DAN HOLT

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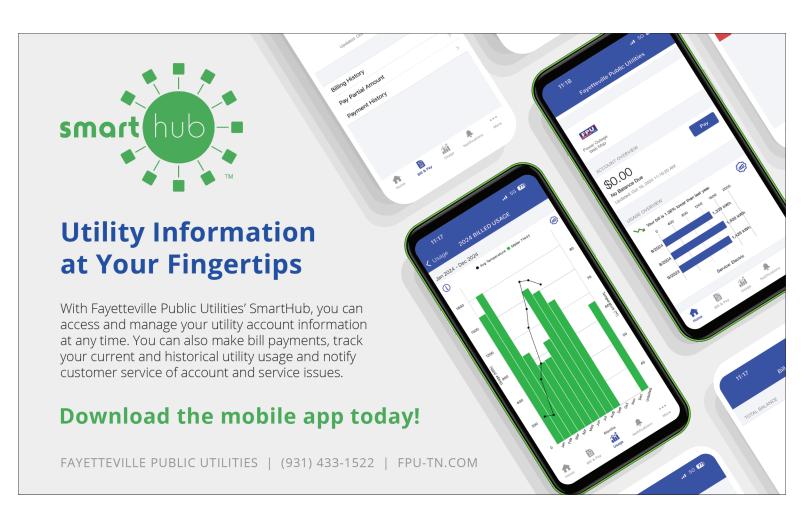




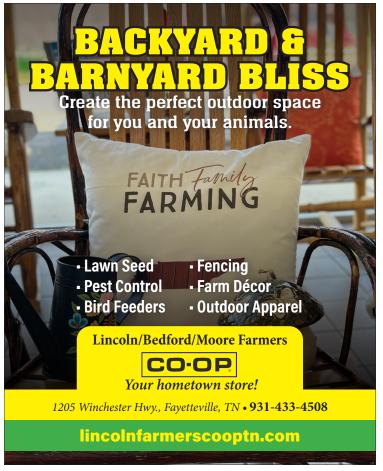
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"GOOD NEWS MAGAZINE" is published monthly by Exchange Media Group Inc., 404 Main Avenue S, Fayetteville, Tennessee 37334. Periodicals postage pending Fayetteville, TN Post Office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Exchange Media Group, P.O. Box 490, Fayetteville, TN 37334





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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Shop Local

Every receipt is a vote for dreams to stay open.

WHEN YOU choose a locally owned business over a national chain, you're not just spending your money, you're planting it. And the roots of that investment reach deep. Every dollar counts, and it lifts our neighbors.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, 68 cents of every dollar spent at a local business stays in your community, compared to just 32 cents at a chain. When the community gets to keep the cash flow internal, it doesn't lose revenue to corporations and competitors.

Imagine a little shop tucked between a bakery and a barber. The owner opens the doors each morning with her hands wrapped around a warm mug of coffee. She sweeps the sidewalk and turns on the glowing "open" sign. Years ago, she dreamed of creating a shop that felt like home, where people could find handmade goods, gifts that mean something, and real connection. That dream became her reality not because a corporation backed her, but because her neighbors did.

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Because people like you stopped by.

Every time someone chose her store, she was able to hire a part-time worker, fix a leaky roof, or sponsor a Little League team. When large companies laid off workers, her steady foot traffic kept her doors open and jobs in place. Because the people in our community are not just people looking for a profit. They're friends. Neighbors.

When our community is full of local businesses, it brings our home to life. It makes the gloomy gray sky look like a bright sunrise after a stormy night. It adds beauty, like a local flower shop with blooming colors. Without each other, those flowers wilt. Without our financial support, our shops close their doors. When the glowing neon sign turns off for good, the storm rolls back in.

Sure, shopping local can sometimes mean paying a couple of extra bucks. But our community and the people in it are worth it. This issue of Good News is about shopping local, and it celebrates the people who keep our community alive. **GN**

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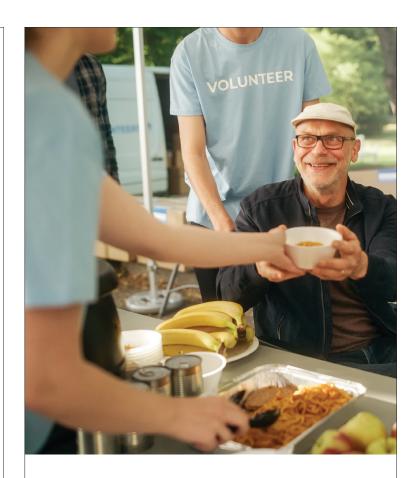
GOOD NEWS IS PUBLISHED BY Exchange Media Group, Inc. **FOUNDER** Bill Thomas (1940-2010)

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Rob Barnett

One box, countless blessings







What started as a small gesture is now a growing movement of giving.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

IKE THE sky overhead, most of Fayetteville is still asleep when Rob Barnett arrives at Elk River Trading Company on a cold December Saturday morning. Today isn't about sales—it's about giving back.

Barnett's commitment to service began in 2020 with a simple "blessing box" inspired by Lisa Little of Fieldstone Jewelry & Pawn in Conyers, Georgia.

"It didn't take long for the community to become reliant on that box," he said, noting how locals took ownership of keeping it stocked. Later, he added the community coat rack, offering warmth to those who needed it.

His desire to serve didn't stop there. In September 2023, the Day of Giving was born from a conversation with Tracie Cowan of "Bryan & Tracie Mornings" on WYTM Radio.

"We wanted to create a holiday event that would help our community and the organizations that support those in need," Barnett explained.

The idea took shape: Bryan and Tracie would broadcast all morning from a fully extended Fayetteville Public Utilities bucket truck, collecting canned food, pet food, and coats for the community coat rack.

Even with careful planning, doubt always creeps in during those early hours.

"Rising before 3 a.m. to stand outside in the cold for eight



Doug Priest, sales manager; Alisha Dunivan, jewelry and luxury manager; Sam Kirkland, customer service manager; Mike Truesdale, inventory manager; and Robert Barnett, owner

"As Tina spoke about the impact of our donations, she became emotional. In that moment, every hour, dollar, and effort I had put into preparing for my second Day of Giving felt completely justified."

-Rob Barnett

hours is daunting. And I wonder — maybe last year was a fluke, and no one will show up this year."

Then a car arrives. A small bag of canned vegetables is dropped off, and another follows. Soon, donations trickle in steadily.

"Slowly, the front porch of my store begins to fill with stacks of canned food," Barnett said.

Late into the first year's event, a man approached WYTM's owner, John Malone, asking if donations were still being accepted. Handing over a small bag with four cans, he apologized, explaining it was all he could spare. Then he shared his story — once down to his last can of food, unsure when he'd afford more, he now wanted to give what little he could.

"He knew firsthand how much of a difference just a few extra cans in the pantry can make," Barnett recalled.

That spirit of giving has only grown. In 2024, the Day of Giving raised nearly \$9,000 for Hands of Mercy and \$1,500 for the humane society and collected almost 50 coats. Barnett's store serves as

a drop-off point, and people continue to contribute throughout the year.

The most rewarding moment came when Barnett presented the proceeds to the Hands of Mercy director, Tina Hudson.

"As Tina spoke about the impact of our donations, she became emotional ... In that moment, every hour, dollar, and effort I had put into preparing for my second Day of Giving felt completely justified."

Barnett doesn't take the generosity of the community for granted.

"The food and funds we've raised were swiftly put to use, providing essential support and nourishment to both people and pets throughout Lincoln County," he said.

For Barnett, it all started with a simple box. Now, it's a movement — one that keeps growing, fueled by the kindness of those willing to give, no matter how much or how little they have. **GN**

You can follow Elk River Trading Company on Facebook or visit the store at 1703 Huntsville Hwy., Fayetteville, (931) 297-2170, or elkrivertrading.com.



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Gay Dempsey:

Banking on COMMUNITY

The Bank of Lincoln County supports small businesses and invests in the local economy.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder and submitted by Gay Dempsey

N CHRISTMAS Eve in 1960, Charles Gleghorn stepped behind the teller's counter at Lincoln County Bank for the first time. He slid open a heavy wooden cash drawer, its metal dividers clinking against neatly stacked bills. He calculated transactions on the mechanical adding machine beside him with a series of sharp clacks. He recorded each transaction by hand. Gleghorn noted customers' savings in an ink-stamped passbook. Banking was slow and deliberate — built on face-to-face trust.

By 2002, Gleghorn had launched and led the Bank of Lincoln County (BOLC). Today, his daughter, Gay Dempsey, serves as BOLC's chief executive officer. Tellers barely touch cash before it moves through the system. Transactions happen in seconds, screens replacing ink-stamped ledgers. Customers



▲ A genuine smile and a compassionate heart is what is given to those crossing paths with Dempsey at Bank of Lincoln County.



▲ Allison and Robin, who work for Bank of Lincoln County, visit local businesses for BOLC's Cash Mob.



Charles Gleghorn (Dempsey's father), Gay Dempsey, Dale Gleghorn (Dempsey's first cousin and the current bank president). This photo was taken early 2024.

tap phones instead of handing over paper checks. But despite all that's changed, one thing remains the same: the bank's mission to make a difference in the lives of its customers, its staff, and the community it serves.

That mission extends beyond banking — it's about strengthening the local economy.

"Giving back is truly part of the DNA of the Bank of Lincoln County," Dempsey said. "And part of that is supporting our local small businesses."

One of the bank's most visible efforts is "cash mobs," a targeted initiative that sends a surge of shoppers to a selected small business.

"The goal of a cash mob is to highlight a local small business and provide an economic stimulus for that business," Dempsey explained. "The bank gives each employee a specific amount of money, and each person shops at that business on a specific day. Each person typically spends more money than they're given, so it provides a significant economic impact on the business."

The initiative also draws in community members, ensuring businesses gain new customers and an immediate boost in sales.

BOLC also celebrates Small Business Month, spotlighting local entrepreneurs and fostering community engagement. A more playful approach comes through the "Where's Iggy?" campaign, named after the bank's beloved mascot. The bank posts videos of Iggy "shopping" at different local

66

GIVING BACK
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SMALL
BUSINESSES.

- Gay Dempsey

stores, encouraging the community to guess his location.

"The first person to guess where Iggy is shopping wins a gift from that small business," Dempsey said.

Beyond promotional events, the bank itself leads by example.

"I'm not sure that people ever stop to think that the Bank of Lincoln County is also a local small business," Dempsey said. "Our shareholders are from Fayetteville and Lincoln County. So when our bank and our community succeed, we all win."

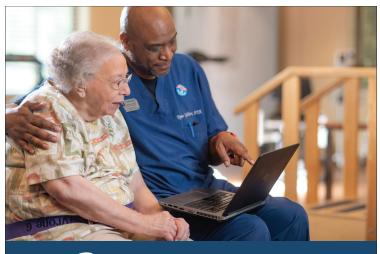
The bank invests in local restaurants and caterers for events, purchases from nearby vendors, and helps entrepreneurs secure funding to launch or expand their businesses.

Every dollar spent at a Lincoln County business strengthens the local economy. Every deposit at BOLC stays in the community, funding new homes, farms, and businesses.

"When you deposit your money at the Bank of Lincoln County, that money stays here and is invested back into Lincoln County," Dempsey stated. "It stays here and makes a difference here."

Rooted in trust, the Bank of Lincoln County continues to strengthen the community, one local business at a time. **GN**

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Dan Holt SMALL-TOWN GROCER, BIG-TIME IMPACT

Holt's IGA flourishes thanks to teamwork, community support, and a passion for service.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

OLT'S IGA may bear Dan Holt's name, but this hometown grocer's greatest success is carried on the shoulders of his team.

Holt never set out to own a grocery store. In October 2016, he bought a Fayetteville shopping center, expecting rent

checks from Piggly Wiggly. Two weeks later, they turned over the keys to Holt.

"I decided to purchase the inventory and equipment and try to operate the store myself," he said, leaning on his family's business roots.

A 9-month remodel birthed Holt's IGA, and mid-rebuild, Joe Lauria approached with an offer.

"I've been seeing what you're doing, and I want to help," he said to Holt.

And he did. He turned a struggling store right side up.

"He changed the whole culture of our store, from the way we stocked the shelves and displays, the cleanliness of the store, the way we greeted our customers and many other positive ways he has impacted our store. Joe brought a sense of pride and accountability to our team," Holt shared.

With this revitalized team culture in place, Holt's IGA was better equipped to face the challenges of competing with large chains, leveraging its customer



A Back: Zeb Holloway, Keri Pettie, Harley Roland, Joey Jean, Brandon Cartwright, Hillary Sydnes, and Chris Brannin Front: Nathan Webb, Dan Holt, Joe Lauria, Christi Gray, and John Pollock

service and community support strengths to stand out in the market.

"We just get up and go to work each day with a good attitude and try to take care of the needs of our customers. We do have a huge advantage over them with our fresh meat department and our customer service," Holt explained. "We also have the advantage of passing on some great deals each week, which are passed on to us from our buying group. We usually have over a thousand items on sale at any given time."

Holt's leadership and his team's dedication have not gone unnoticed.

The Independent Grocers' Association (IGA) designated Holt's IGA as a five-star retailer for 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

In 2024, meat cutter Brandon Cartwright, a store veteran, earned a national award, and Holt's IGA won IGA USA Retailer of the Year. Again, Holt points back to the difference others make in the store's success.

"The credit goes to Joe, General Manager Nathan Webb, and the great team they've assembled."

And, of course, without the Lincoln County community, there'd be no Holt's IGA.

Holt said, "We are very thankful for the support from our community. I feel, as a small business owner in my hometown, that I should do my best to help others when they ask. I see this as a chance to bless others and know that doing the right thing to help others will always come back to benefit our team as well."

Holt's heart for his team is evident.

"At Holt's IGA and our other businesses, we have outstanding





▲ Thomas Monks is a regular customer of Holt's IGA.



▲ Nathan Webb and Brandon Cartwright

"We just get up and go to work each day with a good attitude and try to take care of the needs of our customers."

DAN HOLT

people who work hard each day to provide for themselves and their families. While it may be a store for most people, to our team members, it is their livelihood. I am very thankful to every one of them and thankful to our customers that do business with us."

It's the heartbeat of the community.

"I am very proud to live here," declared Holt. **GN**

Holt's IGA is located at 2762 Huntsville Hwy. # B, Fayetteville, (931) 433–6772. Visit holtsiga.net and follow the store on Facebook.





Mike and Jeff Bradford FIXING WHAT BIG STORES CAN'T

For over 50 years, their family business has kept appliances running with local service and care.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

ROM THE corner of your eye, Mt. Washmore looms — laundry stalled by a dead washing machine. The big box store's helpline? Forty-five minutes on hold, promising you're "next."

It hasn't always been this way.

Decades ago, washing machines, clothes dryers, and kitchen appliances didn't last forever, but there's no denying they lasted longer. It wasn't an 800 number you called for service; it was the local number of your appliance repair company. In 1974, a new number gave Fayetteville and Lincoln County residents access to service and used appliance sales — Bradford Appliance.

It was the year that Billy Joe Bradford, tired of commuting to Sears in

Huntsville, opened Bradford Appliance with his wife, Jane. From a modest block building on Fire Hall Hill, they offered repairs and used appliance sales — a rare local option. Sons Mike and Jeff helped out as teens, then joined full time after layoffs at Jack Daniel's Distillery in 1984, when the business moved to Lincoln Avenue South and began selling new appliances. From here, the Bradford family continues to serve the community today.

"My mother still comes to work every day and works just as many hours as the rest of us. Since my dad passed away, she has turned the business over to me and my brother," Mike shared.

It's been a strong dynamic.



Mr. Billy Joe Bradford made his mark all over Bradford Appliance, from the heights of his babies, the day he had a stint placed back in 2001, down to the day he purchased a new pair of shoes.

Mike said, "Some families can't work together, but we hardly ever have a cross word."

Customers buying appliances today face dizzying selections from showrooms and giant warehouse floors. But Bradford Appliance, with its competitive pricing and local customer service, eases the process and provides the security of someone local to call when problems arise.

"If we just sold appliances, we would probably already be out of business. But we do repair what we sell. These new appliances are not built the way they used to be, and stuff is so complicated."

With repairs lagging weeks behind, they now focus on servicing the appliances they sell.

"Shopping local is a huge thing. Being local and being connected with the community and the people means a lot," Mike mentioned. "A lot of the banks in town really push that, and it's helped us. The Bank of Lincoln County and Charles Gleghorn and Gay Dempsey have been really good about pushing the small businesses, so that helps a whole lot."

For half a century, Bradford Appliance has weathered change — outlasting sturdy old machines and adapting to today's more complex models. From Fire Hall Hill to Lincoln Avenue, they've grown with Fayetteville, not just selling but fixing what breaks. In a world of warehouse deals and endless hold times, their local roots offer what big stores can't: a familiar voice, a quick repair, and a family that cares.

Mt. Washmore may rise, but Bradford Appliance answers the call. **GN**

Shop with Bradford Appliance at 409 Lincoln Ave. S., Fayetteville. For more information, call (931) 433–5869 or visit bradfordappliancetn.com.



Mike is more than willing to answer any questions about appliances on the floor. They sell and service top-of-the-line appliances.





A Chad and Jerry Mullins. Chad followed in his father's footsteps as a builder.

RAFFIC CRAWLED along Lincoln Avenue, a backhoe leading the way, soon joined by a Fayetteville Police Department car's flashing blue lights. The officer eased the machine over, clearing the way for frustrated drivers. As the cab door opened, preteens Chad Mullins and his brother, Jeff Mullins, stared back.

"He asked if our dad knew we were driving around on the backhoe. We said, 'Yes, he's waiting for us at Country Club Estates.' They never went to check our story. Driving the backhoe around town was our driver's ed," laughed Chad.

Chad Mullins BUILDING ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

From adolescent construction worker to business owner, he honors his family's work ethic while forging his own path.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder

In 1974, Jerry W. Mullins hammered his first nails as the owner of Jerry W. Mullins Construction. Soon, his sons worked alongside him, picking up trash on the job site and pulling wire from under the floors, although they were only 7 or 8 years old.

Although they were experienced construction workers by the time they graduated high school, their father wanted more for them.

"College wasn't optional for us; Dad expected us to go. I decided to study civil engineering — the closest I could get to construction in college. After graduation in 1994, I still wanted to build, so I started a spec house, and it went from there," Chad explained. "I don't think my dad was too happy about it. He just wanted a good life for me without all the struggles that come with owning your own business."

With a college degree and his first spec house under his belt, Chad became a second-generation construction company owner. A combination of distance and degrees prompted him to add concrete as a specialty.

"In 2017, while working on a custom home on Crystal Ridge, I was frustrated with getting concrete to the job during

Will, Carlie, Chad, Angie, > and Claire Mullins

the hot summer months. For a concrete truck loaded, it was nearly an hour's drive to get to my job. That's when I decided to do something about it and started the ready-mix plant."

The company expanded again in early 2023 with the acquisition of Carter Septic and Concrete, which manufactures septic tanks, grease traps, and other concrete products.

As the business thrives, Chad looks to the future with optimism. His daughters, Carlie and Claire, are graduating from Middle Tennessee State University with degrees in concrete industry management this May, while his son, Will, graduated in 2023 with a degree in civil engineering.

"I was thrilled when they told me their career path," Chad said. "I want them to learn from others first, but if they come back one day to help in the family business, that would be great."

But hard work doesn't stand in the way of date nights with his wife, Angie. The couple combines out-of-town pick-ups and deliveries, stopping for dinner along the way.

This blend of family and business reflects the core values that drive Chad's success. He embodies a work ethic rooted in family values and commitment to quality.

"Being proud of something you have created is a great feeling," he reflected. "Whether it's a house or a septic tank that's hopefully never seen again, you want it to look good and perform as it should."

With such dedication and passion for his craft, Mullins Construction & Concrete will build a solid future, continuing the tradition started by Jerry W. Mullins. **GN**

Mullins Construction & Concrete, 310 Ardmore Hwy., Fayetteville. For more information, call (931) 438–8940 and follow the company on Facebook.



"Being proud of something you have created is a great feeling. Whether it's a house or a septic tank that's hopefully never seen again, you want it to look good and perform as it should."

CHAD MULLINS

Riverside Christian Academy

25 years celebrated

Heart of RCA Banquet honors legacy, love, and a community rooted in service.

By Tina Neeley // Photography by Brooke Snyder





▲ Bill Mays

HIS YEAR'S Riverside Christian Academy Heart of RCA Banquet celebrated legacy, love, and servant leadership. Held in April with over 325 in attendance, the event honored Riverside's mission and community impact while raising over \$70,000 to support summer maintenance projects that will enhance the school's efficiency, function, and appearance.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Silver Jubilee Celebration: This year marked Riverside Christian Academy's (RCA) 25th anniversary, and the banquet The Silver Jubilee reflected on how far the school has come. According to the school's website, RCA began in 1996 with a dream to provide students with an exceptional education in a nurturing Christian environment.
- Legacy Award: The Gary Upchurch Award was presented posthumously to Mr. Doug Hard, whose generosity in 2000 made RCA's Fayetteville campus possible. His family was present to accept the award.
- Auction Highlights: Laughter echoed through the room as auctioneers worked the crowd. Top items included a weeklong mountain cabin stay, a hand-blown eagle sculpture by Javier Vazquez, and a chain-saw-carved eagle by Elk River Carving Co. Bidding battles between family members brought some of the loudest cheers.
- Faith Over Forecasts: Despite the NCAA Final Four basketball games being in full swing and the severe thunderstorm forecast, loyalty to RCA took a front seat.
- Student Involvement: The Student Council played a vital part welcoming guests, snapping photos, leading prayer, and quietly ensuring the evening ran smoothly from start to finish.
- Planning with Heart: The 11-member Heart of RCA committee, chaired by Krysa Spears, poured nearly a year of preparation into the event.
- Fun Fact: Krysa Spears has been with RCA for all 25 years of its presence in the community.



▲ Livia and Jaime Ragland

The evening celebrates a lasting partnership between RCA and the community surrounding it with love and purpose. As the school looks ahead, initiatives like the "Portrait of a Graduate" serve as a reminder that RCA's mission is about education and shaping Christ-like leaders who will carry the school's values into the world. That journey begins in classrooms but is made possible by a community that believes in, invests in, and prays for its students every step of the way. **GN**



▲ Mark and Ana Bugg-Cutler

For more information about Riverside Christian Academy, visit https://www.rcaknights.org/ and follow the school's Facebook page.



▲ Charis and Nolan Hughes



▲ Melvin and Camille Gleghorn





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Lincoln County Humane Society

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

(931) 433-3726 www.humanesocietylc.com

Clothe Our Kids of Lincoln County Inc.

Provides at-risk children with needed clothing and shoe (931) 625-6953

www.clotheourkids.com

Fayetteville Main Street

Focuses on historic preservation and economic development of downtown Fayetteville as a revitalization program.

(931) 557-5150 www.fayettevillemainstreet.com

Imagination Library of Lincoln County

Provides free monthly books for registered children under ages birth to 5 in order to promote childhood literacy.

www. Imagination Library Lincoln County Tennesssee

Fayetteville Lions Club

Provides vision care, youth programs, and other community services.

(931) 623-3763 www.fayettevilletnlions.org

Lincoln County 4-H

Provides agriculture, leadership, and community service youth programs.

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

Relay For Life of Lincoln County, TN

Organizes community fundraising events supporting the American Cancer Society and raising money for cancer research.

www.relayforlife.org Facebook: Relay For Life of Lincoln County, TN

Always Endure

Exists to remove financial barriers for adoptive families, barriers to care for patients enduring major medical diagnoses, and barriers to placement for children in foster care.

(931) 625-1861 www.alwaysendure.com

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

Camp Blount Historic Site Association

Works to preserve Camp Blount's history, protects the site from further encroachment, and educates visitors.

campblount@gmail.com www.campblount.com

Fayetteville Rotary Community Foundation

Engages in community service projects and supports global initiative.

(931) 675-2727 www.fayettevillerotary.com

Crossroads Pregnancy Clinic

Pregnancy Clinic
Exists to care for women and men facing unplanned pregnancies by providing life-affirming education through pregnancy decision counseling.

(931) 297-2424 www.crossroadspregnancyclinic.org





Cemetery Location

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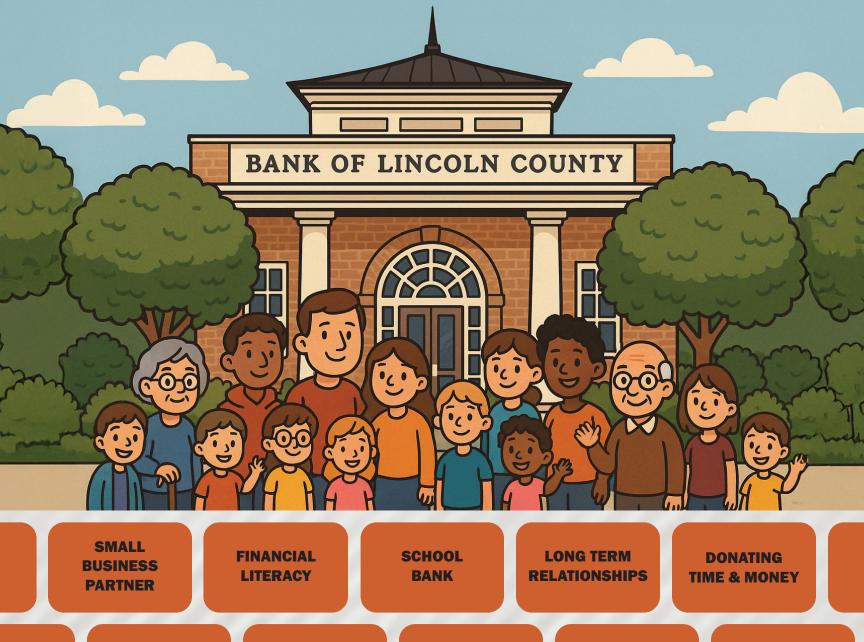


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