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14

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12

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Lemon Zest, Linguini Pasta,
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28

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Cajun Beurre Blanc
30

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Onions, Bell Peppers, Rice,
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8

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12

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Love is in the air

Good News celebrates the love that strengthens communities, brightens hearts, and makes life more beautiful.

YOU KNOW that first breath of spring? The way the warmer air gives you goosebumps — the air is soft, full of promise, carrying hints of something new. After months of cold, we step outside, and for the first time, the sun lingers a little longer, warming our hands, our faces, our hearts. Maybe it's still daylight when we get home from work. Love is a lot like that. It's the warmth that lingers after the winter. The breath that fills our lungs when we didn't even realize we were holding them.

Love exists in big acts with large sums of money, sure. But more often, it's in the small acts — the moments we miss that swirl through the air like dandelion seeds, taking root in ways we may never fully see. It's checking in on a friend, even when they insist they're fine. It's the extra few seconds we hold the door open, the way

we buy the person behind us a coffee in the morning. It's letting go of old grudges, choosing forgiveness even when it would be easier to stay cold.

The beautiful thing about love is that it multiplies. The more we put out into the air, the more it spreads, catching in the wind, drifting far beyond where we first let it go. Love is not just an action or money, either — it's a kind of magic that moves everything it touches in the right direction.

This issue of Good News is dedicated to that love. Not just romantic love but the kind that makes communities stronger, hearts lighter, and life a little more beautiful. Love rooted in appreciation, in gratefulness, in the quiet choices we make every day to make the world a little warmer.

So breathe it in. And then send it back out into the air. **GN**

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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GOOD NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY Exchange Media Group, Inc.

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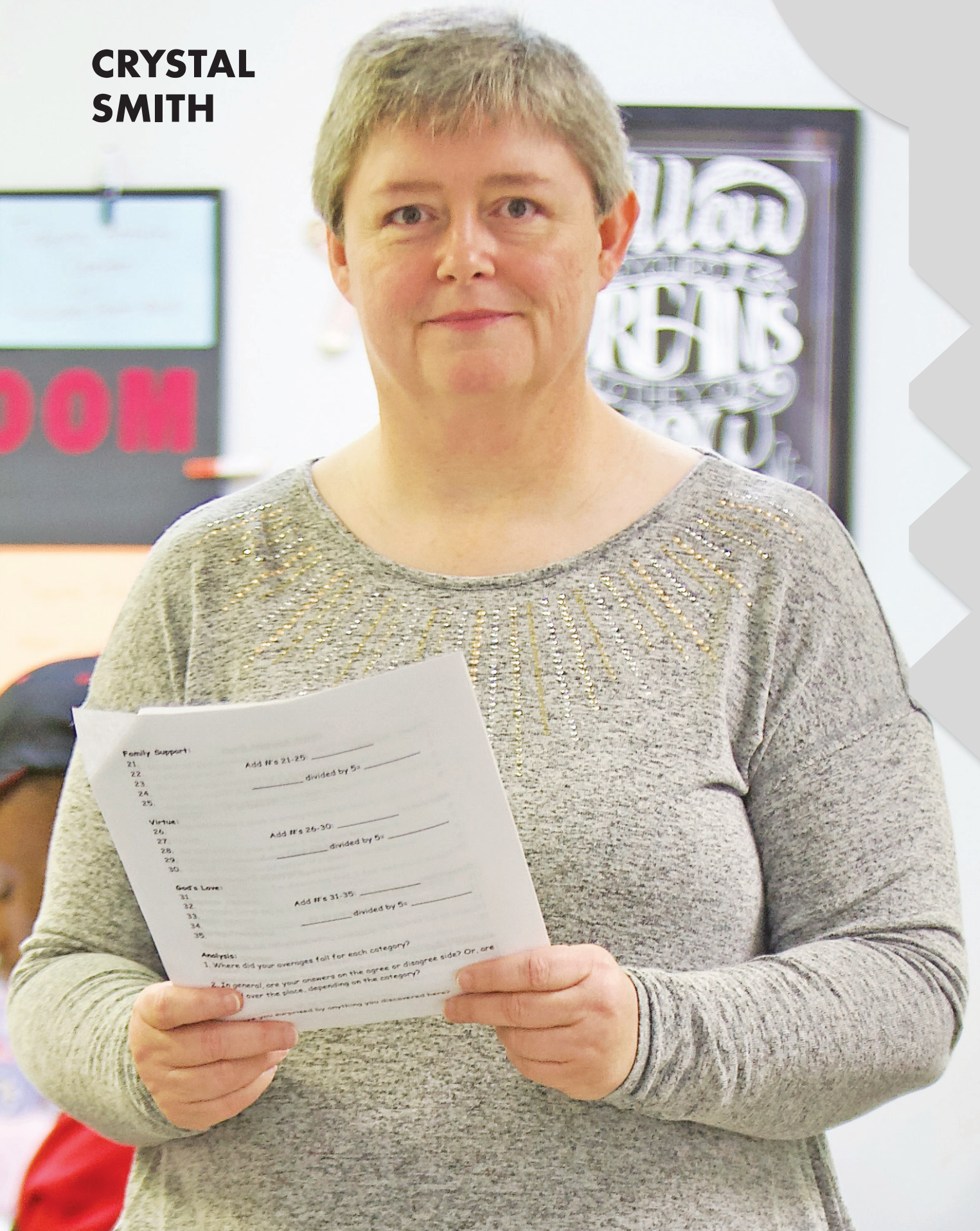


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Family Support:

- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.

Add #'s 21-25: _____
_____ divided by 5= _____

Virtue:

- 26.
- 27.
- 28.
- 29.
- 30.

Add #'s 26-30: _____
_____ divided by 5= _____

God's Love:

- 31.
- 32.
- 33.
- 34.
- 35.

Add #'s 31-35: _____
_____ divided by 5= _____

Analysis:
1. Where did your averages fall for each category?
2. In general, are your answers on the agree or disagree side? Or, are
over the place, depending on the category?
_____ you surprised by anything you discovered here?

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES SPREAD THEIR WINGS AND LEARN TO FLY.

KEY Academy teaches valuable life skills.

By Amanda E. West
Photography by Amanda Guy

INA world where opportunities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) can be limited, the KEY Academy unlocks a pathway that allows everyone to achieve their dreams. Founded by Path Forward of Kentucky, the academy offers a transformative two-year program designed to equip students with essential vocational and life skills and provide opportunities for community engagement. Through a personalized approach, the KEY Academy fosters self-advocacy, positivity, and job exploration, which enables graduates to achieve their independence.

“We identified a significant gap in services for individuals with IDD transitioning from high school to further education or employment. Our goal has always been to bridge that gap by helping participants build confidence and independence. This vision was the foundation for creating the KEY Academy. When the program first launched, we focused on young adults coming out of high school. However, we quickly realized there was also strong interest from older individuals who had not previously had opportunities to build independence or move forward in their lives,” said Brittany Knoth, executive director of Path Forward of Kentucky.

Crystal Smith has been working with the program since 2023 as the program coordinator. Recently, she challenged students to choose a recipe and cook their own meals. Though some were just beginning to learn the necessary skills to make this possible, each one did so, and Smith couldn't be more thrilled with their progress.



▲ Students of the KEY Academy embrace learning and growth as they develop vocational and life skills for greater independence and community engagement.

“We have a classroom setting and utilize lesson plans,” said Smith. “We also take field trips. Some are for community involvement, and some are specifically for the students’ interests in potential careers, or so they can practice independent living skills. We go to the University of Kentucky Extension Office in Bowling Green to use their commercial kitchens. For some students, this might be the first time they have ever attempted cooking their own food. When we focus on housekeeping skills, we go to ‘The Hive’ and clean a ‘real living room’ and sort laundry in their laundry room!”

The students aren’t the only ones following their dreams. Smith leads this hands-on learning approach, having begun creating all of the lesson plans after completing the necessary waivers and the training required by the state. She graduated from the SkyTeach program at Western Kentucky University in 2012, holds a degree in education, and earned two majors in science. Students are in capable hands, with Smith leading them.

“We provide a service that no other adult day training center offers, and this makes us unique,” said Smith. “We train high school graduates on how to live independently and how to gain and maintain employment. Our students range from 20 to 46, but they aren’t ready for a traditional vocational training program. All of our classes are hands-on. We have a lot of project-based learning to bridge the gap between where they currently are and where they need to be.”

Smith continued, “Our leadership team has over 75 combined years of experience working with people with disabilities in a professional and/or personal

capacity. The ‘PFK way’ is built on core values of compassion, education, honesty, integrity, respect, commitment, and rock-solid teamwork. Since people with disabilities are severely under-represented in the workforce, our students go through five main units of study, so they are much better equipped to go out into the world and become productive members of their community. They also learn coping skills and communication skills, which help them in every aspect of their lives.”

When the program first began, a goal was set to gain nine students by the end of the first year. Currently, Smith has 10 students, with two more on the waiting list.

“I would love to see programs like this throughout the state,” said Smith. “People with disabilities are marginalized all over the world, and they shouldn’t be. They can learn as well as anyone else, and they have dreams that they should be given the tools to pursue. Many don’t want to just sit around doing nothing. They want to be out and about. They want to work. They want to help their families. There is no reason why this can’t be a reality.”

The skills, confidence, and opportunities gained through the KEY Academy not only transform the lives of the students but also enrich our community as a whole. We invite you to support the KEY Academy in its mission to unlock the potential of every individual. Whether through volunteering, donations, or spreading the word, your involvement makes a significant difference in the lives of these remarkable adults. **GN**

For more information, go to www.pathforwardky.com.



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*“Don’t give up,
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down, try to stay
positive. Positive is
the key word.”*

- TYRA PEARSON

Becoming a warrior, not a survivor

Tyra Pearson fought cancer, and now she helps others continue the fight.

By Sara Hook // Photography by Adin Parks

ACCORDING TO the Cambridge Dictionary, a warrior is “someone who has experience and skill in fighting.” Tyra Pearson’s battle was against her own body, and her victory against cancer was a result of her own determination as well as that of the doctors treating her. Now, as a breast cancer warrior, Pearson encourages and informs other women going through the same battle.

Pearson was on her second mammogram when the doctors found something. A biopsy showed that it was benign, and her follow-up was also positive. Nothing was out of the ordinary, and Pearson found herself putting off her next annual appointment. Once she realized that, she was determined to go at the next opportunity.

“I have anxiety, so they wouldn’t call me back fast enough,” Pearson

said. “I got a hold of my doctor, and she said, ‘Hey, something showed up.’”

She found out she had breast cancer on her youngest daughter’s birthday. Pearson was 42 years old.

“For about two hours, nobody could find me,” Pearson said. “My father passed away about four years ago from cancer, and I went to my dad’s grave, and I just sat and I talked to him.”

She also called her brother, who told her she had to fight, no matter what — and that’s what she did. As a single mother of three, she had to be strong for her kids, and she continued going to work throughout the entire treatment.

“I really shocked myself by the way that I handled the situation, but I’ve just been praying about it, going strong, and talking to people,” Pearson said. “I’ve just put up the fight.”

Fortunately, Pearson caught her cancer early. She did not have to go through chemotherapy, but she did have surgery at TriStar Greenview Regional Hospital, followed by 20 rounds of radiation at another facility. TriStar has some of the newest 3D imaging technology in the area, and Pearson said their staff made her feel welcome.

“Dr. Jessen was my surgeon,” Pearson said. “He saw that I was scared, and he was like, ‘Can I pray with you?’ And he got on

his knees, and he prayed with me, and that really meant a lot to me.”

Eight months after receiving the diagnosis, Pearson’s scan showed her cancer-free. At first, she considered herself a cancer survivor, Pearson said, before a brief conversation changed the way she saw her journey.

“A lady walked up to me, and she was like, ‘let’s not say survivor, let’s say warrior,’ and she was like, ‘we’re just going to keep pushing,’” Pearson said.

Taking that designation to heart, Pearson has made it a point to share her story and encourage other women to get tested. Especially in her work at AT&T, she has found conversations with women about cancer, mammograms, and the importance of early testing. She has also encouraged women to be strong and fight, just as she did.

“Sometimes, as women, we let things get to us,” Pearson said. “Don’t give up, don’t get yourself down, try to stay positive. Positive is the key word.”

Early detection of breast cancer is possible with TriStar’s technology, and yearly mammograms save lives. Pearson said if she had waited, her diagnosis could have been much, much worse.

“Don’t think that it can’t happen to you,” Pearson said. “No matter how old — young or old — anybody can get breast cancer.” GN

You can schedule a mammogram screening online at tristarhealth.com or visit the hospital at 1801 Ashley Circle to learn more about women’s services.



FOR THE LOVE OF
HOCKEY





A WIN FOR HOCKEY AND THE COMMUNITY WITH BG PUCK CLASSIC

BY HALEY POTTER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRETCHEN CLARK

THE SHARP sound of skates carving into fresh ice and the crisp chill of a Bowling Green winter day set the stage for the second annual BG Puck Classic. Held at the SoKY Ice Rink in downtown Bowling Green, this year's event was a thrilling showcase of community and the love of hockey. On Feb. 1, the rink came alive with the echoes of slap shots and cheers as players and spectators gathered to celebrate a steadily growing sport in Kentucky.

Tony Brown, the passionate founder and organizer of the BG Puck Classic, was at the heart of this event. His mission? To grow the hockey community in Bowling Green while fostering connections between players, fans, and local businesses. "There's actually a lot of people in and around Bowling Green who played hockey as kids or adults but don't realize there's a network of others who share that same passion," Brown shared. "This event is an opportunity to bring everyone together."

This year, the BG Puck Classic was bigger and better. With over 50 players competing, the

tournament featured teams sponsored by 10 local businesses, showcasing a remarkable collaboration between the hockey community and the Bowling Green area. "Each team is sponsored by a business, and the players are drafted to those teams," Brown explained. "It's about building partnerships and highlighting the incredible local businesses we have here."

What made this event even more remarkable was its regional draw. Players and fans traveled from cities like Nashville, Knoxville, and even Cincinnati to participate and cheer on the teams. Despite its growing reach, the BG Puck Classic remained rooted in its mission to elevate the local community. Brown emphasized, "We want to highlight Bowling Green businesses while creating an event that hockey fans across the region can look forward to."

For Brown, hockey has always been a passion. Growing up in Bowling Green, he played high school travel hockey in Owensboro and continued his love for the game through adult leagues and tournaments across the country. The BG Puck Classic is more than just a tournament to him; it's a way to build a strong hockey community in



▲ Nate Berry and Nash Brassel enjoy a game of hockey on a kid-friendly rink, embracing the excitement of the BG Puck Classic.

a region where the sport has struggled to find a permanent foothold. “There’s a small group here working to establish a permanent ice rink that could host hockey and other ice sports,” he said. “But to make that happen, we need a strong, united community. That’s what this event is all about.”

The SoKY Ice Rink, which recently celebrated its grand opening, provided the perfect backdrop for this year’s event. The all-day affair was free to attend, making it accessible to families and individuals of all ages. “We want people to come out, even if it’s just for a little while,” Brown said. “It’s a chance to experience the excitement of hockey and maybe inspire the next generation of players.”

Last year’s inaugural event was a resounding success, and this year, Brown expanded on that foundation with bigger ideas and greater community involvement. As the puck dropped on Feb. 1, the BG Puck Classic was a celebration of hockey and a testament to the power of community and the shared love for a sport that brings people together.

With its unique blend of competition, collaboration, and community spirit, this event left a lasting impression on Bowling Green and beyond. **GN**



▲ Anna, John, and Julius Weslo share a fun-filled family moment while attending the BG Puck Classic.



▲ Spectators watch the action at the BG Puck Classic, enjoying a day of hockey and community at the SoKY Ice Rink.

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UPON ENTERING Toro restaurant, you're immediately struck by its modern industrial yet cozy chic decor, highlighted by a striking metal bull with glowing red eyes that cleverly doubles as storage for extra plates and napkins. The restaurant has cozy velvet banquette seating and numerous large-screen TVs so you sports fans don't have to miss a play.

With an extensive selection of hand-crafted cocktails to choose from, picking just one was nearly impossible. I ultimately opted for the blood orange caipirinha, which was both absolutely delicious and refreshingly vibrant. Paired with some fresh, crunchy restaurant-made tortilla chips and a not-so-spicy salsa roja it was a great start to our meal. Toro also has an extensive coffee menu, including cafe cubanos and affogatos — in case you require a little extra energy to keep eating — which I'd highly recommend because there's so much to try here, and everything I've sampled so far has been tasty.

Tapas, which are absolutely big enough to serve a few friends, include typical

items like chips and dip, oysters, shrimp, nachos, and wings, with more exotic offerings like Calamari Al Diablo, which was served in a sauce made with chorizo and spicy salsa. Because I consider octopi too smart and fascinating to eat, we went with some delicious Spanish meatballs in a sauce made from tomatoes and gorgonzola, accompanied by some delightfully charred and garlicky bread. Another delicious choice were the street corn fritters that were savory and citrusy thanks to a topping of lime aioli and Tajin. A sesame ginger salad made with crisp cucumbers, radishes, and juicy pineapple was a spectacular palate cleanser, and we followed up our delightful tapas meal with some Nutella creme brulee and an outstanding crepe cream cake where the crepes were paper thin and a fluffy, creamy custard was sandwiched in between.

Toro has seafood, vegetarian, and kids offerings, so it's a place that either works for a fun family dinner with unusual tapas to share or a romantic evening with a paella to share. **GN**

GOOD NEWS IS COMING TO DINNER!

We will feature a local food critic's thoughts as they dine in Bowling Green. This month Eve Vawter visited Toro.

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A TIMELESS LOVE



Bill and Betty Glisson's 71-year journey

By Haley Potter
Photography by Amanda Guy

SITTING SIDE by side in their cozy living room at Arcadia in Bowling Green, Bill and Betty Glisson shared laughter and memories as they reflected on their love story, seven decades in the making. Their love is obvious, as strong as it was when they met on the school bus all those years ago.

"I was a senior in high school, and I drove the school bus to school every day. One day, I picked up a girl whose eyes gleamed like no other, and, from then on, the seat behind the driver's seat on the bus was reserved for Betty," Bill shared. "Everyone knew that was Betty's seat."

You could say the rest is history.

"I knew that day I was going to love her forever," Bill said.

The couple raised two children, Tony and Tamy. Tony and his wife, Leeza, have two daughters, and Tamy and her husband, Alan, have two sons. The Glissons were at the hospital for nearly every one of their four grandkids' and seven great-grandkids' births, even if it meant driving quite the distance.

That love and devotion to family speaks volumes about the couple.

The Glissons built a strong foundation for themselves, their children, and their grandchildren, passing down values of love, respect, and commitment. Their son Tony's admiration for his parents' loving relationship is evident.

"Dad taught me a lot about honoring and respecting Mom. I even learned how to love my wife, Leeza, because of what he did," said Tony. "It was always about honor and respect and consideration. That's how I learned what it means to truly care for someone. They've passed on something that has shaped my life and my marriage. It's a gift."

For Betty, their children's happiness and well-being have been her joy.

"Our children have been such a blessing. They've taken care of us, and they're always there. When we moved to be closer to them, they had our apartment all set up, even groceries in the refrigerator," she said.

Betty laughed when asked about the secrets to a long-lasting marriage, "You have to love each other and just get along."

Bill chimed in with a twinkle in his eye, "Keep your mouth shut when there's trouble," and they both shared a hearty laugh. Even after seven decades, this playfulness shows the importance of joy and laughter in maintaining a lifelong partnership.

Their love story is grounded in shared values and a deep respect for family.

Bill recalled when he found himself alongside his twin brother, Johnny, helping Betty's parents unload corn from a truck. Dressed in his best clothes, he worked alongside Betty's father, not thinking twice about showing his love through action. "We came up the hard way," Bill shared, "and I was there to show I could support her, no matter what."

For Bill, commitment is a word he takes seriously, especially when honoring his vows. "If you love her, stick with her. Forsake all others," he said with conviction.

His faith has been a guiding principle throughout his marriage, serving as a

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**A BIRTHDAY TO
REMEMBER**

BILL AND BETTY GLISSON





◀ Bill holds a framed photo of him and Betty from the beginning of their relationship, after reflecting on 71 years of true love and devotion.

“

**WE'VE BEEN
BLESSED
IN WAYS
WE COULD
HAVE NEVER
IMAGINED.**

- Betty Glisson

steady anchor even during tough times. Reflecting on this, Betty said, “I just knew he’d be there. It never crossed my mind he’d step out. He was my husband, and that’s all I needed to know.”

A letter, still in its original envelope, aged and worn, revealed Bill’s love and admiration for his wife. Written to Betty on their first wedding anniversary and recently discovered at the couple’s former Mississippi home, it’s a time capsule of promises made and dreams whispered.

“I wanted to put down in words what I couldn’t say out loud,” Bill explained, his voice cracking slightly.

Health challenges tested their bond in recent years, especially when Bill underwent brain surgery. Betty’s voice softened as she recalled that terrifying time. “I just knew I’d lost him,” she said, her eyes welling up. “He was bleeding on the brain, and I thought, ‘They’re waiting on him to die.’” Yet,

against all odds, doctors operated, and Bill pulled through.

COVID-19 restrictions meant Betty could only see him through a window during his recovery. “It was so hard,” she said. “I just wanted to hold his hand, but we could only talk through the glass.”

Despite the physical distance during that time, their love was crystal clear. Betty never stopped praying for his recovery, holding onto her faith as she stood by his side, even if only through a pane of glass.

“He got COVID on top of everything else,” Tony recalled, “but he fought through it all. And when he came home, he was as sharp as ever.”

Betty is proud that the love she and Bill share will inspire future generations. Her eyes sparkled as she talked about their great-grandchildren, whom she lovingly calls “her little jewels.”

“Our family is beautiful,” she said. “We’ve been blessed in ways we could have never imagined.”

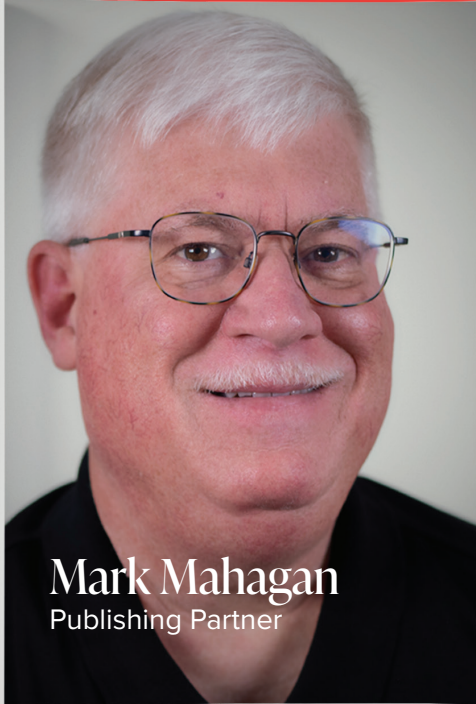
When asked more about a loving marriage, Bill’s answer was simple yet profound: “Stick together. Love each other. That’s all that matters.” This advice is rooted in his own life, one spent honoring the woman he chose so many years ago.

Looking toward the future, Bill and Betty remain committed to love. For them, love isn’t just a feeling; it’s a lifelong promise to honor, support, and cherish one another through every trial and triumph.

“It’s special, seeing the legacy they’ve built,” Tony said.

Even in their 90s, they can love one another the same way, or even a little stronger, than they did in their teens. Their journey reflects a timeless truth: that true love, when nurtured with faith, respect, and a touch of humor, can indeed last a lifetime. **GN**

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A TEEN'S SELFLESS GIFT WARMS NASHVILLE'S STREETS.

Preslee Thurman, 17, sacrifices her Christmas presents to bring hope and warmth to those in need.

By Gabriel Grant Huff
Photography by Adin Parks

A MAN ON the streets shivers in the cold, pulling his thin coat tighter against his starving body, leaning against a wall to reduce the piercing Nashville wind. He quit tracking time months or even years ago but knows it's January because Christmas displays, though decreasing by the week, still sparkle in the windows of some glass storefronts. In his worn, tattered clothes, the man keeps watch, ready to defend himself immediately if a threat approaches. When grogginess starts weighing on his eyelids, he sees two young girls and two older folks walking past him, but a blink issues a correction. The group actually walks toward him, carrying bags. The older of the two girls then stops and extends one of those bags to him.

Suddenly, a sensation of warmth ignites within the man, like steamy liquid soothing its way down his throat and spreading within his chest.

"Thank you," he said, as his day just got a little bit brighter and warmer.

Preslee Thurman hopes to inspire everyone she meets on the streets of Nashville, Tennessee's capital. The 17-year-old does what some teens are unwilling to do to accomplish her goal.

She sacrifices her Christmas gifts.

Preslee, a native of Franklin, Kentucky, where her father was raised, lives a typical teenage life: she attends school, competes in dance, loves animals, and dreams of becoming a marine biologist after college.

However, her actions betray the heart of anything but a typical teen. Around 2021, Preslee told her mom, dad, and grandparents that she no longer wanted Christmas gifts.

Instead, she desired to take that money and shop for those without homes or in need. Hearts filled with thankfulness and pride, the parents obliged.

In January, Preslee spends a day filling bags with blankets, scarves, food, gloves, hats, toiletries, handwritten notes, and Bible verses. The following day, she travels from Franklin to downtown Nashville with her nana and grandpa to distribute the bags to those she encounters on the streets — Preslee's cousin, Sawyer, who is six years younger, tags along with them. The handouts usually take about two hours.

"There's not a lot of homeless people in Franklin, and Nashville is pretty close, and there's a lot of them there," Preslee said.

So that's where she takes Sawyer, hoping to stand as a living example for her cousins.

The need certainly exists, after all. According to Metro Nashville's Homelessness Dashboard, 3,412 people in April 2024 endured homelessness in the city. Working to fight such insecurity, the Metro Council approved a historic \$50 million investment via American Rescue Plan funds in October 2022 to reduce homelessness. In her own way, Preslee aims to help and provide a message. Her Bible notes tell the people she finds in the cold that they are not alone, hopefully providing a hint of light to individuals who need the smile.

Preslee simultaneously leaves a message for her younger cousins.

"I want to show my little cousins that it's good to give to others, and it makes me feel good knowing that I'm not just getting a bunch of stuff for Christmas and other people aren't, so I give back," she said.

LOVE
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AIR



PRESLEE THURMAN

Does the 17-year-old feel nervous while doing this good deed?

No. She feels terrible.

“I always feel super bad after because it makes me realize how much I have and that I need to be more grateful.”

With her mom as an inspiration, Preslee strives to always give back, acknowledging her very own blessings and her duty to serve those living in worse situations.

“I always think about what God would do,” Preslee said. “So maybe pray for them, and I would say be kind because you never know what someone else is going through. Whatever you do, do it in love. That’s what I go by because that’s what God would want.”

Preslee’s actions convey to every girl, boy, woman, and man the importance of giving, especially in the United States, where the average person is better off than most people living in a third-world country. From that perspective, wealth takes on a completely different meaning, one that Preslee better understands every year when she visits Nashville. It becomes a momentary shelter for someone facing the bitter coldness of a harsh world.

Those wanting to learn more about Nashville’s efforts to help those in need can visit the city’s website at nashville.gov. People looking to help can support organizations like the Nashville Rescue Mission through donations or volunteer work. **GN**

“

I ALWAYS FEEL SUPER BAD AFTER BECAUSE IT MAKES ME REALIZE HOW MUCH I HAVE AND THAT I NEED TO BE MORE GRATEFUL.

- Preslee Thurman

COMPASSION AND CARE: THE LIFELINE OF THE HIVE

Providing a source of hope and support in Bowling Green

By Amanda E. West
Photography by Amanda Guy

ON THE day of the high school graduation, Laura Orsland's anxiety for her son, Tay, reached its peak. As he twirled and showed off his new cap and gown, pride overwhelmed her. Yet, beneath that pride, a gnawing fear of what his future held rose within her. Since she enrolled Tay in kindergarten, the structured school environment has provided him with a sense of routine and built-in friendships. However, as soon as Tay switched his tassel to the opposite side and received his diploma, this safety net would be severed. The question of what happened next haunted Laura.

This concern led her to establish The HIVE in 2017. What started in a small classroom borrowed from The Housing Authority, with four members, gained momentum, and the group moved to a different facility before finally settling into their current location in 2020. They have now served over 550 individuals and their families.

"At The HIVE, our mission is to empower individuals with intellectu-

al development disabilities to pursue self-directed and fulfilling lives. We strive to provide the necessary support for making informed decisions, fostering relationships, and engaging fully in the community. Our vision is a welcoming environment where everyone can live, work, and have access to opportunities as esteemed members of society," said Grace Hagan, the director of programs.

For Hagan, the mission of The HIVE hits close to home. When her brother was younger, he was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, but in recent years, genetic tests have revealed that his learning differences are due to a genetic condition called 8p23 deletion.

"Growing up with a disabled brother has influenced me to work in this field. I've seen the trials and triumphs that affect those with disabilities and their families. With limited resources and funding, too many individuals get left behind in a system that is overrun. Everyone longs to engage with others and contribute to society, and so I work to help those find that for themselves."

At The HIVE, staff tailor a wide range of services and programs to meet each participant's unique needs. These include educational activities, vocational training, recreational opportunities, and life skills development. This personalized approach ensures that each individual receives the attention and care they need to thrive in their own lives. Community involvement is at the heart of their programs, fostering a deeper sense of belonging for participants and their families.

"Feeling valued is an essential, yet often overlooked, component in one's success in life, work, and independent living. Being informed is another, and the work we do extends beyond just directly working with our members, but also their families, therapists, and support professionals so that everyone who needs wrap-around support is receiving it," said Hagan.

Parents and caregivers consistently share how The HIVE has been a lifeline for their families. One such story is that of Valerie, who couldn't make her own lunch when she first started attending. She also struggled to hold a part-time job and lived in a neglectful and unsafe environment. Today, after engaging in the programs for a couple of years, Valerie makes her own meals, works a part-time job, and lives in a safer environment.

Before moving to Bowling Green, Paige felt isolated in her journey as a caregiver. At The HIVE, her son, Brian, developed friendships, which improved his overall well-being and helped him develop social skills. Paige discovered a community of other caregivers who understood her day-to-day struggles. Now, she feels supported, heard, and guided, which makes both of their lives richer.

The HIVE operates in harmony with Medicaid services that members already receive from other agencies. By not billing Medicaid or insurance companies, staff spend their time focusing on the members and not filing paperwork. Therefore, community support is vital to the continuation of their services and makes tax dollars work more effectively.

"If you don't have a friend who is neurodiverse or who has an intellectual disability, you are missing out on a multidimensional, complex, unique, and wonderful human being who will enrich your life in ways you wouldn't imagine. Connect with someone. You will be glad you did," said Hagan.

The HIVE is a source of hope and support, and its positive impact on individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families is undeniable. Together, we can ensure that every individual, like Tay, has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling and enriched life. **GN**

*For more information,
go to www.thehivebg.org.*

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THE HIVE CLUB

The Wide World of Animals - Jan. 18



Photography by Gretchen Clark

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1. Group of parents and teachers who attended the event 2. Jamie Kemmerer holds the largest type of owl in the world
3. Grant Kemmerer feeds corn to a capybara 4. Daisy, Justin, Leo, Lea, and Demi Lindsey

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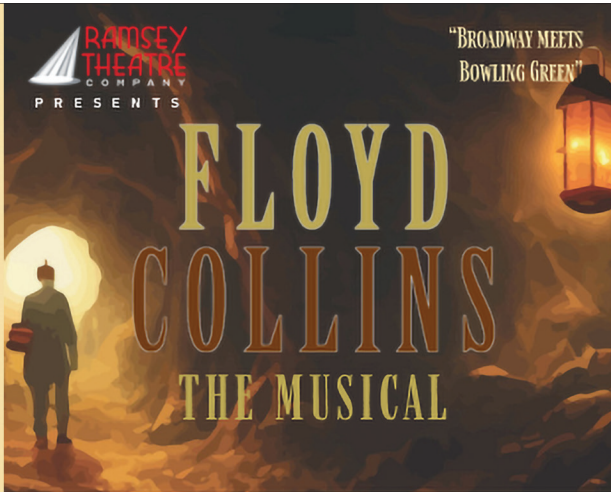
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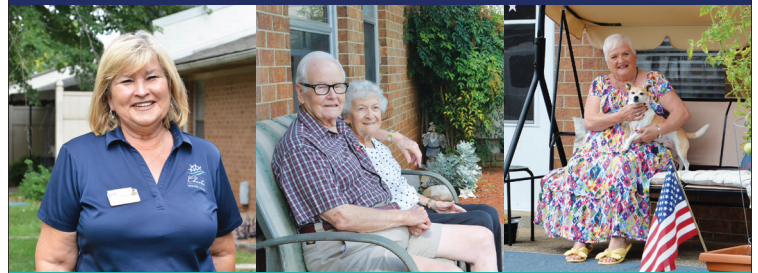
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