

NEA'S

PREMIERE

MAGAZINE

February 2024



Bethany Noto

United Way of
Northeast Arkansas

Community RESOURCES

Non-Profits & Organizations

GREENE COUNTY COMMUNITY FUND
VALENTINE'S GIFT GUIDE
KIDS PLAY IN NEA

A PUBLICATION OF MOR MEDIA, INCORPORATED

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From the Publisher



Dina Mason

Dina Mason
General Manager & Publisher
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Volunteering... I believe it is the fuel that energizes those that endeavor to make a difference in the world they live in. There are certainly many causes to choose from and most are honorable and good. Northeast Arkansas has many that reflect the nature of our community spirit. We tend to favor helping those who at least try to help themselves and those that had no control such as children.

If you have never given of your time in a volunteer situation, I recommend thinking of your strengths and passion and picking a charity that reflects your values. Look up their executive director and contact them. Ask what their volunteer needs are and see if your skills fit. I am always surprised when I hear someone say, "I was not asked to volunteer for that." Most of the time committees, boards and just plain volunteering at a community event is not a situation someone will think to "ask" you to do. The definition is "freely offer to do something" or "say or suggest something without being asked."

So, make 2024 the year of the Volunteer! And let us know about your journey. Report back to Premiere of your experience of being one of "the Good News and the People Making it Happen in NEA."



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ARKANSAS METHODIST MEDICAL CENTER AWARDED FOR RURAL CARE IMPROVEMENTS



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People who live in rural communities live an average of three years fewer than urban counterparts and have a 40% higher likelihood of developing heart disease. Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) is committed to changing that.

For efforts to optimize acute cardiac care and eliminate rural health care outcome disparities, AMMC has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® - Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) Rural Recognition Bronze award for ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI).

The American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, recognizes the importance of health care services provided to people living in rural areas by rural hospitals that play a vital role in initiation of timely evidence-based care. For that reason, all rural hospitals participating in Get

With The Guidelines® - CAD are eligible to receive award recognition based on a unique methodology focused on suspected non ST-elevation acute coronary syndrome (NSTEMI-ACS) and/or STEMI performance metrics.

"We are proud that our team at AMMC is being recognized for the important work we do every day to improve the lives of people in Greene County and the surrounding areas who are affected by coronary artery disease, giving them the best chance of survival and the best possible quality of life," said Tori Thompson, Director of The Foundation & Marketing at AMMC. "Residents in rural communities deserve high quality emergency cardiac care. I'm proud of our team for their commitment to heart care excellence and this achievement."

This award recognizes hospitals for their efforts toward care excellence for suspected non ST-elevation acute coronary syndrome care excellence. This is demonstrated by composite score compliance to seven guideline-directed care metrics for STEMI: early recognition of STEMI by electrocardiogram; timely initiation of inter-facility hospital transfer; initiation of a rapid reperfusion strategy by thrombolytic administration and/or primary percutaneous intervention; administration of appropriate antiplatelet and anticoagulant medications prior to transfer.

"Patients and health care professionals in Greene County and surrounding areas face unique health care challenges and

opportunities," said Karen E. Joynt Maddox, M.D., MPH, volunteer expert for the American Heart Association, co-author on "Call to Action: Rural Health: A Presidential Advisory From the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association" and co-director of the Center for Health Economics and Policy at the Institute for Public Health at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. "AMMC has furthered this important work to improve care for all Americans, regardless of where they live."



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Marybeth is on the rise in the musical world, and the Historic Collins Theatre is proud to present Marybeth with her full band on the Collins stage on Saturday, February 3rd, at 7:00 p.m.



Never miss out on the fun happening in NEA. Keep up with local events like festivals and live music at exploremorenea.com/community-calendar

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Birth Announcement



Submitted Photo from Lindsey Utley

Lainey Danielle Utley

Jonesboro residents, David and Lindsey Utley, welcomed their newborn, Lainey Danielle Utley, into the world on December 19, 2023.

Lainey was delivered at St. Bernards, weighing 6 pounds and 6 ounces, and measured 19 inches.

Lainey was also welcomed by Madelyn and Jolie Utley (big sisters), Lonna Baker (aunt), and grandparents Brad Baker, Mona Baker, Danny Utley, and Robin Utley.

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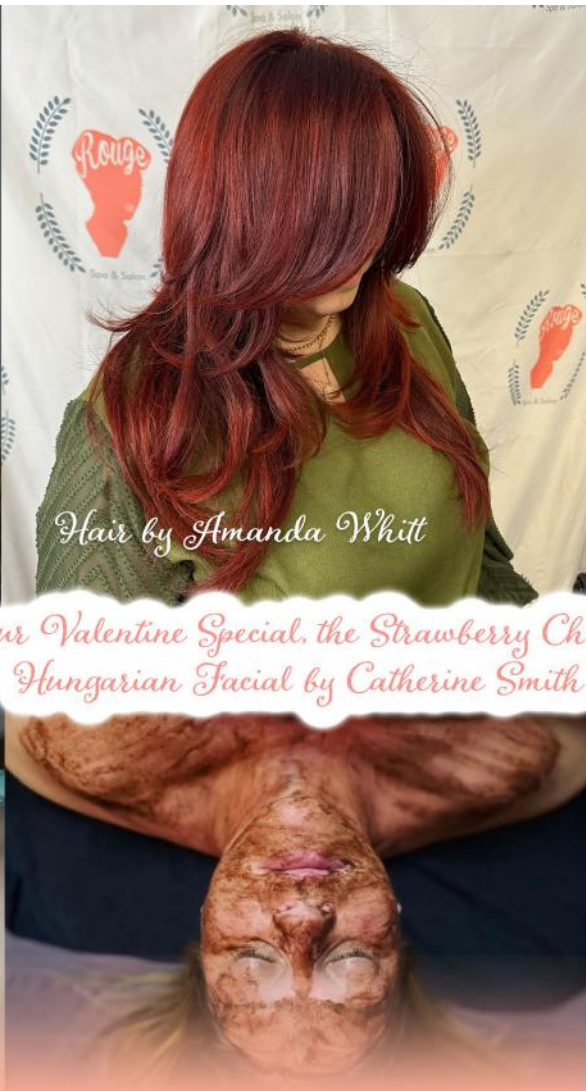
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Lessons LEARNED IN Motherhood

BY CAITLIN LAFARLETTE

My husband and I are somehow outnumbered with two children. Since the birth of my second, I've found I have more than enough love in my heart but definitely not enough hands. It has been, to put it lightly, chaos in our house.

Eva has taken on the role of big sister without flinching. She fetches diapers and wipes, soothes Aubrey when she cries, and even helps me with laundry. On the other hand, she has struggled with not having our undivided attention 24/7. One parent (typically me) is usually holding Aubrey, leaving the other to tend to Eva. And in the midst of this my husband and I still have to manage our own to-do lists and chores. Let me just say, doing laundry in a top loading washer is a bit of a struggle with a one-month old Velcroed to your chest.

Some mornings I attempt to help Eva get dressed with just one hand, the other holding my nursing infant. Evenings include my husband trailing after the toddler with a screaming baby in his arms, while I take five minutes to shower. I kiss him, sometimes, as he leaves for work, give his shoulder a squeeze before I go to bed before anyone else. Our conversations are always interrupted and we haven't had time to sit together without anybody attached to us. I give my full attention to Eva in the few minutes before her bedtime when I read her a story or brush her teeth, feeling guilty I can't do the full nighttime routine like I used to.

Somehow, even on the days (and nights) when I can't stop the tears, I know deep down this is all just for right now. As my husband says, "It's a blip." Eva may not be spending as much time with me as she used to, but she will still have happy memories of her childhood. We might be running around like chickens with our heads cut off but this is all temporary. We will find our groove and the stress of these early days as a family of four will ease up. Knowing this, I can allow myself to relax in this season and truly enjoy every moment.

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Bethany Noto

United Way

BY KAROLINE RISKER

Bethany Noto originally hails from Columbia, Tennessee (the “Mule Capital” of the world). She met her husband, Joseph, who is from Mississippi, when he was a youth minister in Bono and she was a law student at Ole Miss. The pair dated, spending a lot of time on the road, then marrying 12 years ago. Upon graduation, Bethany worked with attorneys and decided it wasn’t for her, nor was selling life insurance, which she did very briefly. Bethany eventually found her niche as a Private Client Relationship Manager at First Horizon Bank, working with local businesses and individuals to handle their banking needs. She says she uses past experiences and her undergraduate degree in marketing to help her clients to make sure they have all the boxes checked. “This role was one of those things that I never knew was out there or was looking for until I found it, and then it all made sense,” she said. Bethany and Joseph are now parents to Owen, 7, and Olivia, 3. Bethany enjoys playing tennis, spending time with her family and reading books by her favorite authors, John Grisham and James Patterson.

Bethany is also the Campaign Chair for the United Way of Northeast Arkansas where the organization’s goal in 2024 is to increase the amount of support allocated to our nonprofit partners while ultimately paving the way to create positive change for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) -those that need it the most. Though the United Way can be found in 37 countries, it works on a regional basis, which is something Bethany likes. The funds raised locally stay local. “The funds stay here in Northeast Arkansas,” she said. “Give where you live.” Counties served by the local UW are Randolph, Clay, Greene, Lawrence, Craighead, Mississippi, Poinsett, Jackson, and Cross.

Heather Coats, Executive Director of United Way of Northeast Arkansas said, “We currently have 19 vetted and trusted nonprofits that are receiving their allocated dollars every month in 2024 for a total of \$270,000 invested directly in their programs. We also committed another \$153,000 of funding directly to our community through United Way in-house initiatives like Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, Stuff the Bus, and Day of Caring for a total of \$423,000. In addition to our monetary commitment to our community, United Way works through our strong partnerships to provide connections and volunteer opportunities throughout the year for businesses, individuals, and nonprofit partners, allowing people to give and receive services that are much needed. Through the power of United Way’s foundation of collaborative giving, money collected from individual donors, workplace campaigns, company sponsorships, corporate matches, and grants helps to bridge the gap between survival and stability for vulnerable households to ensure access to essential resources and break the cycle of poverty.”

“United Way is very unique as a non-profit because it provides consistent monthly funding to non-profits in our nine county coverage area that focus on providing direct services to our ALICE population in areas of health, education, and financial stability,” she said. Bethany goes on to further explain that the United Way funding takes some of the burden of raising money off of the non-profits so that they can continue





Pictured: Erin Calhoon, Heather Coats, Bethany Noto, Casey Kidd

to provide direct services to our community. Bethany notes that she likes how purposeful UW is in how they allocate funds, adhering to strict guidelines and an approval process before money changes hands. "They are not just throwing money to whoever asks for it," she said. "We are sure we are making the most impact in the best way. We look at data to see where the need is and it's always changing," she said. "Is it food insecurity, homelessness, financial stability? We find the need and then fund that need." In this way, she adds, you make an impact on the community by using the resources in the most effective way. Just last year they assisted 18 non-profit partners and impacted the lives of 69,679 people.

In addition to being a funding source for local nonprofits, United Way also provides their own community programs. Money is raised through corporate donations, workplace campaigns, individual donors, and grants. One United Way community program is Day of Caring. On this day in September businesses are put together in teams and go out in the community and complete projects for area nonprofits and neighbors in need. Bethany, who first volunteered for the UW doing this particular project. Projects for Day of Caring can include landscaping, cleaning, organizing, or even washing dogs at the local shelter. Last year, 50 projects were completed with more than 550 volunteers, contributing 2,233 volunteer hours saving our community over \$50,000 in costs they would have had with the volunteers. Another event, Stuff the Bus, which happens every year before school begins is a United Way staple. School supplies are collected at different Wal-Mart locations and then given directly to the schools so that they can provide the supplies to families that need the extra support. Bethany said that the supplies are given directly to the schools so that the administration can give to kids who they know truly have that need. "It's not a handout," Bethany said, "it's getting supplies to where they need to go for families that

are working hard everyday but the expense of school supplies is out of reach." A new program that began in 2023 called Books and Badges is where police officers participate in read alouds with elementary students and read to the students in full uniform in order to foster relationships with the kids. United Way purchases a book for every student in the class as well as a classroom book that stays in the teacher's library. "They know that they can talk to the police," said Bethany. "They aren't someone to be scared of. It helps them build positive relationships. It's great."

Bethany found out more about the United Way in 2015 when there was a UW campaign at her work, stating that she was familiar with the organization before, but got to see how the local UW functions and how they support non-profits close to home. "That's when I got more interested," Bethany said. She encourages people who are interested in being a part of UW to give financially or to be a part of one of their programs.

Bethany also wants to note what she calls the fantastic staff at the local United Way: Heather Coats, the Executive Director, Erin Calhoon, the Development Director, and Casey Kidd, the Finance Director. "They are an incredible team and do a phenomenal job with the UW volunteers," she said.

Even before Bethany served as Campaign Chair, Bethany has had other roles within the United Way. She has also served in the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce, was a part of Leadership Jonesboro in 2017 and served on the Jonesboro Young Professionals Network. Today she serves on the board with St. Bernard's Advocate and is an associate member of the Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro. The United Way can be found at 407 Union Street, or by visiting www.uwnea.org.

PET *of the* MONTH

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BY SARAH BARNHILL

Meet Wilson! Wilson is a 14-month-old Long Haired Pembroke Welsh Corgi. We got Wilson as a six-week-old puppy from 4 Girls Corgis in Pleasant Plains. Our lives have revolved around him ever since. He may be short but don't let him fool you, he is a wild child. His favorite things to do are: Go for walks, steal socks -- straight from the dryer, get the zoomies, play fetch, and eat pup cups. He also loves a good day at doggie daycare to get some of his energy out!

His favorite foods are whipped cream, cheeseburgers, and anything he can sneak from the dinner table. Wilson has recently made it his life's mission to remove and destroy the squeaker from any unsuspecting toy he comes in contact with and so far he remains undefeated. If you ask anybody in our families who the boss of the house is, they will all undoubtedly tell you, "It's Wilson."

Wilson is wild and crazy with a dash of sweet, but he's ours and we wouldn't change him for the world!

~Josh & Sarah Barnhill



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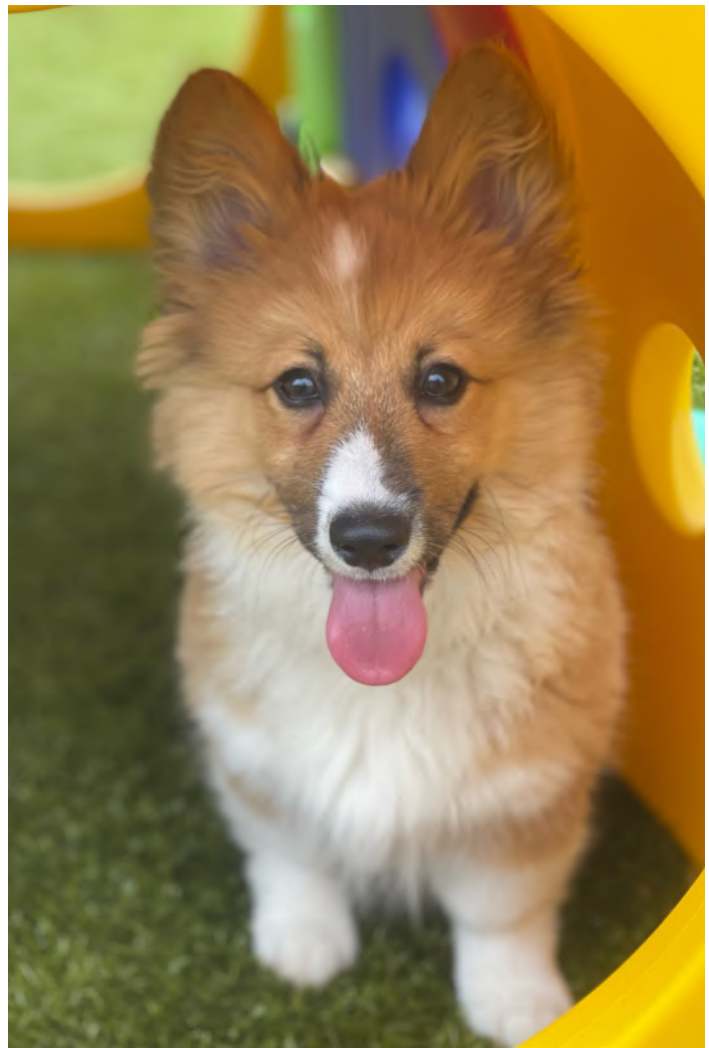
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HAPPENINGS

AMMC CONGRATULATES JOSH SMITH ON ACQUIRING HAND THERAPIST CERTIFICATION

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) proudly announces the recent certification of occupational therapist Josh Smith as a Certified Hand Therapist (CHT). This accomplishment further strengthens AMMC's commitment to providing comprehensive, specialized care to our community by offering high-quality hand therapy services close to home.



Certified Hand Therapists (CHTs) possess extensive training and expertise in treating conditions that affect the hands and upper extremities, including the shoulder and arm. Josh's newly acquired CHT certification adds to his existing skill set, enabling him to provide a broad range of services to patients. From managing acute trauma, such as fractures and cuts, to addressing chronic conditions like arthritis or neurological disorders, Josh is equipped to offer the specialized care necessary for optimal recovery. Additionally, as a CHT, Josh is skilled in assisting patients with post-operative rehabilitation, helping them regain strength, flexibility, and function after surgery.

BLACK RIVER TECHNICAL COLLEGE EXPANDS FOOD PANTRY

Black River Technical College's (BRTC) food pantry moved from the administration building to SC 100 in the Joe Martin building on the Pocahontas campus.

Food pantry organizer Christina Derbes said, "It's a larger room which allows us to house more amenities and its new location will give volunteers and organizers the ability to have regular hours which helps us to better serve students."

The food pantry's new hours will be 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Mondays; 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays; 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Wednesdays; 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Thursdays; and by appointment on Fridays.



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DR. KAREN POWERS LIEBHABER SELECTED FOR FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Black River Technical College (BRTC) Vice President of Institutional Advancement Dr. Karen Powers Liebhaber was recently selected as a fellow of the 2024 Delta Leadership Institute Executive Academy.

Delta Regional Authority (DRA) has selected 29 community leaders from Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Mississippi, and Tennessee as fellows of the 2024 Delta Leadership Institute (DLI) Executive Academy, an extensive nine-month leadership development program that brings together public, private, and nonprofit sector leaders from the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions. The 2024 DLI Executive Academy fellows were selected through a competitive application process led by DRA's eight state governors and DRA's federal co-chairman.

"The Delta Leadership Institute Executive Academy is an essential instrument for nurturing community placemaking and capacity building in the Delta region," said Federal Co-Chairman Dr. Corey Wiggins. "This program will give this dedicated and diverse group of leaders the tools they need to drive change within and outside their communities and accelerate prosperity across the region."

Since 2005, the DLI Executive Academy has

provided leadership development to more than 700 community leaders from diverse backgrounds, sectors, and industries to improve economic competitiveness and social viability throughout the Delta region.

DRA created the program to empower a corps of leaders with the tools, experiences, and networks to address local and regional economic development challenges. DRA invests in regional leadership through its annual DLI Executive Academy. Fellows representing each of the eight DRA states are selected by the eight governors and the Federal Co-Chairman from a competitive pool of applicants that represent both the public and private sectors.



The fellows will participate in six in-person sessions led by local, regional, and national experts and cover policy areas and skills related to public infrastructure, regional transportation systems, workforce development, coalition-building, and other fields necessary to facilitate economic development in the Delta.

As a result, DLI Executive Academy fellows graduate with enhanced decision-making skills, policy development know-how, strengthened leadership capacity, and a mutual understanding of regional, state, and local culture and issues.

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HEALTH Matters

KARAN SUMMITT
 Retired Health Educator
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In 2017 a survey conducted by the Cleveland Clinic that included over 1,000 men and women revealed some alarming facts. Approximately 74 percent of Americans are not worried about dying from heart disease, and 32 percent are not taking any steps to prevent the condition. Some 49% of us know little or nothing about our personal heart health and even among those with a family history of heart disease, only 26 percent are proactive in protecting their health.

The survey was conducted as part of Cleveland Clinic's "Love Your Heart" consumer education. Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the United States. Each year about 700,000 people, or one in every four deaths, die from the disease. Despite awareness campaigns, new medications and ground-breaking procedures, that number continues to rise each year.

In 2001, at age 64, the statistics included my mother. In 2013, at age 51, my brother experienced a debilitating stroke as a result of Atrial Fibrillation, a heart health condition. By the time my father reached his 80s, he had been diagnosed with multiple aneurysms, a serious circulatory condition. In my family, we don't mess around with heart health.

Many of us share common misconceptions regarding heart health. The survey found that 44 percent think vitamins can lower cholesterol and 61 percent wrongly believe vitamins or supplements can help prevent heart disease. When it comes to salt, we think cheese is

the biggest culprit, blissfully unaware that breads have a high sodium content. We also think there is a "heart disease gene" that can help identify risk. Although a family history of heart issues is a significant risk factor, no such gene has ever been identified.

Let's talk about risk. Every day you make choices that impact the various risk factors influencing your quality of life. We wear seatbelts to lower the risk of injury should we be involved in a car accident. If wise, we manage our finances, live within our means and avoid unnecessary debt, thus lowering the risk for money problems. We tuck a portion of our earnings into funds that will increase our risk for an enjoyable retirement. As I write this, many are wrapping pipes, installing clean air filters and preparing for a bout of extremely cold weather.

Your health operates in much the same way. We may be genetically predisposed to certain health conditions, but genetic predisposition is rarely a death sentence, especially with heart health. Family history may increase your risk, but lifestyle habits can either lower that risk for heart disease or increase it even more.

Cardiologist Dr. Suzanne Steinbaum, director of Women's Heart Health at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, believes that in many cases, heart disease is preventable. In her work with patients, she gives these 10 tips for reducing your risk of cardiovascular trouble:





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- ◇ Know your numbers. Keep track of blood pressure, cholesterol, hemoglobin A1C and inflammatory markers.
- ◇ Watch your diet. Paying attention to what you eat can decrease your risk for heart disease by as much as 30 percent. A diet high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and olive oil is a major cornerstone of good heart health.
- ◇ Exercise. Go for two and a half hours of moderate exercise every week.
- ◇ Manage your stress. Stress takes a toll on the heart, increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Other stress hormones, such as cortisol, can cause inflammation.
- ◇ Master the art of well-being. Positive emotions like optimism, contentment and laughter can lower stress and boost the immune system.
- ◇ Keep your arteries healthy. Arteries should be clear of plaque and flexible. A healthy diet can help decrease cholesterol, lower blood pressure and prevent clotting. This results in better artery health.
- ◇ Be aware of gender differences in heart disease. While men may experience chest pain, arm pain and shortness of breath as signs of a heart attack, in women the symptoms can also include jaw pain, nausea, vomiting, fatigue and trouble sleeping.
- ◇ Talk to your family. Although 80 to 90 percent of heart disease is due to lifestyle choices, a significant family history can accelerate the onset of problems. Knowing your family history can give you a better chance for lowering your own risk.
- ◇ If you are a woman, consider your pregnancy history. High blood pressure or elevated sugars during pregnancy put women at a higher risk of heart disease later in life.
- ◇ Be proactive about screenings. If you have multiple risk factors (smoker, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and/or diabetes) or a strong family history, get screened to determine your personal risk. Aggressive prevention can lead to a healthier heart and a longer, more vibrant quality of life.

My personal list would include two more guidelines: Maintain a healthy weight, and don't use tobacco. Heart health can be a very individual thing, but these tips include behaviors everyone can adopt to lower their risk. If my mom were here, she would tell you "because I said so" and mean it.

8 life events that can affect your life insurance needs

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
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| 2. Marriage | 6. Starting a Business |
| 3. Purchasing a Home | 7. Becoming a Caretaker |
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THE ADVENTURES OF

BY VICKI McMILLAN

Lester

Hello, folks! Lester, here, bringing in February like a heart-shaped Mylar balloon!

First of all, February is National Heart Care Month where we can focus on what we need to be doing to take good care of our tickers. Of course, your vet (oops, doctor) will say things like, "Lester, you need to exercise more," and "Lester, you need to cut down on your treats and windfalls." (A windfall is a morsel of food that falls to the floor accidentally and your human is too slow to get it before you snatch it up — another advantage of living with elders.) But even if we get a scolding about weight, blood pressure, etc., we need to pay attention to our medical professional so we can live the best life possible -- which brings me to my second point: Romance. See how I did that? You need good heart health for romance and romance for good heart health.

As ya'll know, I've traveled a good bit for a scrappy ol' pound dog from Jonesboro, Arkansas. And, let me tell you, some of the places I've seen are very romantic -- doodle down the street romantic.

*Savannah, Georgia, is number one on my most romantic places to visit. Downtown Savannah has cobblestone streets, live oaks dripping with Spanish moss, and beautiful old historic buildings. There are 22 park-like areas called "Squares" scattered throughout downtown with beautiful fountains, statues of various historical figures, and benches to sit and take it all in — like Forrest Gump did when he was waiting on the bus. Savannah also has several great restaurants, from super fancy Alligator Soul to come-as-you-are Green Truck Pub. Savannah has great museums and art galleries, if your sweetie is into that, and cemeteries that date back to the early 1700s. I personally

prefer Bonaventure Cemetery, as I have fond memories of a frolicking afternoon with a young doodle there. Alas, we came from two different worlds. Read the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* before you go and then never, ever mention it while you are in Savannah.

*Santa Fe, New Mexico, comes in as a close second. Santa Fe is nestled in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and is at over 7,000 feet in altitude. (Doggios should be prepared.) Santa Fe is also considered one of the great art centers in the U.S. There's a Georgia O'Keeffe museum that is very calming and welcoming for doggies. Then there's this punk subversion thing called (get this) Meow Wolf. I was intrigued by the name, but then decided it wasn't my kind of place, kinda like the pound when too many puppies had been picked up. However, your sweetie may really enjoy Meow Wolf. A restaurant with *je ne sais quoi* is definitely the Geronimo -- very elegant. But my favorite is the Coyote Café and Rooftop Cantina! There you can get a flight of margaritas! Unless, of course, you are a dog and then you can get a bowl of water. But, hey, it's all good. Visit the Chapel at Lorretto where a spiral staircase was built without nails or any visible signs of support. One tip though, don't chew on the banister. Yes, the wood is soft, and yes, the wood is tempting -- just don't. It's a one-way ticket out of the historic district. Stay at the La Fonda on the Plaza which has a fireplace in every room.

I could go on and on -- especially with coastal towns in the Northeast ... Doodle worthy. California and the Pacific Northwest ... perfect for a little romance.

OK, let's recap: Take care of your heart so you can travel with your sweetie before you cross the proverbial rainbow bridge.

Amore,
Lester – the canine Casanova

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Birth Announcement



Photo by Lauren Tyler Photography

Aubrey Elizabeth Kenney

Aubrey Elizabeth Kenney was born December 14, 2023, weighing 6 lbs., 14 oz., in Jonesboro to Caitlin and Tyler Kenney.

Aubrey was welcomed by her older sister Eva, grandparents Mike and Jeri LaFarlette, grandmother Annette Kenney, and great-grandparents Charles and Donna Pope, Jerry and Reba Clark, and Don and Betty LaFarlette.

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MOORE on MANNERS

WITH LINDA LOU MOORE

"Moonlight and roses, never out of date," are song lyrics from the classic movie, Casablanca. Valentine's Day brings to mind gifts that are timeless, or never out of date.

We often think of the traditional Valentine gift as romantic, but what happens when you:

1. Try to buy a Valentine gift for someone you have just begun to date?
2. Wonder what the pitfalls are of reading more into a gift than intended?
3. Debate how to sign a Valentine card?

NEW RELATIONSHIPS

What type of Valentine gift is appropriate if you are in a new relationship? Deciding to give a gift on Valentine's Day can be as thorny as a dozen roses.

What should you do if moonlight and roses may appear:

- Too personal?
- Too intimate?
- Too expensive?

Linda Lou Moore is a certified etiquette consultant. She offers business professionalism and dining seminars for adults, and etiquette and dining programs for children and teens. Contact via Post Office Box 726, Paragould 72451 or at manners@paragould.net.

You may want to consider the status of your friendship or your relationship. Evaluate not only your comfort zone, but the recipient's comfort zone as well. Oftentimes, an overly romantic gift, given in the first stages of a relationship, may prove to be somewhat awkward. How will the other person respond? Will he or she read more into the gift than is intended? Will your gift be misunderstood or misinterpreted? Sending flowers, delivering homemade baked goods or making dinner plans can be as casual or as elegant as your relationship status.

SIGNING THE CARD

If you have just begun seeing someone or just begun a new friendship, signing your Valentine card with the word "Love" may be a little too intense. Instead of using "Love" you may want to consider signing your card with the phrase such as "Happy Valentine's Day!" or "Thinking of you!"

GIFT GIVING TIPS

Before sending Valentine Day gifts make certain you know the rules. Here are some tips from the experts:

Be sure and check before sending gifts.

Often, schools and businesses have strict rules about accepting gifts from parents, clients or business associates.



Always check gift giving policies.

In some instances, businesses prohibit colleagues from exchanging gifts.

Consider where the gift is sent.

It's not a good idea to send intimate apparel to your Valentine at his or her place of employment. Also, very private, romantic and personal correspondence should not be sent to the office or a school setting.

KINDNESS

No matter what you decide to give on Valentine's Day, do remember to show kindness and consideration to others. *These are gifts that are never out of date.*



The Paragould Regional Chamber of Commerce presents:

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February 15, 2024
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ARKANSAS GAME & FISH COMMISSION NEXT GENERATION OF ATHLETES



Youth Shooting Sports has two divisions: junior and senior. The junior division is for grades 5-8 and the senior division is for grades 9-12. Home-schooled students compete in the division they would be in if they were in public school. Home-schooled students 15 or older must compete in the senior division. Coaches must be 21 to apply and must be certified by AGFC to participate in the program. An Arkansas State Police background check will be run on every applicant who is not an active Hunter Education Instructor on file with the AGFC.

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission’s annual youth trap-shooting competitions may be five months away, but it’s time for coaches to get their teams together and register to be a part of the Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports Program today.

Jimmy Self, Youth Shooting Sports coordinator for the AGFC, says registration is open until March 1, but the sooner coaches sign up, the better equipped they’ll be to conduct practices and form a true team of shooters by regional tournament time, which begins in April.

“The competition can be challenging, and it takes more than a few times at the range to become proficient with a shotgun,” Self said. “Some teams will have shot for years, but we want as many newcomers to the sport as we can get.”

Nearly 5,400 Arkansas boys and girls signed up to participate in last year’s regional tournaments, making YSS one of the largest clay-target

shooting programs in the nation. Program coordinator Self says he’s ready to hit another gear and take the program even further in 2024.

“AGFC Director Austin Booth has really made recreational shooting a focus of the AGFC and its new strategic plan,” Self said. “He’s elevated our programs into their own division and is working hard and developing shooting ranges and recreational shooting facilities throughout the state. I’d love to see our existing coaches get out and really try to form some new connections to grow this sport even more in Arkansas.”

Returning coaches are encouraged to register their teams at www.agfc.com/yss as soon as possible. New coaches should contact Self at james.self@agfc.ar.gov or call 501-604-0460 to learn more about the program and how to get started.

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THE GREAT ARKANSAS *Fish List*



CHUCK LONG

Avid Outdoorsman

Retired Outdoor Educator

I have recounted a few times in this column my path to a career with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. A change in major from accounting to wildlife while at Arkansas State University led to some wonderful classes relating to all kinds of wildlife and the management of those species. One of my favorites was Fisheries Biology. Fish and fishing had always been one of the top priorities on my activity list, but my general thoughts on fish were simple. There were two kinds of fish, those you eat and the rest were bait. The Fisheries Biology class generated a whole new level of interest in fish and the diversity of species that fill the waters of not only Arkansas, but across the globe. This interest has led to a pursuit each year of the widest variety of fish possible.

My pursuit each year begins in Arkansas, and with just over two hundred species of fish, it is a great place to start. Though many of the Arkansas fish are diminutive minnows or darters, about fifty species are actively pursued in some way by anglers in the lakes, rivers and streams of our state. Arkansas state record fish have been submitted in just over fifty species categories, but some of those were species rarely caught on hook and line that were incidental catches. Largemouth bass, crappie and the catfish species make up the most pursued species in the Natural State, with the bream species, smallmouth and spotted bass, walleye and the trout species also being very popular. At the other end of the spectrum there are a few dedicated anglers who try for gar, grinnel, drum, buffalo and a few other less sought after species.

My favorite waters to catch a wide variety of fish species include larger lakes and cool water streams. Norfolk and Greers Ferry offer a wide variety of fish and fish habitats. I personally like rivers and my favorites are the Current and Eleven Point River. I have not fished it much, but the Little Red River is also very appealing due to the tailwater fishery for trout that transitions to a cool water fishery for the lower stretches of the river.

To bolster the fish list, I like to take a trip to a saltwater venue. One of my favorite fishing locations is the Gulf Shores/Fort Morgan area. There are a wide variety of fishing options in that area that can produce a wide range of fish species. Pompano, redfish, whiting, sharks, mackerel and a variety of other fish can end up on the end of the line on any given cast.

One trip I hope to make that will provide opportunities not found in our southern climes is a trip to the Great Lakes area to try for yellow perch, pike and maybe some salmon species.

Are you interested in the pursuit of a wide range of species? It is much easier than it might seem. One of the first steps in chasing a variety of species and keeping a list is learning to identify species. There

are plenty of online references for fish identification and a search of state conservation agency pages is a great place to begin the learning process. Pick a state and search its page for fish identification and quite a bit of information should be available. The Arkansas page, agfc.com, and the Missouri page, mdc.mo.gov, offer some fish identification information. Many states also have apps that can loaded to the phone for immediate access while on the water. There are also apps that are not tied with a conservation agency that can be beneficial, with the Fish Rules app being my favorite.

If you are like me, however, hard copy of fish identification as reference material is important. Many states make some type of pocket guide that will cover the most common fish caught in that area. These are often available by request or at local tackle shops. For a more in-depth look at fish, my favorite is "Fishes of Arkansas" by Henry Robison and Thomas Buchanan. It was a textbook for the Fisheries class and contains very detailed information about the fish species found in Arkansas. There is also a dichotomous key that will help in fish identification. The second edition of this book was recently published and is available on Amazon for about \$50.

As far as equipment for a pursuit of a variety of species, a medium-to-medium-heavy spinning setup is hard to beat. A seven-foot rod paired with a 2500 size spinning reel that is spooled with eight-pound monofilament line will catch a wide variety of fish. I like a quality two-piece rod for travel purposes. For more specific species pursuits, the equipment can be downsized or upsized as needed. Trout and the bream species might be better pursued with a six-foot light action spinning setup, while catfish and other larger species might require a heavy spinning setup or baitcasting setup.

As far as lures or tackle goes, I like to keep it simple. A few small to medium crankbaits, a three-inch paddle tail grub on a 1/8-ounce jig head, or a small spinner will catch several species. But for a wide variety of fish, live bait is hard to beat. A lively worm will produce a wide variety of fish species. Minnows will also work as will small pieces of shrimp in the saltwater locations. My favorite live bait rig is a #4 baitholder hook and an appropriately sized sinker, depending on the water conditions.

I hope you have plans to get on the water this year and that this article will inspire you to diversify and chase a wide variety of species while out there. I am currently working on a fish list for Arkansas and some of my other favorite fishing holes. If you would like a copy or have fishing questions, drop me an email at cflong2002@yahoo.com or find me on Facebook and I will help any way I can. Good luck in your fishing endeavors and I hope to see you out there!



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Greene Co Community Fund

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT



The Greene County Community Fund has two important deadlines looming for those interested in applying for some of the services it offers.

The first is for future funding possibilities and the second for scholarship program applications.

According to a press release, the Community Fund will be accepting applications for the 2025 funding year through April 1, 2024. Non-Profit organizations and agencies throughout Greene County are welcome to apply. Requirements to be considered for funding include:

- Must be a 501 (c) 3 organization (in existence for at least one year prior to applying)
- Submit a completed application packet with all required documents
- Must utilize the money specifically within Greene County

Applications are available at the Greene County Community Fund office, located at 401 South 3rd Street (inside the Robbie Young Law Firm), or at www.gccfund.org.

For additional information or questions regarding the 2025 applications, email the Executive Director at give@gccfund.org. The Greene County Community Fund is a non-profit organization which solicits and receives contributions for charitable agencies from local residents, businesses, and industries. It allocates and distributes the contributions through grants which benefit Greene County.

Paragould Police Dept. Captain Brent

McCain, the Fund's sitting President, said the important part for local residents and agencies to understand is that all money donated stays right here. "All the money stays in Greene County," he said. "We don't fund outside grantees, and all the money someone donates is put back into support of programs they donate to. All these agencies would have a difficult time finding funding if not for us and the community's support. So many are funded totally through us." He mentioned the Greene County Senior B.E.E.S. as an excellent example. "In their Meals on Wheels program, they don't charge for the meals they deliver. They still make sure all the seniors are taken care of."

Agencies currently being funded include CASA; Focus, Inc.; Greene County Senior B.E.E.S.; Lions Club International; Pilots For Christ International; Greene County Boys & Girls Club; Child Abuse Task Force; In His Wings Ministry; Greene County Rescue Squad; UofA Division of Agriculture Research and Extension Office; Greene County Historical and Genealogical Society; Agape House; The Henry Wrinkles Foundation; Together We Foster; and Options.

Capt. McCain said the GCCF is "always willing to accept donations. The only thing we ask for, really, is a dollar a week, less than the price of a cup of coffee. We want everyone to give whatever their heart leads them to give. We fund a lot of agencies that wouldn't get funded otherwise."

As for the scholarship hopefuls, the GCCF Scholarship Awards Program applications

were made available as of January 1, 2024. Under the Program, four (4) \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to seniors attending Greene County Tech, Paragould, Marmaduke and Crowley's Ridge Academy high schools.

Scholarships are disbursed directly to the higher institution and may be used for costs of tuition, books, room/board, and other college expenses. Scholarship applications are available for download at the WWW.GCCFUND.ORG website or at the high school counselor's office. The deadline to apply is March 30, 2024. For more information, contact the GCCF office at 870-239-8435 or via email at GIVE@GCCFUND.ORG.

The Community Fund has been around for more than 60 years and, as a non-profit organization, its purpose is to impact our region in a lasting, positive way by encouraging the arts, activities, local business and education in Greene County.

Capt. McCain said many local industries participate by offering payroll deductions to interested individuals but there are other ways to get involved. "They can visit our website and click on the hyperlink to donate," he said, "or we can do billing."

The Community Fund is currently interviewing candidates for the Executive Director's position, one the organization's president said "takes a special person. They have to believe in our mission."

JUNIOR AUXILIARY OF JONESBORO'S UPCOMING OUT OF THIS WORLD CHARITY BALL

Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro has announced details for 2024's Charity Ball. This year's theme is Out of this World: A Cosmic Disco - A Brighter Night for A Brighter Tomorrow. The annual event will be held on Saturday, March 9, at Embassy Suites by Hilton Red Wolf Convention Center.

Registration opens that evening at 5:30, and the program, dinner and live auction will begin at 6:30 p.m. The evening's events include gaming with the addition of a hole in one golf game, dancing, live and silent auctions, raffle and Wild Card drawings, and much more. The gaming room will open immediately following the live auction portion of the program. A Wild Card drawing will also take place where the winner will receive the Live Auction package of their choice. Wild Card Tickets are \$100 each, are only sold at the event, and the winner must be present to win.

Dr. Zarr's Amazing Funk Monster will perform on the Tommy's Express Car Wash stage, and DJ Spence with Suspence Entertainment will DJ the after hours sponsored by Evolve Bank. Guests will dance the night away on the light up dance floor sponsored by Cavanaugh Auto Group.

There will also be raffle ticket sales leading up to the event with a live night-of drawing. For \$10 per ticket, you can enter to win a trip for two to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, sponsored by Snider Performance + Spine. Get with any active Junior Auxiliary member or message JA on Facebook or Instagram to purchase your tickets.

This is the 53rd year for Charity Ball, which is Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro's only fundraiser. All funds raised through the event go to support the 12 projects funded by Junior Auxiliary in Craighead County. Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro is a non-profit organization that is operated entirely by volunteers who donate over 3,500 service hours each year to children and families in our community. Since 1958, Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro has donated over \$1 million in scholarships. Some of our projects include weekly book clubs for area elementary students, literacy and math tutoring at area schools, dissection projects for local science classes, providing clothing and other necessities for families in need, mentoring junior high and high school girls, working at The Learning Center to assist developmentally-delayed adults and children, and many other areas where there is a need. Tickets for the event are \$175 per person and may be purchased by texting CharityBall2024 to 243725.

Founded in 1950, Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro has a mission to meet the needs of children, youth, and families throughout Craighead County. The non-profit organization is run solely by approximately 100 volunteers in Jonesboro. Today the chapter has 12 working service projects - Consolidated Youth Services, Crown Club, Girl's Enrichment Junior High, Girl's Enrichment Senior High, Growing Healthy, Kick-Start Kindergarten, Literacy & More, Scholarship, Share & Wear, The Learning Center, Community Outreach Programs, and Molly The Mega Body. Follow Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro on social media for more details leading up to the event.

Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro presents **Charity Ball 2024**

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 2/10 - Saturday at 7:00pm, Magician Jonathan Erlandson magicshowtour.com
 2/17 - Saturday at 7:00pm, Chad Garrett & Friends
 2/24 - Saturday at 7:00pm, Rocking the Night Away presented by the Paragould Band
 2/26 - Monday at 7:00pm, Bluegrass Monday kasu.org/tickets
 3/2 - Saturday at 7:00pm, The Unforgettable Flood presented by St. John's Lutheran Church

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Tuesday 1 breakfast item & a large specialty coffee - \$7
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Thursday Keto Day - buy 2+ items and receive 20% off of your keto items
Friday 6 cupcakes - \$14
Saturday 6 cupcakes - \$14
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DOWNTOWN PARAGOULD EVENTS



Feb. 2nd

6:00 p.m.

Singo Bingo at The Twisted Goose
Main Street Paragould Event



Feb. 3rd

7:00 p.m.

Marybeth Byrd Returns to NEA!
Downtown Collins Theatre



Feb. 17th

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Brunch & Paint with
Mr. And Mrs. Mouse

Bloom Events in
Downtown Paragould



Feb. 24

7:00 p.m.

Rocking the Night Away
by the Paragould Band
Downtown Collins Theatre



March 1st

6:00 p.m.

Singo Bingo at 1812 Pizza
Main Street Paragould Event



March 2nd

7:00 p.m.

The Unforgettable Flood
by St. John's Lutheran Church
Downtown Collins Theatre

*A complete listing of all Downtown events can be found under
"Events" at downtownparagould.com or
facebook.com/oneandonlydowntown/events.*

Happy Valentine's Day!



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Ridgecrest Health and Rehabilitation specializes in providing short-term transitional services and long-term care services.

If you or a loved one needs short-term rehabilitation to accelerate recovery and get back on your feet or needs a long-term care setting, then Ridgecrest Health and Rehabilitation is here to help.



Pizza Wonton Cups for the WIN!

BY KATIE COLLINS

Ingredients:

12 wonton wrappers
¼ cup pizza sauce or marinara sauce
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
Mini pepperoni or regular size pepperoni slices cut into quarters – use 3-4 pieces of either per cup



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray. Arrange wonton wrappers in the muffin pan to make little cups, then bake for 3-5 minutes. Remove from the oven.

Add ingredients in whatever order you prefer – I put a little cheese down first, then ½ teaspoon-1 teaspoon of sauce, mini pepperoni, and more cheese on top.

Return to the oven and bake for 8 minutes, or until cheese is melted. You can top with chopped parsley, Italian seasoning, or chives if you like or just serve as is. Best served hot!

Pizza Wonton Cups

If I'm not mistaken, I believe there is a quite popular sportsball game happening this month. I may not be much of a sports person, but I do enjoy the commercials and halftime entertainment that goes along with this particular game, and who doesn't like a good excuse to have a get-together with fun snacks?

Not celebrating the big game this year? You can still use this recipe for your Galentine's Day get-together with your besties, or as part of your Valentine's Day dinner with your sweetie. You can also make this just because; I mean, you don't really need a special occasion to enjoy a Pizza Wonton Cup!

As I often like to do, I have chosen a recipe that is easily customizable, and allows you to alter it to your personal preferences. It's probably my history (and current state) of being a picky eater most of my life! No pepperoni on hand? You can sub in some cooked, chopped bacon! Prefer a no-meat option? Just add a little extra cheese instead! I think a drizzle of hot honey before serving would be a great addition, too. If you happen to have taco ingredients on hand instead of pizza ingredients, you can make taco wonton cups! You're only limited by your pantry/fridge and your imagination!

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BUILDING A COALITION OF HOPE

Greene Co. Mental Health & Substance Abuse

BY KARAN SUMMITT

Anyone involved in helping families and individuals in recovery knows the familiar saying, “It takes a village” is an everyday, absolute truth. The process requires individuals willing to recover, people willing to help and a vast network of resources ready to meet the wide variety of needs recovery requires — all of these working together so the right hand has intimate knowledge of what the left hand can do and is doing.

Under the funding of Restore Hope Arkansas, with TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families), as well as assistance from individuals, churches and local organizations, Northeast Arkansas is growing that network of resources. Each entity contributes toward the common goal of helping families overcome barriers, move out of crisis and into stability and embrace a career path that promotes growth and long-term financial stability. These organizations also raise awareness and provide substance abuse education for youth and families. The ultimate goal is to break generational cycles that destroy lives.

Doing that isn’t easy. The first steps of recovery are as different as people are different. Some seek resources for overcoming addictions. Others require things as basic as food and shelter. Some have legal issues that need resolving, and others require counseling for mental health challenges. Once the fundamental issues are addressed, jobs, transportation and childcare present new challenges. In early stages, the risk for relapse into old, familiar habits remains on the horizon.

The key to success is a coalition of community entities, each one a unique, but essential piece of the recovery puzzle. With a strong, growing and co-dependent network, successes make the effort worthwhile. In Greene County, with backbone support from the Greene County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition, that network includes organizations such as the 100 Families Initiative of Greene County along with the partnerships and support of mental health organizations, local school districts, law enforcement, faith-based communities, medical and public health groups, recovery organizations, the Peer Specialist Recovery Program and a host of other organizations.

The 100 Families Initiative builds an alliance with these organizations to work together through the “collective impact model.” Hope Hub, an online case management system, consolidates the alliance resources into one, streamlined location, allowing the family’s resource team to interact with each other, provide client support where needed, and ultimately track the family’s progress from “crisis to stability and to career.”

Shauna Hitt, who has served as part-time director of the 100 Families Initiative of Greene County since its start in late spring 2023, has used

her role to help raise awareness of the need for collective impact, to build an alliance of current resources in the community, and also to highlight resource gaps needed to fully help families. Hitt noted that some of the gaps include public transportation options along with the need for a local domestic violence shelter. “No family struggles alone in Greene County, and we want people to realize there is hope and there is help” noted Hitt. For now, the immediate Alliance goals are to build an even stronger alliance of existing resources, increase the number of participating families, and create awareness of current resources.

Telly Roberts, a lifetime Paragould resident, is one who benefited from community support and turned that help into serving others. Roberts’ journey to sobriety began through participation in the Arkansas Drug Court program - an effort to avoid prison time. Quoting from their website, Arkansas Drug Court is “a voluntary, fourteen-to-eighteen month, multi-phase intervention program designed for adults involved in the criminal justice system due to underlying, unmanaged substance use disorders and are at increased risk of reoffending. Adult Drug Court utilizes evidence-based treatment and supervision measures to aid participants in achieving lasting recovery ... Adult Drug Courts help connect participants to community services and support, saving their lives, families, and futures while effectively preserving tax dollars.” (<https://www.arcourts.gov/courts/circuit-courts/specialty-court-programs/adult-drug-court-map>)

Upon graduation from drug court and with two years of sobriety, Telly began certification as a Peer Support Recovery Specialist. Her history as a former addict with “lived experiences” provided much-needed credibility for helping others overcome substance abuse. Training for the program is available through the Arkansas Department of Health with grant funding from the opioid settlement monies awarded to Arkansas.

Telly talked about the personal benefits of becoming a peer support specialist: “It keeps me busy and that helps with my own sobriety, but it also reminds me every day that one of my biggest responsibilities is to show other addicts that recovery is possible.” In the past two months, as a Peer Support Specialist Telly has provided assistance for 114 needs. The goal of the Arkansas Peer Recovery Program is to have a specialist in each of the 75 Arkansas counties.

Earnest Friend is one of those who benefited from Telly’s help and knowledge of available resources. At this writing, Earnest is six months clean from methamphetamine addiction and is participating in the local Drug Court Program. Telly has helped Earnest find resources to pay reconnect fees on his utilities, move needed appliances and begin work toward his GED. Earnest spoke



enthusiastically about Telly, saying, “She goes out of her way to help. It means so much because she has been there and realizes how drug addiction can consume every part of your life. I can talk to her knowing she understands.”

Jessica Strickland is another whose own recovery and experience with a multitude of area resources has led to giving back through the Peer Support Recovery Program. In her own words,

Crowley’s Ridge Development Council helped me come up with the initial deposit and get my utilities turned on with the rapid rehousing funding for literal homeless. God answered my prayers for a sponsor in Judy Lambert and the 7th & Mueller Church of Christ. I had an open DHS case, and I was running out of time allowed to obtain a home and furnish it in order for my boys to come back home to me and begin our trial home placement. I had been sober a year and attending 7M’s Celebrate Recovery program on Thursday nights. 7M helped furnish our home so that we could pass inspection and begin trial replacement. A few months later I was awarded custody of my children again.

During the course of my journey to recovery I was court-ordered to complete a program. I had been rejected by a few rehabs due to health concerns from domestic abuse. I was healing in more ways than one, and I was approved to go to both the Midsouth partial day treatment program and then the second part of that program was to go to their group once a week while choosing at least two other recovery meetings outside of that.

Shelly Dhane was the instructor and she referred me to the Peer Recovery Support Specialist Program. She felt like I was exhibiting leadership skills and had a desire to help others find their path to recovery. My probation officer Michelle Odem believed in me and Sheriff Brad Snyder, then a police officer, told me to keep pushing forward. Shalinda Woolbright of NEA Divine

Intervention took a chance on hiring me when I was one year and eight months clean and hadn’t had a real job in almost 11 years. Today I am a certified Peer Support specialist and excited about the possibility of opening up a peer support recovery center in Greene County. I’m also meeting with another non-profit to help us get an adult literacy program going and be able to take that into the jail.

Leigh Blythe, founder and president of the Greene County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition, along with numerous individuals from within the community, is passionate about growing a strong coalition.

Blythe shared, “Our goal is to create community-level change and reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental health disparities in Greene County – the place we all call home – where we shop, where we raise our kids. We realize creating community-level change begins with prevention but also requires addressing the current needs of struggling families. To change the community, we have to start with one individual, one family, one mindset. Working together is imperative to bring that change.”

The Coalition meets monthly at the Paragould Community Center. They welcome anyone interested to be a part in the monthly meetings, working committees or resource development. For more information, you can contact:

Greene County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition
870-230-3149 or greenecountycoalition@gmail.com

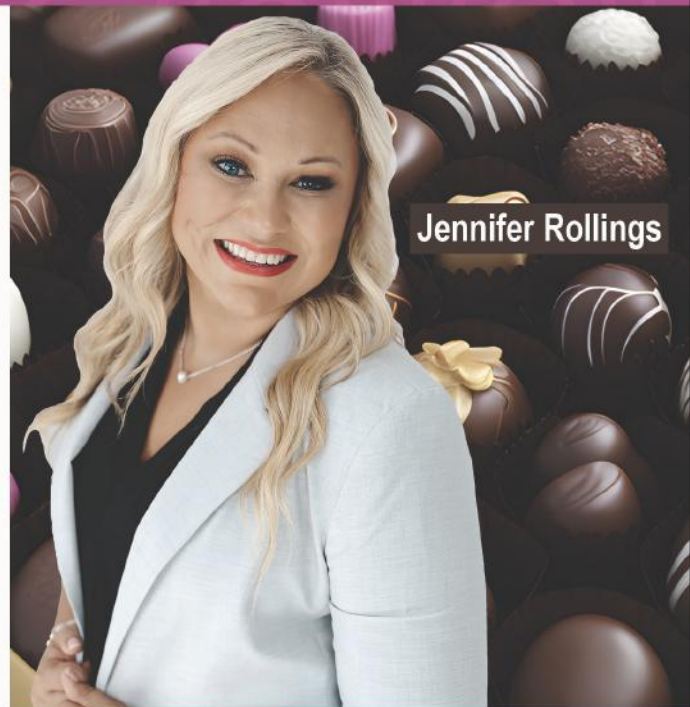
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FEBRUARY 2024

CHILD DEVELOPMENT
STEWART PEDIATRIC THERAPY



Craighead County Jonesboro *Public Library*

BY GABBY POWELL

What does a library have to offer? The obvious answer is, of course, books, but what else? Maybe some story times planned for the kids, or possibly a book club for the older reading enthusiasts. Most people wouldn't know what their local library has to offer because they haven't actually taken the time to see. Well, "this is your sign" because your local libraries in NEA have more to offer than just bound paper with words; they offer a world of experiences, opportunities, and education.

The Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library seems more like a learning oasis than a library, for both children and adults. Walking into the Children's Library, you are met with colors that stimulate the imagination and a world ready to explore.

One young library goer said, "This is where I can stay and play." She explained there were more than just picture books for her to come to after school. There were other children to talk to, unique animals to observe – really, go check out the Guinea pigs — and a comforting environment in which to relax.

The staff at the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library also deserves its moment to shine for creating this welcoming space. There was not a staff member who didn't smile or ask how they could help those browsing through the thousands of books. It is through their hard work that the library can provide resources such as the Bookmobile, numerous clubs, and professional development opportunities.

The Bookmobile is one you have most likely seen distributing books throughout town or participating in local parades and festivities. Ms. Laura Dunivan, the driver of the Bookmobile, says this is one of her favorite resources the library offers. The Bookmobile carries books and DVDs throughout the community, and you can even have a library card made at the bus! You can find the next stop by visiting the library's website and clicking on the events tab.

When mentioning that the library offers activities outside of books and reading, the clubs are a great place to start. The four main clubs the library currently hosts are the Cross-Stitch, Cookbook, Knitting, and Murder and Mayhem clubs. Each meets at different times throughout the week and fosters a community built on similar interests. If you are interested in these topics, be sure to reach out and join in. New members are welcome and no experience or materials are generally required.

The library offers numerous youth resources, all free to the public. There are online learning and homework resources, book lists and blog posts for elementary ages all the way to teens. From game nights to music mixing to paint parties, there is something offered for everyone.

But after all, we are talking about a library, so the books cannot be forgotten! With over 150,000 print volumes, this is one of the largest libraries in Northeast Arkansas. If you happen to have a specific book in mind they do not carry, chances are they can find it for you through their online database. The library also offers research references, genealogies, free notary service, resume review, public computers, free Wifi, and more. The library card is definitely worth the investment!

For more information on the Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library, visit libraryinjonesboro.org.

DELTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA YOUNG ARTIST CONCERT



Victor Radko Shlyakhenko
2023-2024 Grand Prize Winner



Anamaria Tarkington
Neale Bartee Award Winner



Jun Lee
2023-2024 Grand Prize Winner

The 2023-2024 Delta Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition Finals were held on December 16th on the A-State Campus in Jonesboro Arkansas. This competition began in 1988, and each year, talented, young musicians (up to age 26) travel across the United States to Jonesboro for a chance to compete in the DSO's prestigious Young Artist Competition. Two grand prize winners were chosen, as well as an outstanding YAC finalist who is an Arkansas high school student (grades 9-12).

The 2023-2024 Grand Prize winners will perform with the Delta Symphony Orchestra at the Young Artist Concert on February 4, 2024, at 2 p.m. in Riceland Hall at the Fowler Center in Jonesboro,

(201 Olympic Dr.). This concert will also feature a junior high chorus from Northeast Arkansas schools (Brookland, Buffalo Island Central, MacArthur, Nettleton, Valley View, and Westside). Tickets are \$20-\$35 (group rates are available for parties of 10 or more) and can be purchased at www.deltasymphonyorchestra.org/tickets or by calling 870.761.8254.

The 2023-2024 Grand Prize Winners that will be featured as guest soloists at the 2024 DSO Young Artist Concert are Jun Lee from Urbana, Illinois, and Victor Radko Shlyakhenko from Los Angeles, California. Jun Lee will be performing a piece on the cello, and Victor Radko Shlyakhenko will be performing a piece on the piano.

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You’re correct. The label does not necessarily tell us the “why” or the “what to do.” We first must understand the “why.” The “why” is called the “function” in behavioral terms.

To identify the function we need to conduct a full medical records review, observe the challenging behavior when it occurs, and conduct an in-depth functional assessment. The information gleaned from this process will give us the why. After we identify the function, we are better prepared to teach your child how to communicate their wants, needs, and experiences to others.

Based on your child’s skill set, we select a specific communication behavior to teach them how to more appropriately, effectively, and safely communicate. It is important that this new, safer behavior achieves the same function as the challenging behavior. Our goal is for the new behavior to replace the challenging behavior by meeting the exact same needs the challenging behavior met.

Throughout the process, we will continue to collect data on the challenging behavior and the new, safer behavior. This will allow us to ensure we are not missing any of your child’s needs. And, if we find the challenging behavior returns, we can start new supports quickly.

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Clinical Director

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New Year's Babies!

ARKANSAS METHODIST MEDICAL CENTER

A year of double blessings and double joy! In a thrilling start to the new year, Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) is overjoyed to announce the birth of not just one, but two New Year's babies - a precious pair of twins!

Baby boy Aiden was born January 2, 2024, at 1:05 p.m., weighing 6 pounds 3 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Baby girl Auden was born at 1:06 p.m., weighing 5 pounds 1 ounce, and was 18 inches long. Proud parents are Lindsey and Jake. These first-of-the-year miracles have brought a wave of happiness to the entire AMMC family.

"We are beyond ecstatic to welcome these two bundles of joy into the world," exclaims Dr. Charles Cesare, Sr., OBGYN at AMMC. "What a wonderful way to usher in 2024! Their arrival is a reaffirmation of our commitment to providing outstanding care to every mother and child. Here at AMMC, we don't just deliver babies; we deliver happiness, hope, and new beginnings," says Dr. Cesare. "And today, we've delivered double the joy! We congratulate the proud parents and thank our dedicated team for their tireless work."

In the spirit of the New Year, AMMC reaffirms its commitment to providing exceptional maternal and newborn care. Please join us in welcoming our New Year twins and celebrating this extraordinary beginning of 2024!



Submitted Photo from Arkansas Methodist Medical Center

SCAN TO GO TO FORM

WANT TO ADD A BIRTH, ENGAGEMENT,
OR WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT?



BIRTH



ENGAGEMENT



WEDDING



Jordan White, LMSW

I love what I do... I love working with the community that our clinic serves. I love being able to help with the littles who have no idea how to feel to the moody defiant teens. I am grateful for the additional training of Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), and Infant Mental Health (IMH). I hope to continue to grow in my training and experience to continue to best serve those in my community.



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Special Needs *Play Resources*

BY STEPHANIE COOPER

As a parent of two children with disabilities, I am very familiar with the difficulties of finding play resources in NEA. When a child has mental or physical barriers, normal activities can be dangerous, and at times, parents and children can feel out of place. Fortunately, if NEA is your home, there is a large availability of resources for special needs families. Below is a list of disability-friendly resources for parents in our area. Some events are seasonal and have age limitations. Be sure to contact each program with the information provided, and you will find passionate people who want your children to have just as many opportunities to smile. Our special needs community is thriving, and it just takes some digging as an advocate to find innovative, safe play for your children.

The Arts

iCan! of Jonesboro is a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of free classes to children with disabilities. The Jonesboro chapter provides dance classes at The Floor in Jonesboro from Feb. 16 to May 10 for the spring season. The classes use a buddy system to pair volunteers with each student. This helps re-create a standard dance class environment for students and parents so they can feel safe and understood. This a weekly event that parents must pre-register for on icanarkansas.com. Twenty-two-year-old Arkansas State University student Victoria Mitchell teaches these inclusive dance classes for iCan! Ms. Mitchell is an exercise science major at A-State and has dedicated her Fridays to this dance program for two years. Victoria took over for Ellie Mayberry, whose sister Julie inspired iCan! The program started in Jonesboro and is now active in seven different Arkansas counties, providing dance, art, cooking classes, and more. Ms. Mitchell has a background of working with children with disabilities, as she was part of the Best Buddies program in high school. She has always been

passionate about volunteering her time: "No words can describe how it feels to watch these dancers perform on that big stage. Their smile just lights up the whole room, and they make me so proud. Being able to form relationships with the students and parents of this program has been such a blessing. Seeing the students' excitement when they arrive to class and watching them form friendships with the other students is such a heartfelt experience. Our community is so lucky to have a program like this available."

Contact Information: icanarkansas.com or thefloordancestudio@gmail.com

The Greene County Fine Arts Council has always been open to casting and working with those with disabilities. It has a creative and friendly atmosphere, building lasting friendships with all students and adults involved in its programs. It hosts many theatre opportunities for adults and children. Watch its page for auditions and program announcements.

Contact Information: (879) 565-3477 or gcfacmarketing@gmail.com

Learning Expression Through Arts Programming (LEAP) is an arts outreach program partnered with Abilities Unlimited and the Foundation of Arts. LEAP is a theatrical opportunity for adults with disabilities. A recent performance, *Especially Strong*, was held at the Forum in July of 2023 and directed by Sydnie Walker.

Contact Information: Foundation of Arts: (870) 935-2726 or info@foajonesboro.org

Special Olympics Arkansas

Special Olympics of Arkansas has the largest variety of activities dedicated to students and adults with disabilities. When searching for Special Olympics events, it is vital that you know which Special



Olympics Area you fall in. Greene, Clay, and Randolph counties are classified as Area 1, and Craighead and Poinsett are classified as Area 7. You can visit www.specialolympicsarkansas.org and click the In Your Area tab to find your county classification.

Special Olympics Arkansas provides activities such as bowling, swimming, powerlifting, volleyball, bocce, basketball, track and field, etc. Activities may come with age limits and involve outside-of-school practices. Parents are also given the opportunity to receive training to become coaches for Special Olympics events. They compete in local, state, and national competitions.

Contact Information: Phone: (501) 771-0222 or specialolympicsarkansas.org

Miracle League Baseball

Miracle League Baseball is a program offered in Jonesboro for children with disabilities. They seek to remove barriers that keep children with mental and physical limitations from the baseball field. The Miracle League teams play on a custom-designed, rubberized field that can accommodate wheelchairs and other devices. This provides an inclusive environment with fewer injuries. Players are paired with able-bodied peers to create an environment of friendship and bonding. Miracle League Jonesboro offers an experience that extends beyond sports and can make a real impact on the life of a child with disabilities.

Contact Information: (870) 933-4604 or www.jonesboro.org/173/Miracle-League

Malco Movie Sensory Nights

Jonesboro's Malco Theatre hosts numerous Sensory Cinema Saturdays throughout the year. It provides parents and children with a calmer theater atmosphere for those who otherwise have difficulty watching movies. During these Sensory Cinema events, theatre lights will be dimmed, the temperature inside will be comfortable, and volume levels will be lowered. Children are free to move around in an atmosphere without limits. This is not only convenient for those with disabilities but convenient for anyone with sensory issues or small children. The Center for Exceptional Families organizes Sensory Cinema. Tickets are bought on the event day for eight dollars per person (cash only).

Contact Information: (888) 360-9654 or thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org

Public Parks

The Paragould Community Center has a variety of disability-friendly

parks. Their outdoor waterpark has a handicapped pool lift seat, while the indoor aquatic center has a therapy pool, which would require a doctor's note for a child under 16. The Aquatic Center located in Pochontas has similar amenities. Paragould's Community Center playground has an oversized glider that older children with disabilities can use and a safe, cushioned foundation. Paragould also has a splash pad at Labor Park, which is a safer option for children with physical disabilities.

Contact Information: (870) 239-7530 <https://www.cityofparagould.com/174/Parks-Recreation>

Jonesboro has a variety of disability-friendly parks as well. Craighead Forest Park has a handicap-accessible area, Castle Playground, and a splash pad. Miracle League Park in Jonesboro is ADA-accessible and offers 28 pieces of handicapped-accessible playground equipment. This park also has a quiet room for children experiencing sensory overload.

Contact Information: (870) 933-4604 or jonesboro.org/161/Parks-Recreation

Paragould Parks Fishing Rodeo

Paragould Parks and Recreation hosts an annual Children's Fishing Rodeo in June. This event is free to children 15 and under. It is also very special needs friendly, involving familiar faces from the Special Olympics community and pairing children with able-bodied peers. During this event, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission stocks the lake with 400 pounds of fish. They also provide lunch, trophies, and door prizes for the children registered for the event. Use the Paragould Parks contact information above to inquire about the Fishing Rodeo.

Miracle Rodeo

The Miracle Rodeo was previously held in the fall of 2023. This fall event is offered to children and adults with disabilities and sponsored individually. They offer supervised horse rides, face painting, and other activities. The Craighead County Mounted Patrol organized the Jonesboro area Miracle Rodeo in October 2023. Paragould's Travis Hedge Miracle Rodeo was held at the Greene County Fairgrounds in October 2023, while the Forrest City area had theirs in September, sponsored by the Crowley's Ridge Saddle Club.

Contact information: Travis Hedge Miracle Rodeo (870-240-6666), Craighead County Mounted Patrol (870-935-5553), Crowley's Ridge Saddle Club (870-317-8001)



HOW TO PROMOTE CHILD DEVELOPMENT

STEWART PEDIATRIC THERAPY

As children grow, they develop their own personalities and can communicate their needs. They begin to express specific interests, and they learn to play independently and with others. However, parents of infants are sometimes unsure of how to promote development. PLAY -- that's how development is promoted. Even a few minutes a day of reading books or playing on the floor can boost your child's development. Peek-a-boo, singing, tummy time, while reaching for rattles or your hands, are all easy interactions for the parent and very important learning tools for your infant. "Time spent playing with children is never wasted." As a pediatric physical therapist, I am frequently asked about a few common development concerns.

The first subject we will discuss is tummy time. Tummy time has become a buzz word in all the developmental books and articles. Tummy time does not have to take hours per day. It can be simply a few minutes a day on the floor or, for newborns, a few minutes on a parent's chest. Tummy time promotes neck and shoulder strength and gets those muscles ready for creeping and crawling.

Next, a common subject with infants is torticollis. Torticollis is a shortening of neck muscles on one side. You might notice this if your infant holds his/her head to one side or has difficulty rotating his/her head to look at you as you move. If you suspect your infant favors one side over the other, introduce a rattle or toy and promote looking both directions to follow the toy. If difficulty with neck movement continues, talk to your pediatrician. Physical therapy can assist with stretches and activities to strengthen the neck to promote appropriate development.

"My child is 12 months old and isn't walking. Should I be concerned?" Children develop at different speeds. We tend to place a big checkmark on development on whether a child is walking. I do not become concerned about a neurotypical child not walking until about 15 months of age. Some pre-walking skills I look for when children are 12-13 months old – standing independently, cruising at support, and transitioning from floor to standing on their own. If your child is doing these things, those first steps are probably just around the corner. Once again, if you have concerns, talk to your pediatrician.

Finally, toe walking is a common concern. As infants begin standing, they are trying to figure out their foot position; therefore, they might walk on their toes to get extra information to their brains to help their foot placement. However, if they are independently walking and continuing to perform continuous toe-walking, discuss your concerns with your physician. If toe-walking is not addressed, it can lead to balance problems and pain in the legs as a child grows.

Stewart Pediatric Therapy would be happy to help you with concerns regarding your child's development. Be watching for details on our Facebook page regarding our upcoming mommy and me classes.





Stewart Pediatric Therapy

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Paragould *Public Library*

BY GABBY POWELL

Albert Einstein once said, "The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library." Well, 120 North 12th Street, Paragould, Arkansas. Now you know where the Greene County Public Library is!

With an abundance of books, DVDs, CDs, audio books, magazines, newspapers, job search assistance, free hi-speed Internet, and more, the Greene County Public Library is just waiting for you to come explore! But not only are the friendly staff at the library waiting for you to come explore your imagination, but they are also waiting to help the community thrive by providing events and resources that bring us together.

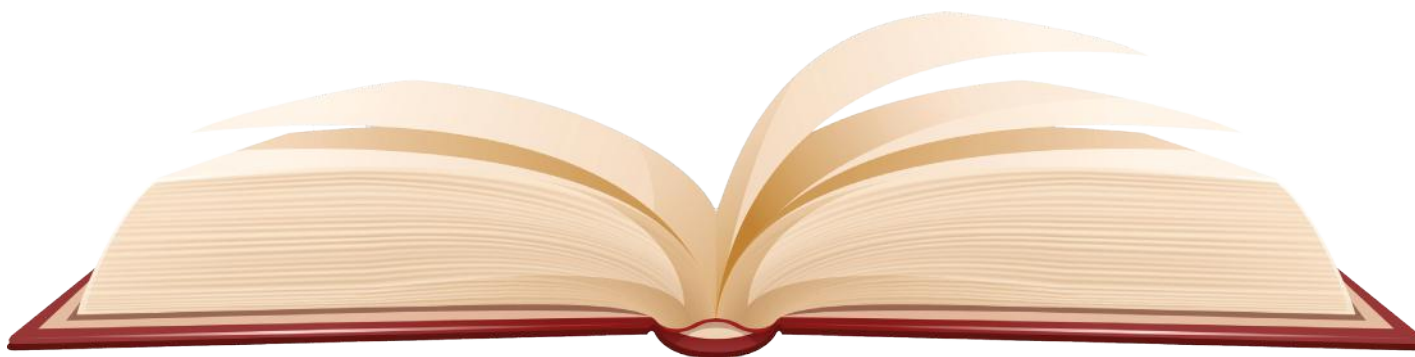
The library also plays host to local Northeast Arkansas artists. The most recent exhibit has been of Stephen Gillespie, a current Brookland resident. While he has resided in Mississippi and Missouri, he returns bringing new inspiration to his artwork. The library provides the opportunity for artists to thrive in their community.

To help promote the love of reading in the community, the library publishes a book list each month for its Book Club Hub. Genres and difficulty levels vary each month, so there is always something for someone to join in on. Along with the monthly readings, the library also hosts Children's Story Time each week.

Non-profit and charitable organizations are always welcome at the Greene County Library. Meeting rooms are available during the day and after hours if arrangements are made beforehand.

Signing up to use the library will be most beneficial for your education and imagination, while not breaking the bank! All you need is a library card, and you'll be on your way to hours of entertainment.

You can find more information on the Greene County Library by visiting its website at mylibrarynow.org/greene or visiting the Facebook page. If you would like to contact a librarian, call 870-236-8711 or visit the "Ask a Librarian" link on the website.





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Lincoln Lewallen a local talent

BY RICHARD BRUMMETT

Lincoln Lewallen figured out at an early age he had a connection to music and now he hopes to parlay it into a career choice.

The Marmaduke High School junior has won talent shows at his school and elsewhere in Northeast Arkansas while performing on the piano and as his confidence grows, so does his love of music ... and performing it.

"I used to watch videos on the Internet all the time, and around the fifth or sixth grade I got into music and decided to try it out," Lincoln said. "I decided to take lessons but I didn't like the pace, so I quit. I've taught myself ever since. Lessons had more younger kids and I had more of a passion to learn the instrument. I watched tutorials on the Internet, YouTube for the most part, and just kept learning."

Walking on stage and playing in front of an audience represented quite a step out of character for the normally shy teen, who says he "used to be an introvert. The first time up on stage in front of classmates was difficult. I had known a few songs and kind of wanted to show people what I could do. I had *said* I could do it, but I wanted to *show* I could. I asked my music teacher, Ginger Richey, if I could play during a choir performance and she said, 'Let me hear you play' and so I sat down and played for her and then she said I could. And that was probably the best performance I ever had ... end of the year at the annual Spring Concert."

Before long he was winning Audience Favorite and First Place in a school talent show and followed that up with top honors in additional competitions at the Fairgrounds in Jonesboro. Now he gets asked to play at churches, he said, "Or people will ask, 'Can you play this song or that song?' I have some friends I play with and other friends sometimes ask if I can play background for them on some things."

That's all a pretty big leap for a guy who has little professional training, relying instead on his own ear and his ability to remember his role in songs by rote. "Being self taught I'd have to listen over and over to get it," he said. "Simple songs, yes, I can learn easily. Classical, probably no. It's more complex, more complicated. You need to be able to read sheet music and I can't to the level I would need to so I can play it. A lot of music has gotten simpler, which isn't a bad thing. Classical is more complex in how it's put together."

"I imagine it varies from person to person as far as how long it takes to get it, but I don't find it hard. Sometimes I'll spend 15 minutes on something, sometimes hours. I have a keyboard at home. I never feel like I'm done with it; I will never master it. I can always learn more. It takes a lot of practice and commitment."

Admitting his entry into the world of music started out as a hobby, he said, "Now I think I'd like to make it a career path. It grew. If it all works out, I would consider it for career purposes. In college, I want to do something musically related. I've looked at music production

in the studio, but I'm not sure. In the very near future I plan to make some money off my hobby, try to partner with some local businesses and maybe plan concerts."

Lincoln said he feels all types of music should be appreciated, but his preferences tend to lean toward Rock and Roll from the 1970s through the '90s "and even newer stuff. I have a sort of business partner, Nathaniel Adams, and we'd like to start a band down the road.

"A few years ago I might not have said that. I would have probably had to force myself to play in front of a crowd that size (referring to those at the state FBLA conference) but now I've done it twice. I still get nervous, but I can push myself to do it. It's always worth it for the applause at the end. That is one of the things that keeps me going up there to do it. I just like entertaining people."

Lincoln, 16, is the son of Heather and Joey Lewallen.

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RAISING MEN & WOMEN

BY KAROLINE RISKER

Lawn Care



Rodney Smith Jr., founder of Raising Men & Women Lawn Care Services

In his nationwide lawn-mowing journey in support of first responders, Rodney Smith Jr., founder of Raising Men and Women Lawn Care Service, visited several states in just a few days by car, including Mississippi, New York, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and even Arkansas. More specifically, he came to Paragould, and he came with the sole purpose of mowing the lawn of Kevin and Melissa Coffell, a married couple who both happen to be paramedics. He mowed the lawn with his own equipment and did it for free. It's a service he has been providing for years as he encourages kids 8-17 to pick up the challenge and mow 50 lawns for the elderly, disabled people, single mothers, and veterans who do not have the time, resources and/or money to take care of their yards. It's an effort to teach kids to be leaders in their community through service to others. Rodney has now branched out to include special challenges for teachers, fallen heroes, and first responders, among others.

Angie Hoggard, a friend who has known Kevin and Melissa for several years, nominated the couple after seeing that Rodney was highlighting first responders on Facebook. She nominated the couple because "they are just wonderful people who met the requirements," she said. "I couldn't think of anyone else more deserving." Angie knew them from her time as a Respiratory Therapist at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center; she is also a distant cousin of Melissa through her husband, Luke.

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"All of a sudden she texted with a weird request," said Melissa. "Girl, we have five acres," she said. "There's no way we will allow that, but he can do the front lawn. And he showed up and he mowed our yard." Melissa had not heard of Rodney or his non-profit organization before that text and admits she was a bit skeptical at first. "I pulled up his Facebook page and was in awe of what he does," she said. "He does it for all sorts of people. This guy is amazing. He pulls up in a van with a logo on both sides. He put big, fluffy pillows in the back to not mess the mowers up. He was in and out in about an hour. He was going to Kentucky when he left here. Five o'clock in the evening and had that drive in front of him and mowed in the morning. He was wonderful. He was so kind and pleasant. He truly, genuinely acted interested in what we did as first responders. He acted interested in how we got started."

"My husband and I met in 1994. I started working at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center and we met that way and are together almost 30 years later," Melissa said. "It's such a rewarding job. With us both working, I teach classes and am a paramedic and teach CPR and First Aid, and Kevin works at St. Bernards in education and charting, we stay busy. Just for him to do what he did saved us. With me not being able to physically get out there (Melissa is a breast cancer survivor) and then he (Kevin) comes home and doesn't have time and doesn't really feel like it. It jump-started me to want to do more for



Kevin and Melissa Coffell with Rodney Smith Jr.

others.”

Kevin adds that his line of work can be challenging because you deal with people in their worst situations: “It’s very trying, very hard for us as paramedics because you have a job to do, but you have to have the emotional side of being human, too.” He also notes it can be rewarding: “Bringing life into the world, we get to deliver babies, get to help people whenever it is a tough time and it’s just a blessing to us to get to do that for people.”

“To see someone like him that wants to give back to people like us make you look at the world in a different way to see that people do appreciate what we do,” said Melissa. “It’s expensive to drive like he does and stay in a hotel. We gave him money for supper to show our appreciation. He was shocked we offered but we were blessed

and wanted to bless him. He was just truly a blessing to us and we appreciate what he did more than he will know.”

To join Rodney’s challenge, go to wearaisingmen.com. All you need to do is to fill out a form, then submit a photo of you holding a sign that says, “I accept the 50 Yard Challenge,” and in return, you get a white Raising Men/Women shirt, along with shades and ear protection. For every 10 lawns cut, you will get a new color shirt. Once you reach 50 lawns, you get a visit from Rodney and are presented with a brand new lawn mower, weed eater and blower. Once children have completed the program, they can do another, more specific challenge, including mowing 50 free lawns for First Responders, fallen heroes, or teachers. The program is currently going strong in all 50 states, and 8 countries besides the United States, with about 5,000 kids currently participating.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE IN WINTER WEATHER

LE BONHEUR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Each winter, children are seen in emergency rooms across the country for avoidable weather-related injuries. During times of extreme cold, those injuries can result from everything from fire, gas and even the cold itself. Jennifer Taylor, manager of injury prevention at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and Safe Kids Mid-South, has some important safety tips for preventing injuries during winter weather.

"Invisible Killer"

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas you cannot see, taste or smell and because of this, is often called the "invisible killer." Carbon monoxide is created when fuel-burning appliances, such as heating devices, grills, clothes dryers and vehicles, do not burn all the fuel they need to function. "Everyone is told that they should have carbon monoxide alarms in their home, but it's unlikely that most adults are aware of just how vital it is in keeping their household safe," said Jennifer. "Especially during the winter months, it can mean the difference between life and death."

Carbon Monoxide's Effects on Children

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 420 or more people die in the U.S. from accidental CO poisoning and more than 100,000 people in the U.S. visit the emergency department each year

due to accidental CO poisoning. Because young children process CO differently than adults, they may experience more severe side effects and show signs of poisoning quickly. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, nausea and drowsiness. At its worst, CO can cause severe side effects or even death. However, there are steps you can take to keep your family safe from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Top Tips for Carbon Monoxide Safety

1. Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. Make sure there is one on every level of your home, especially around sleeping areas.
2. Test CO alarms every month. Replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Avoid using gas appliances inside your home. Only use generators and grills outside of your home, even if doors or windows are open. Make sure they are a minimum of 20 feet away from open windows and doors and warm up vehicles outside of your garage.
4. In a CO emergency, leave your home immediately. If the CO alarm sounds, quickly leave your home. Move to a safe location outside where you can breathe in fresh air before you call for help.

Space Heater Safety

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating



equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths in the United States, at an estimated average of 44,210 fires per year. Unsurprisingly, they also report that nearly half of the heating equipment fires tend to occur within the months of December through February. Heating equipment includes furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves and portable heaters; households who utilize any of these should exercise extreme caution and follow the manufacturer's safety instructions.

Fire Safety Tips

1. Check smoke alarms. Make sure there is a working smoke alarm on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and near sleeping areas. Test smoke alarms every month and replace them every 10 years or when the battery is low.
2. Create and practice a fire escape plan. Create a home fire escape plan with two ways out of every room. Choose a place to meet outside that is a safe distance away from your home.
3. Practice a home fire drill at least twice a year. Practice a home fire drill with your family during the day and at night. Practice escaping in under two minutes. Sometimes that is all the time you will have to get out of the house safely.
4. If there is a fire, leave home immediately. If there is a lot of smoke, get low and crawl out of the house as quickly as possible. Call 9-1-1 after you are a safe distance away from your home.

Tips to Keep Safe While Playing in the Snow

1. Wear warm clothing and have your kids come indoors periodically to prevent hypothermia or frostbite.
2. Make sure your kids use the proper gear, such as a helmet, while sledding.
3. Even when it is cold outside, it's important to use sunscreen and stay hydrated. Compared to adults, children are at increased risk of dehydration.

Local numbers in case there is an emergency:

1. Arkansas Poison Control Hotline 1-800-222-1222
2. Police Department/ Fire Department: Call 9-1-1

For more tips and resources to keep kids safe from injuries, please visit www.lebonheur.org/safekids

For more information on Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, please call (901) 287-6030 or visit lebonheur.org. Connect with us at facebook.com/lebonheurchildrens, twitter.com/lebonheurchild or on Instagram at lebonheurchildrens.

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FIRST COMMUNITY BANK REFLECTS ON A NIGHT OF INSPIRATION

First Community Bank extends its gratitude to the community for the overwhelming success of the special event featuring renowned guest speaker Amy Purdy, which took place on Thursday, January 4, at 7:00 p.m. The free community event, organized by the bank's women's mentoring group, was held at the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) in Independence Hall.

Purdy, a New York Times best-selling author and three-time Paralympic medalist, shared her incredible journey of resilience and triumph. The audience was captivated by her story, from the unimaginable loss of both her legs at 19 to becoming a professional snowboarder and a Dancing with the Stars runner-up.

The women's mentoring group, initiated in 2022 by employees Laura Brissey and Leann Siler, expressed joy at the positive impact of Amy's empowering story on the community.

Brissey said, "Batesville's own, Isabella Floyd, opened the event with an inspiring personal insight and emotional welcome that drove home the night's message of defying the odds. Amy's journey from hardship to triumph resonated deeply with our community, offering valuable insights into resilience, determination, and the power of the human spirit."

Siler remarked, "The atmosphere in the room was charged with thoughtful reflection and appreciation. Amy Purdy's story had a profound impact in Batesville. The women's mentoring group is honored to be part of this meaningful event, echoing the values of First Community Bank."

Dale Cole, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of First Community Bank, shared his reflections on the event's success: "Hosting Amy Purdy was a privilege, and her inspirational journey aligned seamlessly with the values of First Community Bank. We are thrilled with the positive response from our community."

Cole continued, "The event provided an emotionally powerful storytelling experience, transitioning from tears to cheers and redefining the essence of inspiration and resilience. Attendees were treated to a remarkable evening, exploring the themes of resiliency, clarity, and commitment. Amy's incredible journey from adversity to victory served as a testament to the incredible strength and determination. We are proud to have shared this experience with our community."

For more information about First Community Bank, call 870-612-3400 or visit www.firstcommunity.net.



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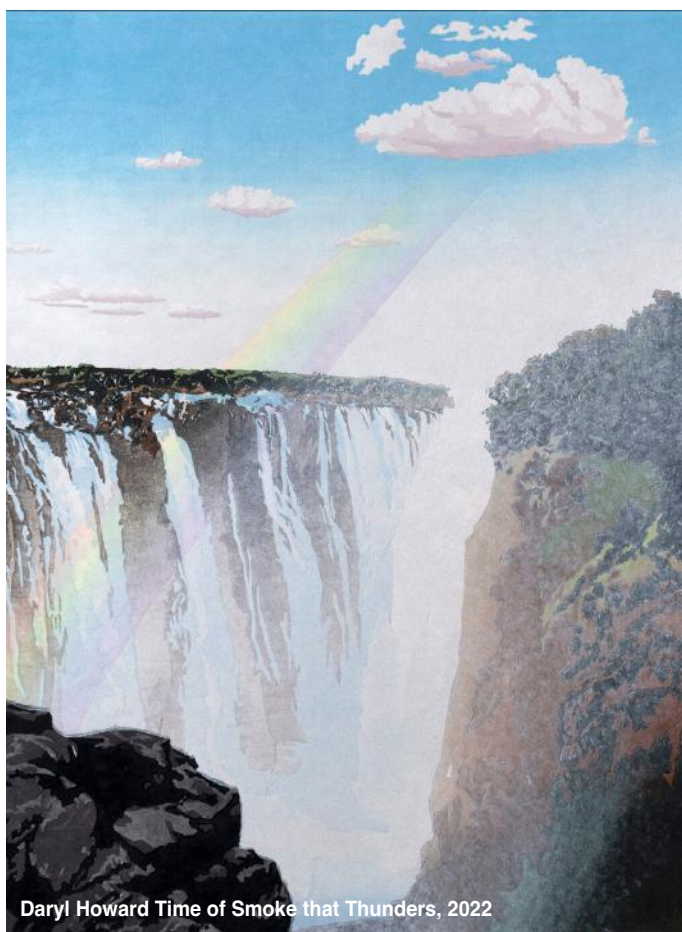
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BRADBURY ART MUSEUM 2024 DELTA NATIONAL SMALL PRINTS

Bradbury Art Museum (BAM) at Arkansas State University is announcing the 28th year of Delta National Small Prints Exhibition (DNSPE), alongside a solo exhibition by printmaker and 2024 DNSPE juror Yuji Hiratsuka.

In conjunction with Delta National, A-State students will have an opportunity to attend two printmaking workshops with artists Cody Scrivner, instructor in printmaking in the Department of Art + Design, and Anthony TungNing Huang of Knoxville, Tenn., 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, in the Fine Arts Center.

Later that afternoon, at 2 p.m., three artist talks will be open to the public at Bradbury Art Museum; these talks will be delivered by Oxford-based Somayeh Faal, Huang, and Knoxville-based Grace Russell.

Retro Urban Portraits

“Retro Urban Portraits” is an exhibition of color intaglio prints by Hiratsuka, who was born in Japan and is currently based in Oregon. Hiratsuka was a purchase award winner in 1996, the very first year of DNSPE, and has been included in the exhibition almost every year since.

This year, he served as the exhibition’s juror and selected the 65 prints included in DNSPE.

“Retro Urban Portraits” will feature prints made by Hiratsuka over

the past three decades, including four prints from the Arkansas State University permanent collection. The exhibition celebrates the artist, his history, and his support for Bradbury Art Museum through his participation in DNSPE.

Delta National Small Prints Exhibition

“Delta National Small Prints Exhibition” is an annual juried print exhibition that features prominent contemporary printmakers from across the country and around the world. It has become one of the country’s foremost competitions for prints.

The exhibition was first designed in 1996 by master engraver Evan Lindquist to be a resource for printmaking students and instructors to view and assess contemporary standards of printmaking as they develop over time. Dr. Ann Prentice Wagner, museum director, is sad to note Lindquist’s recent passing.

“This is a painful loss for Bradbury Art Museum, Arkansas State University, the state of Arkansas, and Evan’s many friends, collectors, former students, and former colleagues. Evan’s legacy will live on in DNSPE, which would not have existed without the hard work and generosity of this great artist,” Wagner said.

“Prints and DNSPE have thus been vital parts of the heritage of BAM, as Bradbury Art Museum is known, since even before it was founded,” she continued. “The most outstanding works shown in each DNSPE are acquired by the museum each year for its permanent collection, thanks



to the generosity of our patrons. The exhibition is a major engine for building the museum collection, keeping BAM on the cutting edge of contemporary printmaking.”

This year, DNSPE is an important reminder of the significance of printmaking to the history of Bradbury Art Museum and the Arkansas State University permanent collection. Not only did Hiratsuka serve as juror after over two decades of participation in the exhibition, but the 2024 DNSPE is also dedicated to Shelley Gipson, professor of printmaking, who passed away in April after 20 years of service to the university.

“Last spring, we were all deeply saddened by the loss of Shelley Gipson. We hope that with this year’s DNSPE and with future events like it, we will be able to honor not only the significance of printmaking

to us as an institution but Shelley’s memory as well,” said Madeline McMahan, museum curator and educator. “We are reminded of how fortunate we are at Arkansas State University to have access to such a beautiful collection of contemporary printmaking, to the rich history of DNSPE, and to the printmaking studio on campus which allows us to host printmaking events alongside the exhibition.”

Each exhibition is represented in a yearly catalog, documenting history and including statements from each juror explaining their decision-making process. Early and recent years of the exhibition are also archived on the Bradbury Art Museum website.

Museum hours are 12 p.m.–5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Admission is free. For more information about Bradbury Art Museum or to learn how to support future exhibitions, one may call the museum at (870) 972-3687.

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GET RICH WITH RICHARD BRUMMETT

Most people consider Valentine's Day the "holiday for lovers" and my wife says I might not be the best person to write about it, since I told her, "I'm struggling to come up with something about LOVE and all that junk."

My closest friends know I entered the dating world at a very late age, choosing a love of sports over the need to snuggle with a girl. When I did finally cave and ask a girl for a date, I had no idea what was supposed to happen next. I think I was hoping -- probably expecting -- her to say no but she very excitedly agreed and then I had to figure out all the date stuff in a hurry, on my own, and somehow survived.

My older sister, an experienced dater, had already graduated and moved out and my dad was on the road as a traveling salesman most of the week, so my in-home training came mostly from Mom, who I now expect was sabotaging my efforts to be attractive to the opposite sex. She was in charge of selecting my fancy outfits for important moments like Prom and Homecoming and I have the photographs to prove she was trying to make sure no one ever wanted to be seen in public with me again. Today, I feel I should call up some of the girls I took to those things and say, "Okay, look, I let my mother dress me. I apologize. I'm sorry."

The first time I experienced one of those February "get all slicked up and wear a tie" events, I decided to wing it. I had not come to Mom seeking advice and I know she sensed it, because one day she came into my room and said, "You're supposed to get her something special for Valentine's Day, you know."

"Sure, I know," I said, but I'm certain my deer-in-the-headlights expression said otherwise. Something special. *Something special?* I tried to think of what I would consider special and since we were in the middle of winter my thoughts tilted toward a new basketball, some sweatbands, or -- if I really wanted to shell out some of my hard-earned lawn mowing money -- a new pair of Converse Chuck Taylor hightops. I had never seen my girlfriend wear any of that and I was pretty sure she couldn't shoot a jump shot, so I went to my friends for advice.

"Get her a big box of chocolate candy," one of them said. "That way, you'll get to eat most of it because she won't want you to think she's willing to get fat." A gift I could eat half of didn't seem romantic or special, so I moved on.

"Oh, yeah, buy her a ring, man," said another friend. "Girls love rings and she'll know for sure you love her." Well, I didn't know if I loved her; I knew I liked her a lot and I thought a ring denoted some permanence in a relationship, and I wasn't sure how permanent I was willing to be with baseball season just around the corner.

Other guys suggested going to a fancy restaurant, buying jewelry, presenting her with something to wear ... and I was lost. Everything about this dating business, especially this Valentine's Day thing, seemed so difficult and expensive. One day I was downtown and just out of curiosity ducked into a women's clothing store and told the saleslady I was looking for a gift for my girlfriend. "Oh, I know just the thing," she said, and led me over to a rack of dresses. "We are selling a lot of these and they are adorable. What is she, a 2? A 4?"

"Well, no ma'am, she's a teenager," I said. "She's 16."

"Oh, no, dear," she said, laughing. "I mean her dress size. What dress size is she?"

I told her I didn't really know and would have to do some research on that and maybe come back later. How was I supposed to know what size her dress was? How do you work that into the conversation? "Did you have a nice day? Do you want to go to the show Friday? What size dress do you wear?"

Running out of time, I called my sister and asked what would be an appropriate gift from a guy who didn't want to be in love, wasn't willing to spend a lot of money, and didn't want Mommy to dress him anymore. She suggested a cute necklace. "It's something she can wear with a lot of different outfits," she explained, "and it doesn't necessarily mean you're in love, just that you care a lot for her, and every time she puts it on she'll think of you." The same could be said for a nice tube of roll-on deodorant; it wouldn't necessarily say "I love you" and she'd definitely think of me every time she put it on, and it wouldn't cost as much, but I went with the necklace instead.

I went to the jewelry store and priced a few. They weren't too outrageous and the salesperson helped me decide on one, and when I presented it to my girlfriend she was thrilled. It was a very memorable and pleasant experience, much better than the time I was expected to pin a corsage on her chest. That was more tragic than romantic.



MATTERS OF THE HEART

ST. BERNARDS HEART DAY



St. Bernards Heart Day will take place on February 15th from 7a.m.-1:00 p.m. at St. Bernards Auditorium, located at 505 East Washington Avenue in Jonesboro. Join us for a day filled with heart care. Heart information, screenings and education will be available. This heart day is geared toward equipping you to have a healthy heart and life. Wear red and get an extra chance at a free prize!

For more information, call (870) 207-7300 or log onto our website at stbernards.info. This event is free and open to the public.



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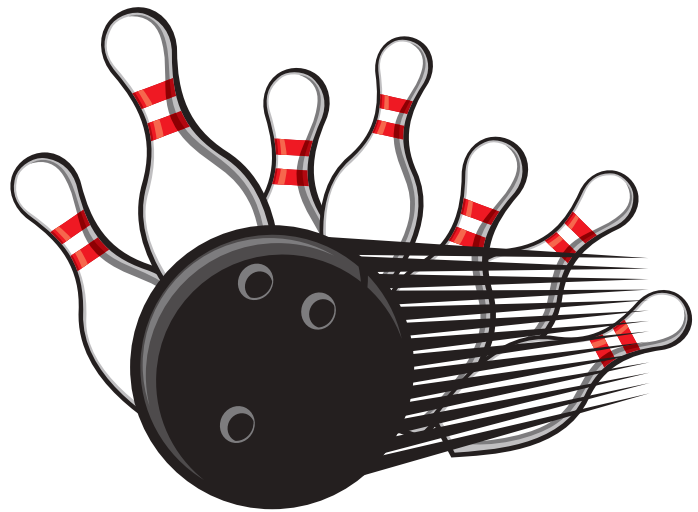
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14TH ANNUAL "ALLEY" CRUISE BOWLING FOR ST. JUDE



The 14th Annual "Alley" Cruise Bowling for St. Jude's is set for Sunday, February 25, at 1 p.m. at Hijinx in Jonesboro! For \$120, a coed team of 4 can enjoy three games of bowling, a large single-topping pizza, and a pitcher of soft drinks! Forms and fees are due by February 19th, so don't delay and sign up today!

Go to form.jotform.com/katiesuel8/alleycruise or scan the QR code to register online.

Entries can also be submitted to these contacts:
Carol Barnhill: 870-680-0623 or carolbarnhill57@gmail.com
Katie Singleton: 417-894-4868 or katiesuel8@gmail.com
Steve Southard: 870-679-8606
Jackie Branch: 870-476-9444



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UPCOMING NONPROFIT SUMMIT

THE ECONOMY OF IMPACT



Nonprofit leaders, mark your calendars! The highly anticipated Annual Nonprofit Summit is back; this year, it's bigger and better than ever. On Friday, March 8, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Cooper Alumni Center in Jonesboro, this summit promises to be a game-changer for those seeking to make a real impact in the nonprofit sector.

The theme for this year's summit is, "The Economy of Impact: Principles from Leading Directors and Their Million Dollar Organizations." This is your opportunity to learn from trailblazers who have successfully built million-dollar nonprofit organizations and revolutionized how we approach funding and income.

One of the key highlights of the summit is the Annual Nonprofit Pitch Competition. Nonprofit leaders will have the chance to showcase their innovative ideas and stand a chance to win grand prizes totaling \$1,000. Over the years, we have proudly awarded nearly \$4,500 to bold nonprofit leaders who have shared their inspiring journeys.

The competition serves as a platform to amplify missions and spark transformational change within the community.

Attendees will also enjoy an exclusive meet and greet session, providing the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and establish meaningful connections. Additionally, the "Meet the Funders" segment will allow participants to network with local and state grant funders, forge partnerships, and explore potential opportunities for financial support.

To ensure attendees are energized and ready to tackle the day, complimentary breakfast and lunch will be provided. Don't miss out on this essential gathering for nonprofit leaders who are ready to take their organizations to new heights. Register now at www.consultkharis.com/nonprofitsummit and secure your spot at the Annual Nonprofit Summit. Join us in March for an unforgettable experience that will amplify your mission, sharpen your leadership skills, and elevate your nonprofit to the next level.

Catch us at these
NEA Basketball Games!

Paragould vs. Searcy	2.2
Greene County Tech vs. Valley View	2.9
Greene County Tech vs. Searcy	2.13
Paragould vs. Greene County Tech	2.23

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SPORTS

with Blaine Wood

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IMPACTS OF A *Healthy Heart*

WITH DR. KRISTIN SULLIVAN



In the veterinary world, February is actually Dental Health Awareness month, but something many of you may or may not know, your dental health directly impacts your heart health. In this article, I will cover how good dental health impacts your heart health as well as other ways to improve the overall heart health of your dear family pet(s).

Periodontal Disease, often referred to as just dental disease, is a combination of inflamed gumlines (gingivitis), tartar and calculus accumulation, and oftentimes tooth root exposure in severe cases. Pets that develop dental disease have increased numbers of bacteria that reside in the mouth and oral tissues. These increased numbers of bacterial organisms can enter the bloodstream and travel to other areas of the body. There are three areas that are most susceptible to the spread of oral bacteria: the heart, the liver, and the kidneys. Bacteria that causes infection within the heart muscle and/or heart valves is endocarditis or valvular endocarditis. This infection can cause heart disease due to the inflammation and infection of the heart muscle itself. The infection can even cling to one of the valves causing a heart murmur. If enough bacteria and inflammatory cells (which are there due to a normal immune response because of the bacterial presence) collect on the heart valve, then some patients can even suffer an embolic event in which the collection of cells and bacteria are thrown from the valve

and these can be fatal at the worst, but can seed septic emboli in other areas of the body at the very least resulting in widespread septicemia. Didn't mean to incite fear or anxiety with that, but you may be wondering what ways you can prevent this atrocity from occurring in your pet. Well, [insert knuckle crack here] let's start with dental health. Brush those teeth! A good dog or cat toothbrush with an appropriate enzymatic toothpaste will help to break down tartar and plaque to prevent accumulation. It also helps to prevent gingivitis by massaging the gumline and cleaning away plaque and bacteria from under the gumline. Some patients are beyond just a good brushing of their teeth and first need a dental prophylactic treatment wherein the teeth including under the gumline are scaled and polished, heavily infected teeth and mobile teeth are typically extracted, and then a preventive care plan is established.

Other ways to improve your pet's heart health? A healthy weight, a balanced diet, and appropriate exercise and activity for your pet. Many pets I see may be overconditioned, which means they are carrying more weight than what is appropriate for their body frame. It is so easy to want to give your pet a bite from the table or when you are enjoying a snack, to just give them a taste of what you are eating. This turns into a major issue. Calories in small animals go much further than they do with people. So what may be just a small bite of cake to us, is more like

Do your part, care for their heart!

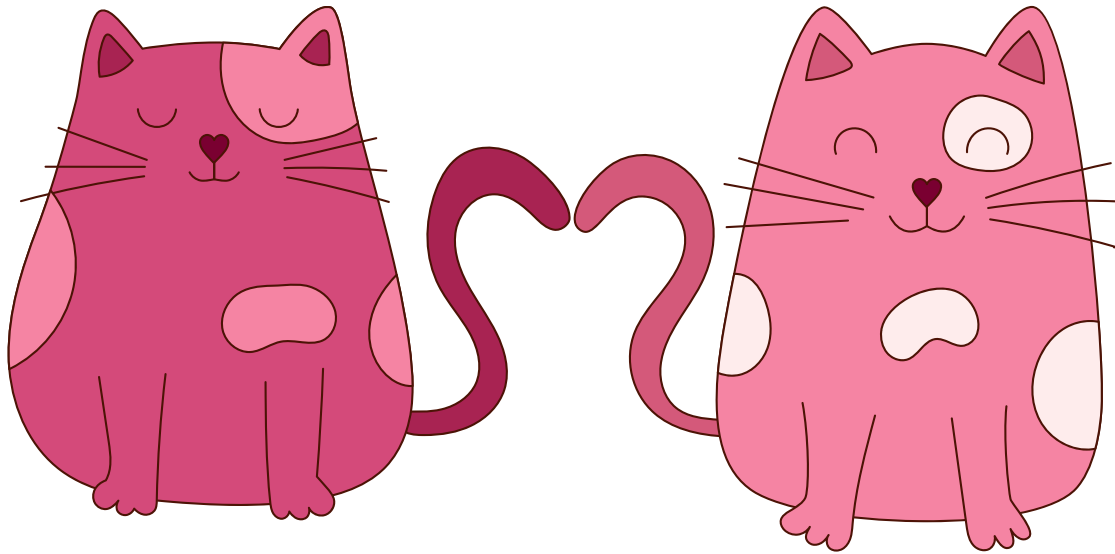
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an entire piece of cake or even more (depending on what your idea of a "bite" is) to your pet. One question I often get is "does it count if I give them meat? I think they need more protein." If they are on a complete and balanced diet, then they do not need the extra meat. If you have a working dog, then keeping it on a high performance or sport dog food is recommended to ensure it gets the extra protein needed to manage its weight and provide its body with what it needs to continue the hard work. Speaking of work, use appropriate exercise for your pet's age, taking special care to consider any ailments in which they may suffer. For instance, you would never want to make an obese black

lab run a mile on an asphalt road in the middle of a heat wave; but taking a gentle 10-20 minute stroll in a shaded area (possibly in the park) would provide gentle exercise and help to prevent any undue stress to the heart.

For other options in improving your pet's heart health, please contact your local veterinarian, especially if your pet has any chronic illnesses, or refer to veterinarypartner.com for other helpful advice and dependable guidance.





Dr. Calixto Cazano



Abbey Taber, APRN



Dr. Justin Yancey
Pediatrician



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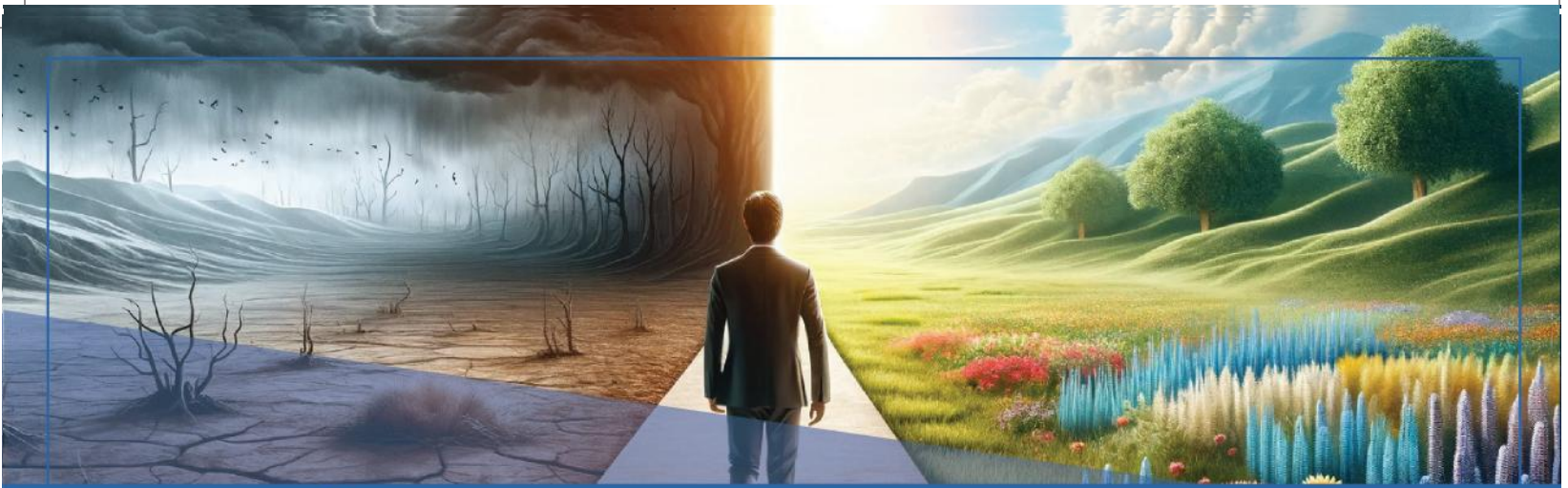
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A reliable IT service provider ensures you can concentrate on growing your business. Knowing if your IT support is suitable can be challenging without expertise. This infographic outlines the expectations from a top-notch IT service provider, whether in-house or outsourced.



RISKY IT SERVICE PROVIDER

Non-customized service contract

Offers standard packages

Reacts to issues as they arise
(break-fix service model)

Acts when vulnerabilities are exposed

Provides one-off solutions
that do not integrate

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Next Month

Women Empowering Women



We're celebrating National Women's History Month by featuring local women who are making a big impact in their communities!

REMEMBER TO VOTE



Voting for the Jonesboro Premiere Awards ends on February 15th! Voting for Paragould businesses opens on March 1st!

Special Section



The first NEA Seniors special section of 2024 is here! Be sure to check it out!



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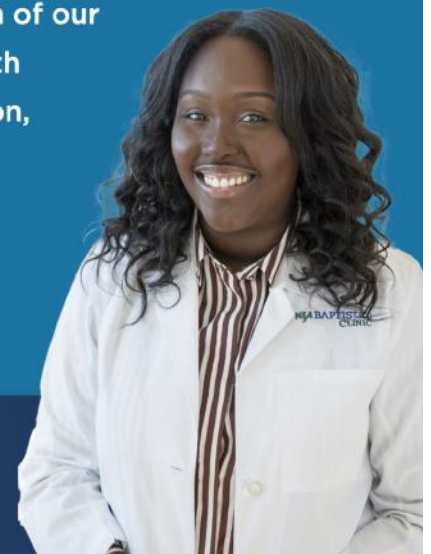
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