herd of cattle, and they serve as inspiration for many of my pieces.”

She passionately highlights the importance and necessity of agriculture.

“I want to bring light to just how important agriculture is and how we need it for our future,” Isbell emphasized. “I grew up on a sheep farm, so I’m no stranger to living on the farm.”

Her personal beliefs inspire her art.

“You’re almost always going to find a painting of a little white church or lyrics from an old hymn in my store or with me at a show.”





In the early years, Isbell sold her work through a rented booth and art shows on the road. Still, she yearned for a space of her own. A storefront for rent on the square provided space for a showroom and a studio in 2020. The direct sales experience further fulfilled and motivated her.

Then, another door opened.

"I soon bought the historic building I'm in now that dates back to at least 1857. Old things have always been another thing I have loved. You'll find that a lot of my staging pieces in the store and when I travel to shows are vintage," Isbell stated.

Still, she dared to dream wider.

"I can remember walking through the aisles of Hobby Lobby as a younger me thinking, 'How in the world did they get their art in here? Can I do that one day? When will it be my time?' It became my goal to be represented by a licensing company and make it into a store like that, so I decided just to keep working harder."

Her time was January 2023 when a marketing representative requested a meeting. By July, she received word that Hobby Lobby chose her Highland cow for its stores.

"It was hard for me not to be emotional because I was ever so thankful to God," Isbell said. "I had to keep that secret for a good while because I wanted to tell my social media following once they could see it in stores."

An Instagram follower from New York announced the first sighting. The secret was out.

"On Dec. 18, I was able to see it in person with some of my family at the Tullahoma store. That's when it really sank in — I was in Hobby Lobby! That was a pretty good Christmas present," she said.

"Then, a few days after that, I received news that they had placed an order for another piece. Seeing my art in a big box store like that is confirmation that I'm doing exactly what I am supposed to do. It made me so thankful for all those who

**“  
DON'T BE AFRAID TO DREAM  
THOSE DREAMS THAT FEEL  
TOO BIG OR CRAZY. IF IT  
HAPPENED TO ME, IT FOR  
SURE CAN HAPPEN TO  
ALL THOSE OTHER CRAZY-  
TALENTED PEOPLE.**

*Allie Huffington  
Isbell*

rallied me along the way and made it possible."

Isbell counts a village of support among her greatest blessings. Her parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, and extended family work the dream alongside her. Her husband, Thee, dreams her dreams with her and helps her make it happen, she said.

"A whole lot of painting, a whole lot of practice, a whole lot of love and support, and the Lord blessing me with the ability to do what I love brought me to Hobby Lobby's shelves. The long days and nights paid off; the dream was worth fighting for. I hope they all feel proud because they helped me get on that Hobby Lobby shelf."

To all the dreamers, Isbell said, "Don't be afraid to dream those dreams that feel too big or crazy. If it happened to me, it for sure can happen to all those other crazy-talented people. Paint the painting, make the art. If it makes you happy, you shouldn't let anyone tell you differently. It wasn't always easy on my way to where I am, but most good things take hard work." **GN**

*Art by Allie is located at 215 College St. E., Fayetteville. For more information, follow Art by Allie on Facebook or email customart-byallie@gmail.com. Art is also available for purchase online at shopsouthernbales.com.*



*Misty Sims*

✦ ✦ ✦ **CELEBRATE  
WITH SWEET FEED  
COMPANY** ✦ ✦ ✦

From lavish grazing tables to custom cakes, Misty Sims' culinary creations bring people together.

By Tina Neeley

Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Misty Sims

**T**HE GRAZING table before you is no ordinary feed trough. It's a feast for the senses — a vibrant patchwork of colors, textures, and flavors that beckons you to dive in and start sampling. Wedges of creamy brie and sharp cheddar, the surfaces glistening with golden drizzles of honey, sit nestled alongside slices of prosciutto and salami fanned out in a rainbow of reds and pinks. Artful piles of crisp green apple slices and plump purple grapes cluster together, the bright hues a perfect complement to the darker, richer tones of the cured meats. Crackers and crusty baguette slices stand ready to serve as edible

canvases, the golden surfaces begging to be topped with an array of delectable ingredients.

The spread offers more than an alternative to fast food; it's a casual, interactive way to sample a variety of foods at your leisure and spark conversation around the shared experience. You can catch up, celebrate, and connect over the grazing tables at The Sweet Feed Co. Cafe (formerly The Boardroom) at 806 Washington St. W. in Fayetteville. There are individual or shareable grazing boards and a selection of soups, salads, and sandwiches. The bakery case is stocked on Fridays and Saturdays with the perfect desserts to end your dining adventure.











This is Misty Sims' element. She understands the love language of food.

"My earliest memories are baking at home in my mom's kitchen. She loved cinnamon rolls, so I remember going through some of her cookbooks until I found just the right recipe and made those for her," she recalled.

Her mom was an excellent cook, so Sims cooked very little until moving out on her own. Then she quickly realized

her mom's cooking skills hadn't magically transferred to her kitchen.

"You can imagine my surprise when I moved out on my own and realized my mom didn't move into my kitchen with me, but I still needed to eat!" she laughed.

She took matters into her own hands.

"I always loved the Food Network, so I bought myself a Rachel Ray cookbook and made almost every recipe in it. From there,





I was hooked and started making anything and everything I could.”

That early experimentation laid the foundation for Sims’ lifelong love of cooking and baking. She began putting her own creative spin on family recipes, blending the comforting flavors of her childhood with a modern twist.

“I love to experiment with food and make some of my favorites from my mom and my grandmother but put a twist on them and make them my own,” she shared.

Sims’ passion for food and connection expanded into a full-fledged business, Sweet Feed Company. She offers a trio of food services, including catering, custom-baked items, and The Sweet Feed Co. Cafe, a charcuterie bar. A dessert trailer and a cafe-style food bus bring Sims’ creative culinary talents to you.

“Our catering side is so special to me. I get to take part in someone’s special event and take the worry of feeding their guests off them,” Sims explained.

She works with clients to craft the perfect menu.

“I provide tried and true menus to select from, or they can request that I tailor a menu just for them. I can do large, grandiose grazing tables, taco bars, or steak. Just name it!”

But for Sims, it’s not just about the food. It’s about the connections made and memories shared around the table. Whether catering a wedding, baking a birthday cake, or serving up a grazing board at The Sweet Feed Co. Cafe, she understands the weight of pushing to do it all. Saying “no”

isn’t easy, but it’s necessary.

“Learning that it is OK to say “no” is such a hard concept in the service industry. You love serving others, but you have to recognize your limits. If you spread yourself too thin, you won’t deliver a product you’re happy with, regardless of what your business is,” Sims said.

The key to balance, she said, is setting limits and staying within them.

The fact that Sims is the acquisition functional career manager with the Missile Defense Agency at Redstone Arsenal increases the need for balance.

“Balancing two careers was certainly challenging in the beginning and caused a lot of sleepless nights. But as I grew my business, I have been able to hire more help, which has made a world of difference,” she recalled. “Not only do the ladies who work with me do an amazing job, they are family and treat my business like it’s theirs. They’re just wonderful.”

It’s not just her job at the arsenal she’s juggling.

Sims said, “Family life was obviously hard to balance because I have two little kids. My husband, Michael, is my partner and has been nothing short of supportive. He’s the maintenance man, the extra cook, the financial advisor — just all the things. And rather than lose time with my kids, I incorporated them into the team. They’ve learned to make change,

“

**SUCCESS WILL COME  
IF YOU MAINTAIN A  
SERVANT’S HEART,  
TRUST YOURSELF, AND  
TRUST THE LORD.**

*Misty Sims*



help with cleaning and washing dishes, and have even taken orders at the tables.”

Sims wants to tell those hesitating to pursue their dreams, “Go for it. You have to be your own cheerleader in the beginning, but if you put your head down and work hard, God will see you through to the other side. Success will come if you maintain a servant’s heart, trust yourself, and trust the Lord. If you need a question answered, ask Him and then listen to the answer — even if it isn’t what you want to hear, He will take you down the path you need to be on.”

Like the patchwork of the grazing table, Sims works to provide the space and inspiration for us to catch up, celebrate, and connect. Whether savoring a bite from the charcuterie board, indulging in a decadent dessert, or enjoying your guests while she handles the food, her culinary creations are a delicious invitation to come together and make memories around the table. **GN**

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*The Sweet Feed Co. Cafe is located at 806 Washington St. W. in Fayetteville. It is open Thurs. 5-8 p.m., Fri.-Sat. lunch 11 a.m.-2 p.m., and dinner 5-8 p.m. Follow Sweet Feed Company on Facebook for more information, or visit [sweetfedco.com](http://sweetfedco.com) to book online.*



*Danny Green*

# FROM DAMAGED GOODS TO A DIVINE ENCOUNTER

Danny Green knows he is a walking miracle  
and a new creation.

By Tina Neeley  
Photography by Brooke Snyder

**L**IKE MANY boys his age, Danny Green started thinking about finding that special someone when he was 16. But it was different for him because what he saw in the mirror told him he was not just different — he was damaged.

Fourteen years earlier, his father was atop a ladder painting their home. In a life-changing moment, frantic screams and fire came from the family automobile in the driveway. Inside were 2-year-old Danny and his 3-year-old sister, Marsha, who moments before were playing while they waited for their mother to return from inside to run errands. Marsha suffered first and second-

degree burns on her ear and face. With third-degree burns on his head, face, and both hands and second-degree burns on much of the rest of his body, Danny was the most critical, his parents being told at Vanderbilt that he wouldn't survive.

He improved slightly, and doctors gave their guarded opinion that an infection might still take his life.

Every positive update came with a potentially life-altering outcome. He's expected to live but be blind. His fingers would have to be removed on one hand because there was insufficient skin for grafting. Danny left Vanderbilt Hospital two months later with his vision restored and



▲ Danny and his sister, Marsha







“

**NOW, WHEN I LOOK  
AT MYSELF IN THE  
BATHROOM MIRROR,  
I SEE A MIRACLE — A  
BLESSING OF GOD.**

*Danny Green*

his fingers intact. His last plastic surgery was when he was 14, and there were many surgeries, therapies, and appointments in Nashville in the years between. Ninth grade and his future were ahead of him.

“Having scars and being different wasn’t a big deal when I was a small child, but as I grew older, it began to take over my thought life. One day, while riding the school bus, a little boy approached me and said, ‘You know what you are? A burnt steak. That’s what you are — a burnt steak.’ Those words sank deep within my memory and my emotions. To this day, I can still see his face and recall exactly where I was on the bus when he made those remarks,” Danny shared. “Later, when I was 16 and riding around McDonald’s with a friend, a teenage girl yelled out, ‘That’s a nice car, but you sure are ugly!’ These comments and others were a confirmation to me that I was damaged goods.”

He was sometimes tempted to surrender to the darkness he believed hovered over his future. But he never talked about it. Instead, he joked and kidded to cover the pain and the struggles of his scars.

But everything changed at church one Sunday.

“All of a sudden, I realized a love was present that I had never experienced before. Person

after person stood up to tell of their relationship with Jesus Christ and how he had made a real difference and change in their life. For the first time, I realized who Christ really was. I began to feel His love pulling me in His direction,” he said.

He continued, “That day at the crossroads, I chose the road to healing and wholeness. I am so thankful for the grace of God. As I look back and think what would have happened if I had ignored Christ Jesus that day, I can only conclude that I would have been consumed somehow by the anger and hate that I felt toward God and myself.”

What he saw in the mirror changed, although he looked no different on the outside.

Danny said, “Over a period of a few years, I no longer looked at myself as damaged goods but as a miracle walking. The truth is, I’m not who I was; I’m a new creation. My identity is now hidden in Christ. God has given me a beautiful wife, three wonderful children, and six grandchildren. Now, when I look at myself in the bathroom mirror, I see a miracle, a blessing of God. I



▲ Danny and Sherry Green

can’t wait for someone to ask me about my scars because it’s at that moment I can testify about what He has done in my life.”

Every day, we pass people with scars we cannot see.

“Most people feel inferior at some time or other, and [some] feel that way more than others. Our world is fixated on competition and comparisons. From the moment we’re born, we begin to be measured by some type of standard. We’re quickly summarized as above or below average or given a percentile,” he stated.





▲ Danny and Chloe

“I understand the reasoning behind it, but I also know that each person is valuable just like they are. We’re not diminished because we have a defect or we’ve been damaged.”

We all carry burdens — some visible, some hidden. What the world sees as ugly or disfigured is never the story. May we choose, like Danny, to see the value in each other, seeking the beauty lying just below the surface, holding a mirror in which they, too, see their true worth. GN



# Annual Kid's Fishing Rodeo - June 8



Photography by Brooke Snyder

The 22nd annual Kid's Fishing Rodeo was a great success. Over 300 participants threw in a line in an attempt to catch a portion of the 2,500 pounds of catfish dropped in the pond at Stonebridge Park. The event took place on June 8, from 8 a.m. to noon.



1. Mabrie Wall 2. Tucker Norman 3. Colton Parrish 4. Mahkaila and Hayden Kirchoff  
5. Indie Cates 6. Ellamea Escobar





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7. Shane and Remington Bartley 8. Jordan Ray and Jamorian Smith  
9. Taylor Pickett, Fern Jones, and Brant Porch 10. Charlotte Newsum



# LCHS Tennis Camp - June 17, 18, and 20



Photography by Brooke Snyder

Tennis camp, hosted by Lincoln County High School, was a huge success. The weather was perfect, and over 50 kids signed up and attended camp this year. The camp was held on June 17, 18, and 20 from 5-7 p.m.



1. Parker Jeans 2. Rivers Shelton 3. Blakeleigh Taylor 4. Abby Kate Gault  
5. Assistant coach Dietmar Bergruber 6. Wyatt Christa





7. Nolan Frame and Parker Jeans 8. Hattie Jeans  
9. Emmett Frame 10. Mary Gentry Byrd



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Facebook: Fayetteville Kiwanis Club of Tennessee  
<https://k10.site.kiwanis.org/clubs/>

## **Lincoln County Humane Society**

Shelters stray and abandoned animals in Lincoln County and provides pet adoption services.

(931) 433-3726  
[www.humanesocietylc.com](http://www.humanesocietylc.com)

## **Fayetteville-Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce**

Unites businesses and professional individuals in an effort to support the area's economy and quality of life.

(931) 433-1234  
or (888) 433-1238  
[www.fayettevillelincolncounty-chamber.com](http://www.fayettevillelincolncounty-chamber.com)

## **Fabulous Fifties Foundation**

Serves locals facing illness, accidents, and hardships with funds raised from the Fabulous Fifties Show — an annual show that brings opportunities to local performers and joy to the community.

(931) 433-3933  
[www.fabulousfiftiesshow.com](http://www.fabulousfiftiesshow.com)

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(931) 225-8578  
[www.flcarts.com](http://www.flcarts.com)

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(931) 625-6953  
[www.clotheourkids.com](http://www.clotheourkids.com)

## **Lincoln County 4-H**

Provides agriculture, leadership, and community service youth programs.

(931) 433-1582  
<https://lincoln.tennessee.edu/4-h-youth-development/>

## **Lincoln County Anti-Drug Coalition**

Prevents substance abuse and promotes healthy lifestyles.

(931) 433-6050  
Facebook: Lincoln County Anti-Drug Coalition

## **Crossroads Donkey Rescue**

Provides refuge and rehabilitation to donkeys facing neglect, abuse, and abandonment.

(989) 619-9475  
[www.crossroadsdonkeyrescue.org](http://www.crossroadsdonkeyrescue.org)



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(931) 297-2424  
[www.crossroadspregnancyclinic.org](http://www.crossroadspregnancyclinic.org)

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(931) 433-7442

## **Junior's House Inc.**

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[www.juniorshousecac.org](http://www.juniorshousecac.org)  
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