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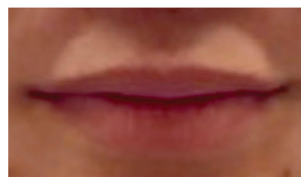
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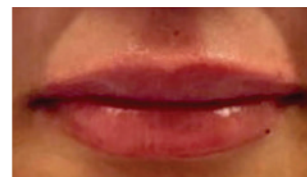
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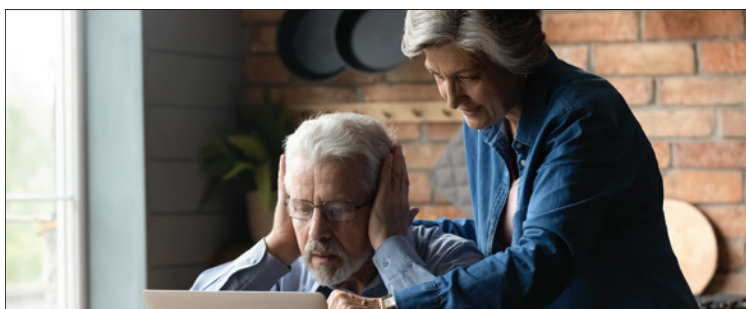


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# The Home Team

A community is built under Friday night lights.

THE SCENT of warm butter-covered popcorn and the huge roar of the crowd... does anything bring you back faster than a Friday night under the stadium lights? For me, it's a flood of memories: the nervous jitters before kickoff, the eruption of cheers after a touchdown, even bumping into old friends and teachers in the concession line. These moments aren't just for students anymore; they whisk us right back to our own school days. We remember walking the school halls, practically buzzing for the game later that night. Those feelings? They stick with us for decades.

No matter how the game went, whether it was a nail-biting win or a tough loss, we played hard, cheered loudly, and probably got a little too carried away. It was something bigger, something you could truly feel in the air. We were together, not just in matching colors and jerseys, but in spirit, drive, and care.

Think about it: whether it's the powerful sounds of the band, the gravity-defying stunts of the cheerleaders, or the grit of the players on the field, every person involved

learns lessons that stick with them long after that final whistle. They learn about teamwork, about picking themselves up after a fall, and about the quiet power of sportsmanship. These are the qualities that make our community special, building character and shaping the next wave of leaders right here in our own backyard.

As life speeds up, it's easy to lose sight of these simple, Friday-night experiences. But there's a hidden treasure in our local fields and courts, a comfort and strength that we shouldn't take for granted. It's the feeling of knowing that our team, our community, always has our backs. That game that's not just a game? It ties us together under those Friday night lights. We build our lives together, often finding ourselves meeting up in those very same stands year after year.

Our home teams have always been a reflection of who we are as a community, inspiring us and cheering us on, both on and off the field. This issue of Good News, "The Home Team," is a celebration. GN

**Wesley Bryant,**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Wesley Bryant  
**REGIONAL PUBLISHER** Jack Owens  
**LEAD LAYOUT ARTIST** Brianna Brubaker  
**SENIOR LAYOUT ARTIST** Melissa Davis  
**LEAD PRINT AD DESIGNER** Todd Pitts  
**LEAD PHOTOGRAPHER** Ashleigh Newnes  
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**FREELANCE WRITERS** Amanda West, Becca Roberts, Gabriel Huff,  
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# FAITH FUELS FAMILY DREAMS

After countless knockdowns, the Shadds continued to get up, rise above, and overcome

By Rachael Smith // Photography by Steve Zak

**W**HEN LIFE threw everything it had at Corey and Misty Shadd – job loss, medical emergencies, financial hurdles, and a devastating car accident — they refused to let it derail their dreams.

Instead, they built something beautiful out of the rubble: The Village Play Place, a community-centered business in Lebanon.

“Our journey’s really been about perseverance,” Corey said. “We just kept showing up, even when everything said we should quit.”

Long before the idea of a play place took root, they faced a terrifying emergency in 2015 when Misty developed preeclampsia late in her pregnancy with their first child, Hazen. The condition escalated so rapidly that doctors feared for both mother and baby.

“I remember the surgeon coming out and telling me, ‘Your wife’s not going to make it. We’re just trying to save the baby,’” Corey said. “But somehow, against all odds, Misty pulled through.”


Hazen was born weighing just 2 pounds 11 ounces and spent more than 120 days in the NICU. Yet she survived and thrived. Two more children followed, Hutton and Holland, but each pregnancy was a leap of faith.

Alongside the trials of early parenthood came professional transitions. Corey worked bi-vocationally as a children’s pastor and in health care, but in October 2023, he was laid off as part of a massive corporate downsizing. And although he applied for nearly 1,000 jobs and had dozens of interviews, no work came.







A family of four is posed on a white staircase. The mother, with long brown hair and wearing a white sleeveless top and light blue pants, sits at the top. The father, with short grey hair and a goatee, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and jeans, sits at the bottom. Between them are two children: a girl with blonde hair in a pink dress and a boy with blonde hair in a white shirt. Two large, fluffy brown stuffed sloths are positioned on either side of the family. The background shows a brightly lit indoor space with orange walls and a red exit sign.

**“You don’t see  
the end when  
you’re in it.  
But when you  
get through it,  
you realize it  
was worth it.”**

**- Corey Shadd**



Then he was in a car accident.

"I had just gotten off the phone with our insurance agent after finding out we were being dropped again, for a claim they had denied, and five minutes later, I was in a major car crash," Corey said.

The accident left him with a herniated disc, a severe concussion, and lingering cognitive issues that required months of therapy. To make matters worse, the driver who hit him was uninsured, and Corey's insurer denied his medical claims.

Through it all, the couple never gave up on their vision for The Village Play Place. The concept had been born years earlier during a brief stint in Louisiana.

Misty envisioned a space where children could play while parents connected over coffee — "a place where community could grow," she said.

"Every time something went wrong, I just felt like it was the devil trying to throw us off," Misty said. "But to me, that was confirmation that we were supposed to do this."

In September 2024, after endless roadblocks and hard-fought renovations, the Shadds opened the doors to The Village Play Place.

The space now offers open play, enrichment classes, birthday parties, and a pre-K program led by a certified educator using a research-based curriculum.

"This wasn't just a business decision," Misty said. "Even down to the colors on the wall, we were intentional. I researched color psychology to create a space that's calming and inviting."

They're already seeing the fruits of their labor.

Parents form friendships over lattes, children meet developmental milestones, and families find support in each other.

"One day I looked up and saw three moms chatting like lifelong friends," Misty said. "I asked how they knew each other, and they said, 'We met here.' That's what it's all about."



Corey, now working full-time in insurance, handles back-end operations while Misty manages the daily bustle at the play place.

"People say there's nothing to do here for families, and we're answering that," Corey said. "We want to be a place where families can connect, where kids thrive, and where parents don't feel so alone."

Looking back on the last few years, they don't see tragedy but transformation.

"Our faith is stronger than ever," Corey said. "You don't see the end when you're in it. But when you get through it, you realize it was worth it."

Their message to others facing trials?

"Just keep going," Corey said. "The most meaningful things in life are never easy. But if you hold on and stay persistent, you'll make it through. We're living proof." **GN**





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SPREADING

# HOPE

ONE ACT AT A TIME

Whether through  
Easterseals, the Rotary  
Club, or daily life,  
Andy White shows up  
to serve and inspire  
others to do the same.

BY SARA HOOK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ROBIN HOLCOMB





▲ Even in quiet moments, Andy White radiates the kind of steady hope he encourages in others.

“**D**O THINGS that can make a difference, and create hope in someone else’s life.” Those words are the driving force behind Andy White’s life, and his work in and for the community reflects that goal.

White is the chief development officer for Easterseals Tennessee, an organization dedicated to supporting people with disabilities as they live, work, and play in their communities. White has over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit world. Beyond that, he makes a concerted effort to be involved in his community, whether through the Rotary Club, tennis coaching, or just through everyday living.

“I love to serve,” White said. “To hopefully provide a solution, or create or provide hope to someone who’s looking for it... that fills my cup.”

He doesn’t just serve; he inspires others to get out into the community as well. White spent a year as president of the Lebanon Noon Rotary Club, during which time he challenged the club to become “hope dealers.”

“I love to serve. To hopefully provide a solution, or create or provide hope to someone who’s looking for it... that fills my cup.”

- ANDY WHITE





*Outside The Mill  
at Lebanon, Andy  
White walks the  
walk — literally —  
as a “hope dealer”  
in action.*



“During my tenure, the Rotary International theme was ‘create hope in the world,’” White said. “That really resonated with me.”

Every act of compassion can be an example for others, a way for them to find hope, and a way for the person serving to foster hope in their own lives. It was an uplifting theme for the club, White said.

“We’re not trying to fix people; we’re just trying to walk with them,” White said. “Pushing out that hope into those spaces where despair... wants to live or was living.”

With Easterseals, White does that every day, helping provide the disability services that let people with disabilities live with as much independence as possible. That could be through supported living, supported employment, autism-related support services, or early intervention for children, among many other programs. White oversees fundraising efforts and community outreach for those programs as the chief development officer. He said he would love to go out of business because people didn’t need those services, but in the meantime, his goal is to support each person as they need it.

“This world right now is just so full of fear and division, and just systems that are hard to navigate,” White said. “We’re trying to make a difference.”

It doesn’t take much to make that difference. There are opportunities everywhere to serve, whether it’s with local schools, churches, civic clubs, nonprofits, or a local chamber of commerce. White said it doesn’t have to be something big or grandiose; the important thing is the willingness to serve.

“You just have to care enough to keep showing up. If you’ve got breath, then you’ve got purpose, and someone out there, I promise you, needs what you have,” White said. “I think we can all be ‘hope dealers.’” GN

*Find Easterseals Tennessee online at [easterseals.com/tennessee](https://easterseals.com/tennessee) or call (615) 292-6640 for more information.*

**“You just have to care enough to keep showing up. If you’ve got breath, then you’ve got purpose, and someone out there, I promise you, needs what you have.”**

- ANDY WHITE





## A PERFECT PAIRING

# Rural 1<sup>st</sup>® Continues their Long-Standing Support of the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.



For nearly 86 years, the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration has been deeply woven into the fabric of the Shelbyville, Tennessee community. To Bedford County and surrounding areas, this isn't just a sport—it's a way of life. Seeing the Celebrations' support of numerous civic groups and bringing together people from all walks of rural life, support of the organization has been an easy choice for the team at Rural 1<sup>st</sup>. The tradition, pride, and spirit that define these events can't be replicated, making it a perfect way to further Rural 1<sup>st</sup>'s mission of Securing the Future of Rural Communities and Agriculture®.

Regional Vice President of Rural 1<sup>st</sup> Sales in Tennessee, Chris Coffey, understands first-hand the impact the Tennessee Walking Horse Celebration has on rural communities and the families that call them home. "My family has been involved with the Tennessee Walking Horse since its inception, even owning one of the first registered walking horses," Chris shared.

The breed has been integral to his family's story for generations. Chris' Grandfather, Berry Coffey, showed at the inaugural Celebration in 1939 and trained 1969 World Grand Champion, B. Major Wilson. Chris continued, "I started showing when I was four years old and won the youth weanling class at the Celebration when I was seven. I still like to compete, but my favorite activity is seeing my wife Nicole and son Landon win world championships of their own."



Rural 1<sup>st</sup> helps finance rural property dreams—and as a customer-owned cooperative, they also support organizations that strengthen the communities their customer-owners call home. In 2024 alone, nearly \$4.5 million was invested directly into communities, programs and initiatives that demonstrate a living commitment to their purpose.

"Rural 1<sup>st</sup> has been an invaluable partner to the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration and their support has played a significant role in our ability to host a world-class event, year after year," shared Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration CEO, Warren Wells. "It's simply impossible to produce a show of this magnitude, with all the tradition, excitement and attention to detail without the backing of exceptional partners like Rural 1<sup>st</sup>."



For those looking to finance a rural property in the Middle Tennessee area, Rural 1<sup>st</sup> Loan Officers Katherine Baxter and Laura Fisher can help turn dreams into reality. Katherine shared, "we understand the unique challenges that come with rural properties. Our team of experienced loan officers live and serve in the same communities as our customers. We're familiar with properties in our home territories and their unique features; including equestrian properties."

As the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration looks ahead to the 88th event in 2026, there is no doubt that Rural 1<sup>st</sup> will continue to serve as a key partner in bringing this time-honored celebration to life for years to come. With a team of rural lending experts like Chris, Katherine and Laura, customers in Tennessee can rest assured that when working with Rural 1<sup>st</sup>, they'll be able to celebrate wins in both the show ring and the rural home of their dreams.

Learn more at [Rural1st.com](https://Rural1st.com), or call the Shelbyville, Tennessee office to get started at **931-684-3291**.



# RURAL 1<sup>ST</sup> IS PROUD TO SPONSOR THE TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE NATIONAL CELEBRATION.



Being the rural lending experts means living out here, too. We know what it takes to finance rural property, including horse farms—because we do it every day. With specially designed financing and expertise from loan officers who live in your communities, Rural 1<sup>st</sup> celebrates The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration and helping you live Closer to What Matters®.



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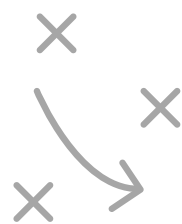
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# Touchdown Favorites

**G**AME DAY is back, and with it comes the thrill of the plays, the roar of the crowd, and the unbeatable joy of gathering with friends. Whether you're glued to every down or just there for the fun, one thing unites everyone: incredible food. This lineup of game day greats is here to satisfy every craving. Think cheesy chicken nachos, sweet and tangy wings, and the always addictive skillet burgers. These MVP-worthy dishes will score big with your guests. So huddle up in the kitchen and bring your A-game — because the best plays happen around the table. **GN**

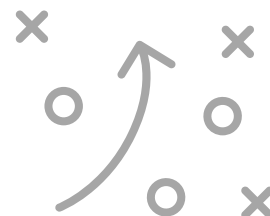


## Chicken Nachos

*Submitted by Rosalind Lindsey*

1 can white premium chunk chicken in water, drained, 9.75 oz.  
1 c. pinto beans, drained and rinsed  
1 c. tomatoes with jalapenos, drained  
1 pkg. pepper jack cheese, shredded, 3 oz.  
tortilla chips, unsalted

Arrange chips on a large, microwave-safe platter. Break the chicken in pieces and scatter over the chips. Scatter the beans over the chicken and the tomatoes over the beans. Top with an even layer of cheese and microwave at full power until the cheese is melted, about 3-4 minutes.



*Submit your recipes to be included in Good News Magazine and the Exchange Cookbook: [www.southernaprons.com](http://www.southernaprons.com)*



## Sweet and Tangy Chicken Wings

*Submitted by Renee Steelman*

3 lbs. chicken wingettes, about 30  
1/2 t. salt, divided  
dash of pepper  
1 1/2 c. ketchup  
1/4 c. brown sugar, packed  
1/4 c. red wine vinegar  
2 T. Worcestershire sauce  
2 T. Dijon mustard  
1 t. garlic, minced  
1 t. liquid smoke, optional  
sesame seeds, optional



Sprinkle chicken wings with dash of salt and pepper. Place in a baking dish and broil 4-6 inches from heat for 5-10 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Transfer wings to a greased 5 quart slow cooker. In a mixing bowl, combine ketchup, brown sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire, mustard, garlic, liquid smoke, and remaining salt. Pour over wings; toss to coat. Cover and cook on low for 3 1/4 - 3 3/4 hours or until chicken juices run clear. Sprinkle with sesame seeds if desired.



## Best Ever Skillet Burgers

*Submitted by Mary Tipper*

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef  
1 lg. onion, chopped  
1 bell pepper, chopped  
3/4 c. ketchup  
2 T. sugar  
2 T. mustard  
1 T. vinegar  
1 T. Worcestershire sauce  
salt & pepper, to taste  
hamburger buns



In a heavy skillet, brown meat, onion, and pepper; drain. In a bowl, combine ketchup, sugar, mustard, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and pepper. Add to meat mixture. Simmer 30 minutes. Serve on buns with your favorite condiments.





# FRIENDSHIP CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

## 2025 Football Schedule

DAY	DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Friday	Aug. 22, 2025	Trousdale County High School	7:30 p.m.
Friday	Aug. 29, 2025	<b>AWAY</b> @ Fayetteville High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 5, 2025	Mt. Juliet High School	7:30 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 12, 2025	<b>AWAY</b> @ DeKalb County High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 19, 2025	Clarksville Academy	7:30 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 26, 2025	<b>AWAY</b> @ Ezell-Harding Christian School	7:30 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 3, 2025	Donelson Christian Academy	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 17, 2025	Franklin Christian Academy	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 24, 2025	<b>AWAY</b> @ Mt. Juliet High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 31, 2025	<b>AWAY</b> @ Nashville Christian School	7 p.m.

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# LEBANON HIGH SCHOOL

## 2025 Football Schedule

DAY	DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Friday	Aug. 22, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Nolensville High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Aug. 29, 2025	Siegel High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 5, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> McGavock High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 12, 2025	Mt. Juliet High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 19, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Station Camp High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 26, 2025	Hillsboro High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 3, 2025	Wilson Central High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 17, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Green Hill High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 24, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Gallatin High School	7 p.m.
Thursday	Oct. 30, 2025	Cookeville High School	7 p.m.

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# WILSON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

## 2025 Football Schedule

DAY	DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Friday	Aug. 22, 2025	Cane Ridge High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Aug. 29, 2025	Northwest High School	7:30 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 5, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Coffee Co. Central High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 12, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> James Lawson High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Sept. 19, 2025	Cookeville High School	TBA
Friday	Sept. 26, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> John Overton High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 3, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Lebanon High School	7 p.m.
Friday	Oct. 17, 2025	Mt. Juliet High School	TBA
Friday	Oct. 24, 2025	Green Hill High School	TBA
Thursday	Oct. 30, 2025	<b>AWAY @</b> Gallatin High School	TBA



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A photograph of John McNeal, an older man with white hair, wearing a green polo shirt with an Under Armour logo and 'EC' on the chest. He is leaning on a chain-link fence, looking slightly to the side with a gentle smile. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a sports field.

JOHN MCNEAL

# LEADING WITH HEART

His greatest victories have always been  
the lives he's helped shape.



# THE HOME TEAM



▲ Coach John McNeal sits in the bleachers where countless seasons have unfolded, backed by a legacy of state titles and faithful leadership.

BY TINA NEELEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN HOLCOMB

**C**OACH JOHN McNeal scanned the hallway at Friendship Christian School — not for hall passes or horseplay, but for instincts. One boy's shove and a quick twist out of a headlock might've looked like a blitzing linebacker and a defensive end blowing up third down. A stolen notebook on the fly carried the energy of a tight end.

In 1986, as the school's new head football coach, McNeal needed a team. Only nine players showed up to the first practice, but he wasn't discouraged. He recruited in the hallways, and the roster grew to 20 within weeks. The closure of Castle Heights added a few more, and some early division. With only two assistants, the biggest victories didn't show on the scoreboard. They came in the

trust built at water breaks, the laughter during bus rides, and the grit shared on long practice days.

"Building relationships has not changed from the first year I coached," he said. "That's the reason I still coach."

Over time, those relationships built a program. McNeal has coached football, softball, and baseball through the years, often overlapping seasons and watching boys carry lessons from one field to the next.

Families and community leaders improved the fields, added locker rooms, and expanded the facilities.

In 2021, the baseball field was named in his honor.

"I was very honored, of course," he said. "It was funny, though, after it was announced, I had a few old friends call to ask if I was retiring or even still living."



**“It’s our mission to help our athletes to be outstanding men, faithful husbands, and loving fathers — and state champions!”**

**JOHN MCNEAL**

I feel privileged to be able to continue coaching in the stadium bearing my name.”

McNeal was also inducted into the Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

“It was very rewarding that this recognition came after many years of pouring my life into the game of baseball,” McNeal commented. “It was even better with my family and friends present at the ceremony. I feel like God has blessed me with a family that supports and loves me and my dream career, and that the relationships built during this time outweigh the wins and losses.”



▲ Trophies, team hats, and signed helmets are mementos of back-to-back championships and the memories built along the way.

Decades of grit and leadership line the walls, with titles marking milestones and commitment that goes beyond the game.



Over the decades, McNeal’s teams brought home four football state titles and three in baseball. But McNeal feels it had less to do with trophies and more with leadership.

“Each one of them had a close-knit senior class,” McNeal recalled. “They were committed to their sport and were outstanding leaders for the younger players.”

That kind of commitment, McNeal believes, carries far beyond the field.

“It’s our mission to help our athletes to be outstanding men, faithful husbands, and loving fathers — and state champions!” he said proudly.

McNeal said he’s had enough football and baseball to be content, but that’s never been what keeps him going. It’s the quiet work of building teams, trust, and the kind of relationships that last long after the season ends with the community, his players, and coaches who’ve stood beside him year after year.

After decades on the field, that’s still what brings him back. **GN**



*In the dugout  
of the field that  
honors his name,  
coach McNeal  
remains at home  
where coaching  
meets mentorship.*





A full-body portrait of Jonathan Barfield, a Black man with a shaved head and a goatee, standing outdoors. He is wearing a vibrant red blazer over a white dress shirt and a dark blue tie. He is holding an orange basketball in his right hand. The background features a modern building with large glass windows and a green bush to the left. The overall tone is professional yet approachable.

JONATHAN BARFIELD

# FROM NO TO INSPIRED YES

Barfield turned early disappointment into a mission to coach and uplift the next generation.



# THE HOME TEAM



ADOBE STOCK IMAGE

BY TINA NEELEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE ZAK

**I**N A Lebanon gym, the squeak of sneakers and the thud of basketballs bounce off the empty bleachers. A group of young athletes navigates through cone drills, focusing intently on their footwork and ball-handling skills. Coach Jonathan Barfield observes from the sideline, his eyes tracking each movement. When a ball ricochets off the rim and rolls toward him, he catches it effortlessly. “Keep at it,” he calls out, tossing the ball back into play, his voice steady and encouraging.

Barfield knows about keeping at it. A crossroads moment could have closed the door on the game entirely. Instead, it became the start of something bigger.

“I was once cut from my high school basketball team,” Barfield shared. “Now I’m one of the top trainers in Middle Tennessee.”

After high school, Barfield didn’t let that early setback define him. He kept working, eventually earning a spot as a collegiate guard at Lambuth University. From there, he transferred to Tennessee State, where he said he gained the real-world skills that developed and shaped his approach to coaching.

Barfield went on to play overseas in EuroBasket, an experience he describes as eye-opening. Seeing the game from a different angle helped him understand how to adapt — not just on the court, but in life. Those years gave him a broader view of basketball and a deeper understanding of the discipline, character, and sacrifice it takes to grow.

After his time overseas, Barfield returned to Tennessee with a growing passion for developing



**“The goal is to inspire athletes around the world. I’ve worked with over 500 athletes from elementary through college.”**

**JONATHAN BARFIELD**

players. He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Tennessee State University. He spent more than a decade building his coaching experience, including roles at St. Bernard Academy and currently as the varsity coach at St. Paul Christian Academy.

On Oct. 5, 2022, after 14 years in coaching, he stepped away from his work in school-age services and launched Inspired Athletes full time. The vision was personal: to create a program that welcomed athletes of all backgrounds and skill levels, while also honoring the memory of his grandmother and the support of his family and friends.

In addition to running Inspired Athletes, Barfield is a respected skills trainer affiliated with Core Hoops, Upward Stars, Vertical Gyms, and Pro Skills Basketball. He has been featured in multiple publications, including Valiant CEO, Entrepreneur Impact, Shoutout Atlanta, Stardom101, Bold Journey, Canvas Rebel, and Voyager Nashville.

In an interview with Nashville Voyager, Barfield explained his highest hope for his skill-building sessions.

“The goal is to inspire athletes around the world,” he said. “I’ve worked with over 500 athletes from elementary through college.”


While presently offering coaching in Lebanon and the Green Hills/West Nashville areas, the goal is also to own a dedicated basketball facility.

It’s Barfield’s way of giving back to the younger athletes. And he’s already proven successful.

He said, “Many athletes I’ve coached and trained in the past have pursued collegiate and professional careers.”

Barfield’s journey from educator and athlete to business founder and community mentor is a testament to passion, perseverance, and purpose. Through Inspired Athletes, he continues to influence and uplift countless young players by equipping them not only with basketball skills but with life tools built on discipline, character, and leadership. His story reflects a powerful blend of legacy, hard-earned wisdom, and forward-thinking vision, solidifying his place as a rising titan in the world of youth development and entrepreneurial excellence in Lebanon.



A man with a shaved head and a small earring is sitting on concrete steps. He is wearing a bright red blazer over a white dress shirt and a dark tie. He is holding a Wilson basketball with both hands in front of him. He has a gold ring on his left ring finger and a red wristband on his left wrist. The background shows more concrete steps and some greenery on the left.

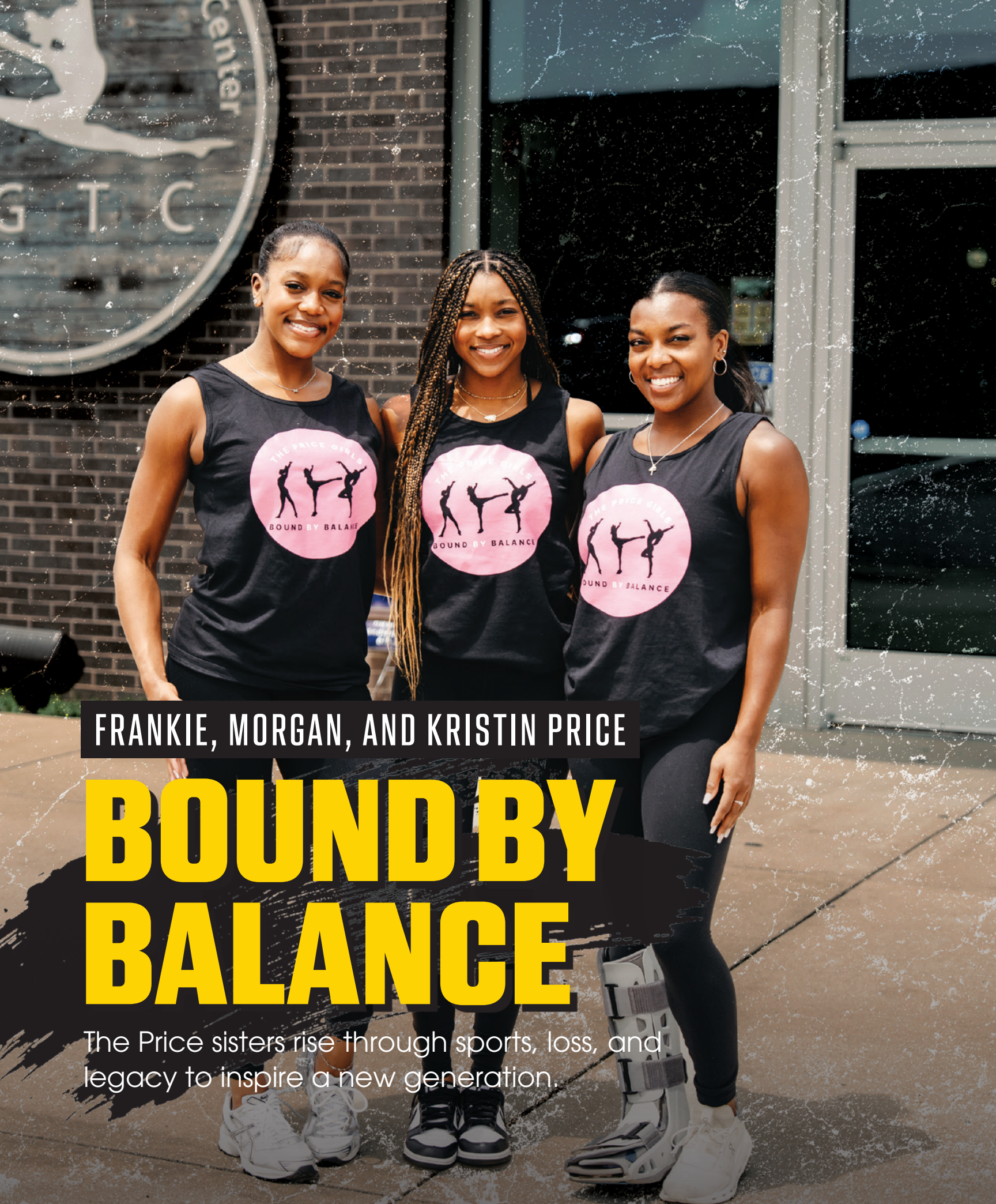
Barfield's playbook is no secret. His best direction to his athletes is straightforward: "Keep God first, eliminate distractions, be self-motivated, and take risks. Go on to manage your finances properly, find ways to be competitive in your field, and be a person of character. Eliminate negativity," Barfield said.

And keep advancing the ball.

At any given time, in some gym in Middle Tennessee, the ball keeps moving; the next shot goes up. And somewhere behind it is a coach who never stopped. **GN**

*For more information about Inspired Athletes, follow Jonathan Jonboy Barfield on Facebook.*





FRANKIE, MORGAN, AND KRISTIN PRICE

# BOUND BY BALANCE

The Price sisters rise through sports, loss, and legacy to inspire a new generation.



# THE HOME TEAM



▲ Laughter and stretches set the tone as the Price sisters warm up for a day of leading and lifting others.

BY TINA NEELEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN HOLCOMB

**B**EFORE THEY were All-Americans, before the college commitments and championship routines, the Price sisters were three girls growing up in Lebanon. They were raised by a mom who never missed a practice and shaped by the memory of a dad who set the bar high.

Their father, Chris Price, was a Major League Baseball player for the Kansas City Royals, and their mother, Marsha, was a Vanderbilt cheerleader. Together, they built a home where sports were a way of life.

“Both of my parents knew what it was like being a part of a team,” Frankie said. “I absolutely loved being a part of an athletic family.”

Sports were woven into their lives from the start. Frankie and Morgan took to gymnastics at age 2. The

youngest, Kristin, explored tennis, soccer, and volleyball before discovering her passion for cheerleading.

“The leadership, the determination, and the drive our parents instilled in us helped a lot,” Frankie recalled.

Morgan added, “We’ve always been a busy family... We also learned how to time manage since we were always busy, and it was only my mom taking care of all three of us.”

The loss of their father still echoes through their lives, not only as athletes but as sisters growing into their own.

“When I was young and lost my father, family members shared stories about his mindset and the way he lived his life,” Kristin said. “Even though he wasn’t





◀ Morgan Price strikes a playful pose on the gym floor where confidence and joy take center stage.

**“If I could speak directly to younger athletes, I would say to dream big and never give up. Stay positive and confident in everything you do.”**

**MORGAN PRICE**

here for long, his impact was strong enough that people still speak about him today.”

“We do everything in honor of him,” Frankie said. “At a young age, he instilled in us that ‘The Price girls don’t give up,’ which is a mantra we hold dearly in our hearts and helps us during hard times.”

“My mom taught me to be confident with everything I do and to always do it with class,” Frankie said. “What I bring to the table will always be enough.”

This fall, all three sisters will take the stage, each in her own way. Frankie is entering her final season as a gymnast at the University of Arkansas. After transferring from Fisk University, Morgan will join her there, competing in the Southeastern Conference. And Kristin will begin her freshman year cheering for the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

“When I found cheer,” Kristin said, “the competitiveness and my drive to want to get up and go to practice

every day was 100 times more... I’ve been able to fall in love with the sport of cheering and stunting, which has been so rewarding.”

Later this summer, the sisters will host the first Bound by Balance Camp in Lebanon — a confidence-building, skills-based camp for young gymnasts and cheerleaders. It’s their way of giving back to the town that raised them and marks the start of their new business venture.

“Lebanon laid the foundation for our family’s success,” Morgan said. “So it’s only right to impact the community where our story began.”

It’s not just about technique and titles. It’s about giving others what they’ve given each other: encouragement, strength, and belief. The sisters want to instill in younger athletes what they’ve been taught to believe — show up, work hard, and stay grounded.

“If I could speak directly to younger athletes,” Morgan said, “I would say to dream big and never give up. Stay positive and confident in everything you do.”

Across three sports and two universities, the Price sisters are writing the next chapter of a story their parents began — one grounded in discipline, faith, and family. The path hasn’t been easy, but it’s been theirs to walk together.

And every time they show up — whether on the mat, the field, or back home in Lebanon — they’re proving what they’ve known all along: The Price girls don’t give up. **GN**



*Together in their element,  
the Price sisters bring their  
Bound by Balance vision to  
life — uplifting each other and  
everyone around them.*







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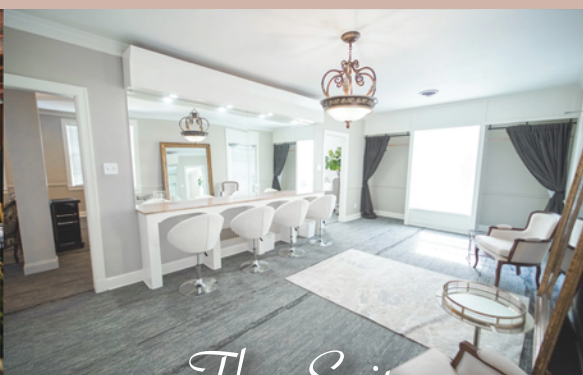


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