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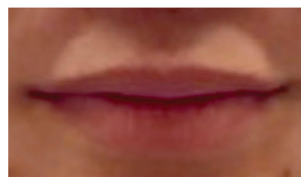
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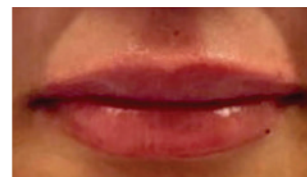
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The bond of blood and honor

Our families survive the test of time.

A FAMILY LOADS up their navy blue Jeep in Tennessee and takes a cross-country road trip. It'll take several days to get to the Sequoia National Park in California. There may be hours when the Jeep feels smaller and smaller by the second. Taking turns picking the music leads to debates on how many songs Brother or Sister picked. The cooler in the floorboard has only a few snacks left. The time on their cellphones changes from Central time zone to Mountain, and then Pacific. After far too many tolls and gas-station stops, the GPS finally uses words that make the "crowd" go wild: "... two miles until your destination."

Grandma, Mom, Dad, Brother, and Sister hop out of the Jeep and stretch their legs. They look up at the leaves above. It's breathtakingly unbelievable. The size and strength of nature demand an undeniable respect. The General Sherman Tree stands almost 280 feet tall on the north end of the Giant Forest. It's believed to be 2,300 to 2,700 years old. It's hard to imagine how far the roots reach. The strength of the branches holds bird nests and gives homes to tiny insects just passing through. Each season

brings new life of connection from the soil to the crisp air, 280 feet above. The chirping bird family belongs together — until, of course, it's time to jump into flight. The ants crawl up and down the bark with a natural interconnectedness that can only be described with one word: family.

Sister misses a step on the way up, and Dad grabs her hand with firm support. "I've got ya," he says. Grandma smiles, not letting anyone know she holds back tears. She knows where her son got that phrase. She had heard it for 50 years before a funeral. Her son says it the same way his father used to. While Sister never got to meet him, his blood still flows through her veins with honor.

Our families weave us together with a generational strength that no wildfire or gust of wind can knock loose. Our memories of those who came before us fly beneath our wings when we jump from the nest. And when the icy cold bites at our fingers in winter, we have an enclave to snuggle into. Families are not just names on a birth certificate or put together with wedding bands. They're a generational structure that will always stand the test of 2,700 years. This issue of Good News honors just that: our families. GN

Wesley Bryant,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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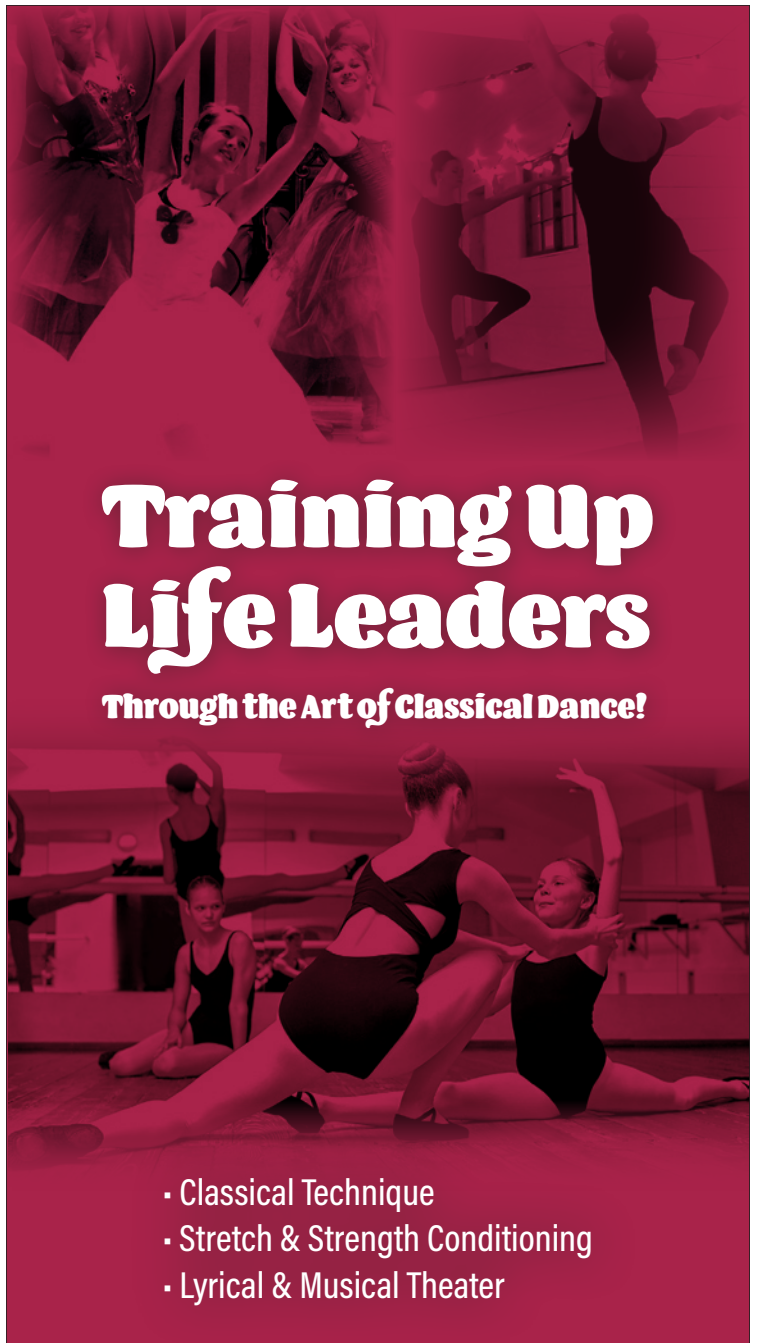
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From hatchery to feed mill, their family business thrives on resilience and community.

FEEDING GENERATIONS





At Edwards Feeds, it's not just about the product, it's about the people behind it. Tim Edwards continues the family's mission.

BY KATLYN OLSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN HOLCOMB

IN 1935, with a dream and \$1,200, which she used to purchase her first two incubators, Vicie Mae Brown Edwards started the Edwards Hatchery. Vicie and her husband started out grinding grain and supplying land and meat chicken for their community, and within the first year, they were able to pay off that initial purchase. “At that time, not everyone could go to the grocery store to get food, so they had to raise it,” said Tim Edwards, grandson of Vicie and current owner of Edwards Feeds. The Edwards Hatchery was a staple in the community and played a significant role in connecting people with poultry. The business continued to grow and cement the legacy of the Edwards name within the Lebanon community.

Since the beginning of the family business, they have been breaking barriers and surpassing expectations. In a time when women were expected to stay at home, Vicie, being the businesswoman she was, decided that was not the life she had in mind for herself. She took the risk of becoming one of the first businesswomen in her community, and the rewards speak for themselves. Her bravery has led to the continued success of multiple generations of the Edwards family. When the couple bought a new building in 1958, they were told they couldn't keep 10,000 birds in a 10,000-square-foot building. “My grandpa, being the person he was, had to prove them wrong,” Tim explained. Their determination and drive eventually grew the hatchery into an operation that maintained 500,000 chickens year-round and hatched approximately 60,000 chicks each week.

“Without my employees and without my customers, I can't do what I'm doing.”

- Tim Edwards

In 1985, the Edwards family decided to get out of the chicken business and become a feed manufacturer and a wholesale retailer. This resulted in the change of Edwards Hatchery to Edwards Feeds. Today, Edwards Feeds is a fifth-generation family business with 21 employees. Tim explained how he has a great crew where everyone is like a family. With larger stores gaining popularity, Edwards Feeds is one of the only feed manufacturers left in the community. They make feed for just about any animal you would expect to see on a farm, with over 50 custom-made livestock feeds and tons of other products. Edwards Feeds also manufactures a brand of packing peanuts called Puffy Stuff, which is made from grain and is 100% biodegradable.

Despite their success, the Edwards family has never lost sight of the importance of community. On top of providing locals with much-needed feed, farm, and garden supplies, Edwards Feeds has made it a priority to contribute to their communities' organizations. They have aided programs like National FFA Organization and 4-H and worked toward constructing an Agricultural Learning Center building. This building will serve as an education center to help teach young people various skills in agriculture. Over the several years they have been collecting money for this project, they have raised \$4.2 million dollars. In addition to supporting their community, they have also made a point to support their employees. Edwards Feeds has set up a program to aid its employees working toward sobriety. Having been in their shoes in the past, Tim finds this mission to have a special place in his heart. GN

To learn more about Edwards Feed Inc. and the family behind the success, visit their website at <https://edwardsfeedsinc.godaddysites.com/>.



▲ A cornerstone of Lebanon since 1935, Edwards Feeds still stands where it all began.



Tim Edwards works alongside his crew to fill bags with custom livestock feed, showing that leadership at Edwards Feeds means pitching in and getting your hands dirty.



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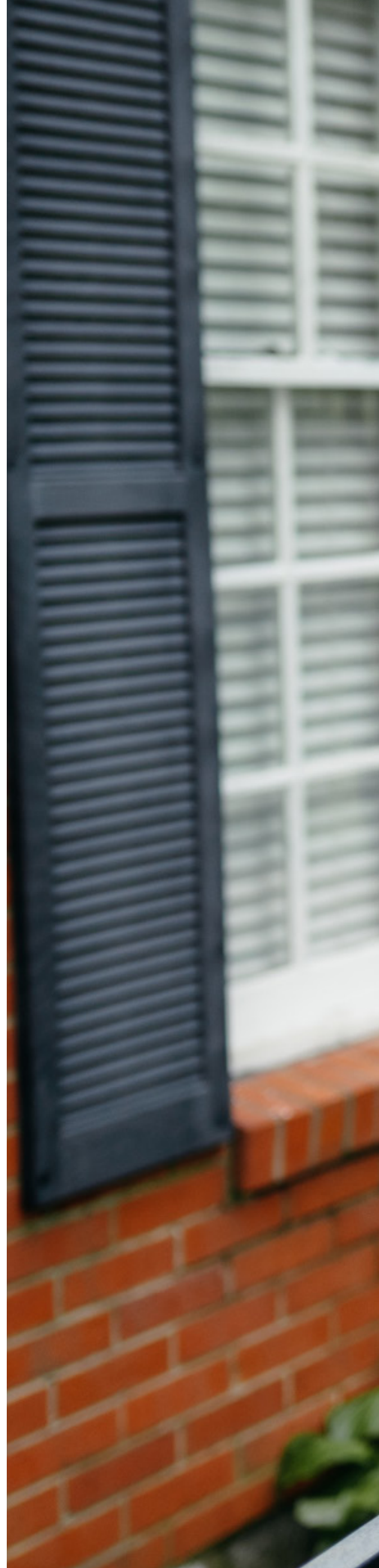
A former foster mom leads efforts to support vulnerable youth through advocacy, empathy, and community connections.

By Kali Bradford // Photography by Robin Holcomb

MOST OF us know the saying, “It takes a village.” A well-known African proverb, it’s often used when discussing the care of children. The concept of the phrase is that no individual succeeds or thrives in isolation — everyone benefits from the care, wisdom, and guidance of others. It would seem that when such a village does show up, children and adults alike can find success. This shows that when we collaborate, share responsibilities, support each other, and foster teamwork, we can achieve more together than we ever could alone.

Wilson County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Executive Director Michelle Swart is a firm believer in such a village. As a former foster parent, community volunteer, and now executive director of a nonprofit, Swart has firsthand experience with the benefits of people coming together to help each other. Accepting the call to become a foster parent, she began to understand just how much help was needed.

“I fostered children for roughly three years, and it gave me a deep sense of what is happening in that realm,” stated Swart. “I was also working to provide food and





Michele Swart

clothing to families in need through a local nonprofit. From there, I kept connecting to people in the community who needed to be helped.”

After becoming a part of a school mentor program, she was introduced to CASA.

CASA is a program that trains and supervises “diverse volunteers who serve as advocates for children involved in court proceedings primarily as the result of abuse and/or neglect,” according to the organization’s website.

As a volunteer, Swart stated that she quickly fell in love with the organization and the level of assistance they provide to the children and families they represent.

“I went from understanding that it was a wonderful volunteer-driven organization to really learning how to appreciate the complexity and depth of the work,” she stated. “Things such as the importance of those of us in the organization being persistent, showing empathy, and meeting families where they’re at. I also saw how those things really translated over to being a force for this impactful and incredible organization.”



▲ Four letters. A world of difference. CASA represents advocacy, hope, and a village committed to protecting children.



▲ Every step Michelle Swart takes is grounded in her belief that no child should walk their journey alone. With CASA, they never have to.

As the executive director, Swart and her staff serve over 250 children a year with an average of 60 volunteers, according to the nonprofit's website. The site also states that Wilson County CASA is part of a national CASA and state network, extending child advocacy services across the country through 951 programs in 49 states.

A dream job for Swart, she is thankful for the path that led her to CASA. She invites others to join an organiza-

tion that she feels is life-changing for all involved.

"You don't need a certain set of qualifications; just be present, care, and want to stand for vulnerable children," said Swart. "We make sure our volunteers have everything they need. The match between volunteer and child is amazing. We can watch all these amazing things unfold because of it. I get chills every time I think about it because I didn't believe it until I started living it." GN



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Mama's Pot Roast

Submitted by Cathy Gulley

3-4 lb. chuck roast
3 T. vegetable oil
6 med. potatoes, diced
2 lg. onions, diced
1 lb. carrots, sliced
6 c. water
3 cloves garlic, minced
¼ c. soy sauce
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½ t. ground black pepper
1½ t. Accent®, optional
1 bay leaf



Preheat oven to 375°. In a large skillet over medium high heat, sear both sides of the roast in vegetable oil. Remove from heat; place in the center of a large roasting pan, along with the juices from the skillet. Place vegetables around meat and add water, garlic, and soy sauce. Sprinkle dry ingredients on top; stir lightly to dissolve seasonings. Add bay leaf. Cover, and bake at 375° for 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 275° and continue baking for 1½ - 2 hours or until meat and vegetables are tender.

Dinner Rolls

Submitted by Edith Sandlin

1 c. shortening
1 c. sugar
1 t. salt
1 c. boiling water
2 eggs, beaten
1 c. lukewarm water
2 pkgs. yeast
6 c. AP flour



In a bowl, mix shortening, sugar, and salt. Add boiling water; blend and cool. Add the beaten eggs. Soften yeast in lukewarm water; pour into egg mixture. Add flour a little at a time and mix well. Refrigerate 6 hours or overnight. Remove from refrigerator and knead onto a floured board. Roll out into 1/4". Cut out with biscuit cutter. Let rise about 2 hours. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes.

Strawberry Angel Food Cake

Submitted by Faye Bonner

1 angel food cake
2 pkgs. frozen strawberries, 10 oz., thawed
1 lg. pkg. vanilla instant pudding
1 container whipped topping, 8 oz.

In a large mixing bowl, tear angel food cake into pieces. Pour strawberries over cake pieces. Mix pudding according to package directions. Pour pudding over the cake and strawberries. Refrigerate until cold. Cover top with whipped topping. Keep refrigerated.

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SANTA'S YEAR-ROUND HELPER

Her nonprofit ensures no child misses the magic of Christmas, even in the face of hardship.

BY RACHAEL SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN HOLCOMB



SINCE 2012, Krys Midgett has made it her mission to ensure that no child goes without the magic of Christmas.

Through her nonprofit, Give A Little Christmas, she and her community of volunteers help families facing emergencies such as illness, job loss, or domestic violence experience the joy of the holiday season.

"This past year was our 13th Christmas," Midgett said. "We make sure the kids get Christmas gifts from Santa. We meet with the parents ahead of time, give them a big bag full of toys, and then Santa puts them out on Christmas Eve, like he's supposed to, right?"

Midgett's work hasn't gone unnoticed. In January and February, she was honored with the

Community Enhancement of the Year Award and the Nonprofit Award of Excellence, both presented by local chambers in Mt. Juliet and Lebanon.

What began with a party for 50 children experiencing homelessness in the community has grown into a massive operation, helping nearly 930 children in 2024 alone.

"We give at least four gifts per child. However, children who have been sponsored tend to receive more," said Midgett. "So, we like to have as many families sponsored as possible."

Midgett was inspired while interviewing country music songwriter Glenn Douglas Tubb. She and her friend, Olivia West Hedges, partnered with Tubb and his wife, Dottie, to form Give A Little Christmas.



▲ The Midgett family keeps the spirit of giving alive year-round. From Kryz and her husband to their sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren, every generation plays a part in bringing Christmas magic to hundreds of children.

“He looked just like Santa Claus,” Midgett said. “He said he wanted to throw a party for kids in shelters. So we did. We pulled it off in two weeks with Grand Ole Opry singers and hit songwriters doing Christmas carols. It was magical.”

The program has continued to grow thanks to community support, events, and a dedicated network of volunteers. One of our biggest community partners is Shiloh Music Center. They accept donation drop-offs all year.

One fundraiser is ‘Cocktails with Santa,’ a grown-up spin on the traditional ‘Breakfast with Santa,’ held each December. Other events include murder mystery dinners, craft fairs, and toy drives.

Everything collected goes into what Midgett calls ‘Santa’s Workshop,’ a storage space filled with gifts for children ages 0 to 18. Volunteers like Midgett’s assistant, Jera Peak, help organize toys and manage fundraising logistics year-round.



Honestly, everything I do benefits the charity in some way. I even started a magazine to help promote it. And nobody gets paid — we’re all volunteers. It’s a labor of love.

KRYS MIDGETT



Krys Midgett, her son, and grandchild work side by side in Santa's Workshop, sorting toys and sharing in the joy of giving as a three-generation team.



▲ Krys Midgett and her husband, Brian, work side by side year-round, turning their shared dedication into lasting holiday memories for families in need.

“Honestly, everything I do benefits the charity in some way,” Midgett said. “I even started a magazine to help promote it. And nobody gets paid — we’re all volunteers. It’s a labor of love.”

Midgett’s family is deeply involved, from her husband, Brian, to her children and grandchildren.

“I honestly couldn’t do this without my family. Jimi, my oldest, will drop everything to help load a truck full of toys. Bronson and Wyatt will stop right in the middle of a basketball game to unload a carload of toys. Tayler and Jay, my daughters-in-law, jump in and help however they can,” said Midgett. “My younger sons, Robby and Tommy, and my husband spent hours writing the murder mystery for our last fundraiser, and they move hundreds of toy bags every Christmas. My mom and sisters are always working behind the scenes to make sure everything comes together. They all pitch in without being asked, by volunteering and making desserts. I’m just so grateful for them.”

One story that stands out for Midgett is one that happened on Christmas Eve when

a mother reached out after leaving a dangerous relationship. Her children’s gifts had been left with their father, who, she found out, had sold them.

“Christmas morning, we got up early and loaded toys from our storage so her kids would still wake up to gifts from Santa. That’s what we do. We help Santa out. He appreciates it,” she said.

This year, ‘Give A Little Christmas’ is reviving a pre-COVID-19 tradition: a children’s Christmas party where kids can meet Santa, enjoy cookies and crafts, and parents can pick out clothes and decorations in a separate room.

“It’s all about keeping the magic alive,” Midgett said. “The kids never know they’re getting charity. We’re just here to make sure Santa shows up no matter what.”

The charity is always in need of volunteers, sponsors, and especially toys.

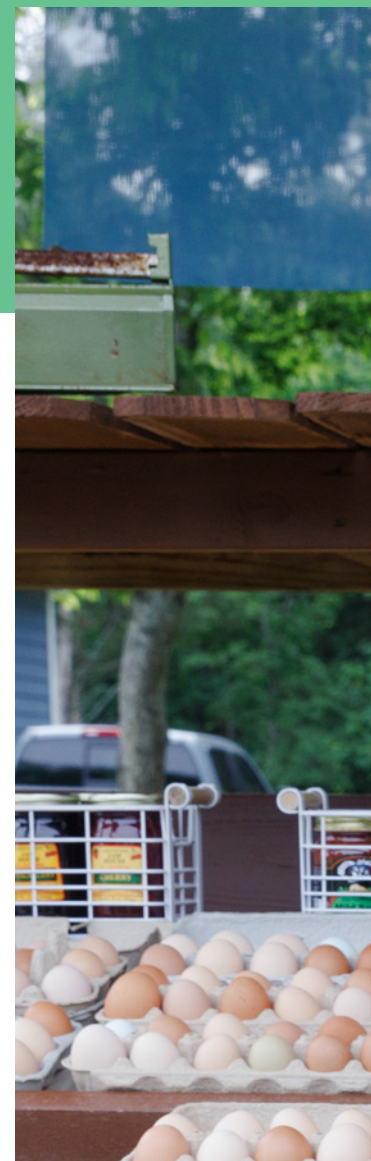
“We need people to attend our events, donate new, unwrapped toys, sponsor families, and help with fundraisers,” Midgett said. “Basically, every event I hold, I ask guests to bring toys!” GN



HEARTFELT HARVESTS ON LOVERS LANE

A Lebanon family's weekend farmstand is a homegrown celebration of food, tradition, and community.

BY HALEY POTTER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE ZAK



ON LOVERS Lane in Lebanon, sits a farmstand that's more than just a place to pick up produce — it's a labor of love, deeply rooted in family, tradition, and a passion for wholesome living.

The Wilson Farmstand is a true family affair, lovingly run by four people who each bring their own special touch to every table filled with fresh fruits, colorful vegetables, and homemade goods.

"There's actually four of us who run the farmstand!" said Jordan Wilson. "It's located on my in-laws' property, but we live just a few houses down the road. We all have different roles when it comes to the farmstand, but we all play an important role!"

Jordan, her husband, Tyler Wilson, and Tyler's parents, Keith and Mandy Wilson, fill those roles. They are a team whose commitment to their community shines through every weekend they open their stand.



▲ Speckled and delicate, the Wilsons' quail eggs are a unique offering that reflects the family's commitment to variety and quality.

FARMSTAND



▲ Jordan Wilson displays her family's farm-fresh eggs - each carton gathered and sorted by hand every week.

Since June 23, 2022, the Wilsons have opened their hearts and their harvest to Lebanon and beyond. This summer, they'll celebrate the start of their fourth season of produce — a milestone that feels every bit as meaningful as the day they first welcomed their neighbors to their stand.

For the Wilsons, this venture has always been about more than just selling food.

“As a family, we’re deeply passionate not only about high-quality, wholesome ingredients, but also about knowing the origins of our food,” Jordan shared. “We believe in eating local and supporting local producers. Our goal was to create a space that offers top-quality produce, eggs, and more — giving the community both something to enjoy and a clear connection to where their food comes from.”



As a family, we're deeply passionate not only about high-quality, wholesome ingredients, but also about knowing the origins of our food.

JORDAN WILSON

At the heart of Lovers Lane Farm, Jordan Wilson and her family offer more than produce — they offer a connection to the land and to each other.





And the community has embraced them right back. Every weekend brings a steady stream of familiar faces — about 130 customers a day — many stopping by not just for groceries, but for a warm smile, a friendly conversation, and the peace of mind that comes with knowing exactly where their food comes from.

The offerings at the Wilson Farmstand are as genuine and down-to-earth as the family who runs it. They proudly sell farm-fresh chicken, duck, and quail eggs — unwashed to keep their natural protective coating intact — for just \$6

a dozen. Their tables overflow with seasonal produce, and shelves are lined with jarred homemade goods like jams, pickles, salsa, and honey.

They even offer freshly baked sourdough bread and scones from a talented baker in nearby Hartsville, delivered fresh every weekend.

Nestled just 3 miles from the Lebanon State Fairgrounds, the stand's location at 525 Lovers Lane feels like a little hidden gem — a place where the pace slows down and people can reconnect with their food and their farmers.



▲ Jordan Wilson offers freshly baked sourdough and scones, delivered each weekend from a local baker in Hartsville.



▲ The Loverslane Farmstand stands as a symbol of family, food, and fellowship.

The Wilson family keeps their prices fair and their mission simple: to nourish their neighbors with the best their farm and their hearts have to offer.

At the Wilson Farmstand, every egg gathered, every vegetable picked, and every jar sealed carries with it a story of family, hard work, and a deep love for their community. As they head into their fourth season, Jordan, Tyler, Keith, and Mandy remain as passionate as ever about keeping that story alive — one customer, one harvest, and one heartfelt weekend at a time. **GN**



KEEPING FAMILIES OFF THE FLOOR

A Lebanon couple provides essential furniture to Wilson County families in need.

BY GABRIEL GRANT HUFF
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN HOLCOMB

SARAH GREEN hung by a thread on a daily basis. As a young mother of four children below the age of 11, she bore a lot on her shoulders. On a whim, Green moved about 90 miles from Dickson, Tennessee, to Lebanon in 2023 with only an old minivan. Graveyard shifts became routine as the mother tried to support her children. With Green possessing little extra time and next to no help, the house resembled chaos — torn furniture, stained sheets, and a lack of basic items were the norm.

Life seemed to teeter on the edge — until FAM Essentials showed up, bringing order and new hope.

Born from a heart of love, this group aids the helpless. That heart belongs to Jeff and Terry Hallums.

Jeff, a Wilson County native, works as a full-time real estate agent and has four grown children with Terry, who is a retired registered nurse with 30 years of experience under her belt. With their Faith and Actions Ministry, they enjoyed traveling internationally to bring medical relief and humanitarian aid to people in Latin America and Africa. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck the world, those trips ceased for a season, and their souls longed to find another way to help those in need.

That opportunity came following a trip to their son's church in the Tampa Bay area. During one service, church members highlighted a ministry called "New Life Warehouse," a volunteer-led



Jeff and Terry Hallums — the heart behind FAM Essentials. Their journey from global missions to local impact proves love starts at home.



*Trailers filled with furniture,
hearts filled with purpose.
These deliveries represent
more than material goods
— they're a fresh start.*





Once we get the deliveries done, the satisfaction of hearing a kid go, ‘I get to sleep on this tonight?’ and he’s been sleeping on the floor, and now he’s got a bed that he can sleep on and he’s 6 years old and he’s so excited, you think he won the lottery.

SARAH GREEN

Christian organization that distributes furniture and household goods to families recovering from homelessness.

“As we were looking at it, I told my wife, ‘I don’t think we have anything like that in Wilson County,’” Jeff recalled. “So the next time we went to Tampa to visit, we went there and volunteered to find out more about their organization.”

Utilizing many of the lessons and advice that the New Life Warehouse group had to offer, the Hallumses began their own nonprofit a few months later, in December 2021, naming the organization “FAM Essentials.” A significant amount of assistance came from Greg, Jeff’s brother; their son, Alex; and Dawn Grisham, the owner of Jeff’s real estate company.

With a group of volunteers, the Hallumses now work to transport essential furniture and home goods to those in need. They receive physical donations from the community on Wednesdays and make deliveries on the second and fourth Saturdays of every month. The number of families they help grows yearly, with 2024 seeing nearly 300. That number included Green and her children. While working at the Farm Bureau Exposition Center, Green

met Jeff, who had been hosting a benefit there for FAM Essentials at the time.

“I did research about FAM Essentials for my job, and discovered I could greatly utilize this program,” Green recalled.

FAM Essentials volunteers brought in beds, cabinets, a couch, and even invited a couple of youth groups to help clean her house and set everything up.

“They will forever stay powerful in my heart and will forever move me to stay positive and help others,” Green said. “The kindness they showed is just so foreign to me.”

Jeff said such blessings are the result of God leading them to this work.

“Once we get the deliveries done, the satisfaction of hearing a kid go, ‘I get to sleep on this tonight?’ and he’s been sleeping on the floor, and now he’s got a bed that he can sleep on and he’s 6 years old and he’s so excited, you think he won the lottery.”

The feeling is one he aims to keep spreading to all families in need across Lebanon. GN

Those wishing to learn more about the mission can visit the FAM Essentials website at <https://www.famessentials.org>, where people can learn how to receive help, donate, or volunteer.





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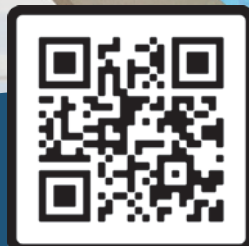
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