

the GOOD LIFE

Mental • Health • Dental



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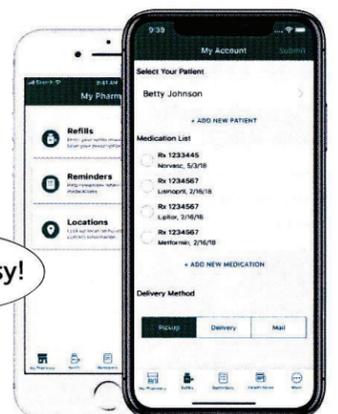
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The beauty of a

DAKE

Bolivar teen's basket featured on Today Show

By David Talley
davidt@bolivarnews.com

Today Show host Savannah Guthrie called it a beautiful moment.

In a video shared on national television Thursday, Jan. 21, Bolivar Middle School student Landon Hayes drives the basketball down the court at Willard Middle School. Hayes stops and shoots for the basket, his throw missing its target.

But, the 14-year-old, who has special needs, shoots again and again, each time both teammates and opponents rebounding the ball and passing it his way.

Hayes scored on his fourth attempt, and the players on the court and the fans in the stands all jumped to applaud.

"The basket is only part of it, it's the friends helping him get there, that's the beauty of it," Guthrie told the Today Show's audience, which averages around 3.68 million households, according to Nielsen.

According to the Today Show's Hoda Kotb, who hosted the Morning Boost segment the clip aired on, Hayes loves basketball and helps manage the middle school boys' team.

"After Landon, who is No. 44, came in as a sub, they made sure he wasn't leaving until he scored," Kotb said.

And, Landon didn't just score once.

"He actually scored 12 points that game," his mother, Isabelle Hayes said. "After we watched the segment, I asked him what he thought. That was the only thing he was upset about. He said, 'Why didn't they show all 12 of my points?'"

She said her son's basketball hero is another high scorer — Steph Curry of the National Basketball League's Golden State Warriors.

"He's also really good at picking who is going to win games," she said.

Isabelle Hayes said Landon receives physical therapy at school, but "isn't quite on the same level as his teammates" when it comes to the physical requirements of playing basketball.

"So, it was really special that everyone came together to help him get some playing time," she said.

She said after a parent posted videos of Landon's goal, a producer with a media company that sources content for television reached out to her for information about Landon and permission to use the video.

"He was really excited to see himself on TV," she said. "I know he's always on the court cheering for his teammates, and it's really great that he got to have everyone cheering for him."

Jennifer Carr, whose son plays on the team with Landon, said the whole team was happy for him.

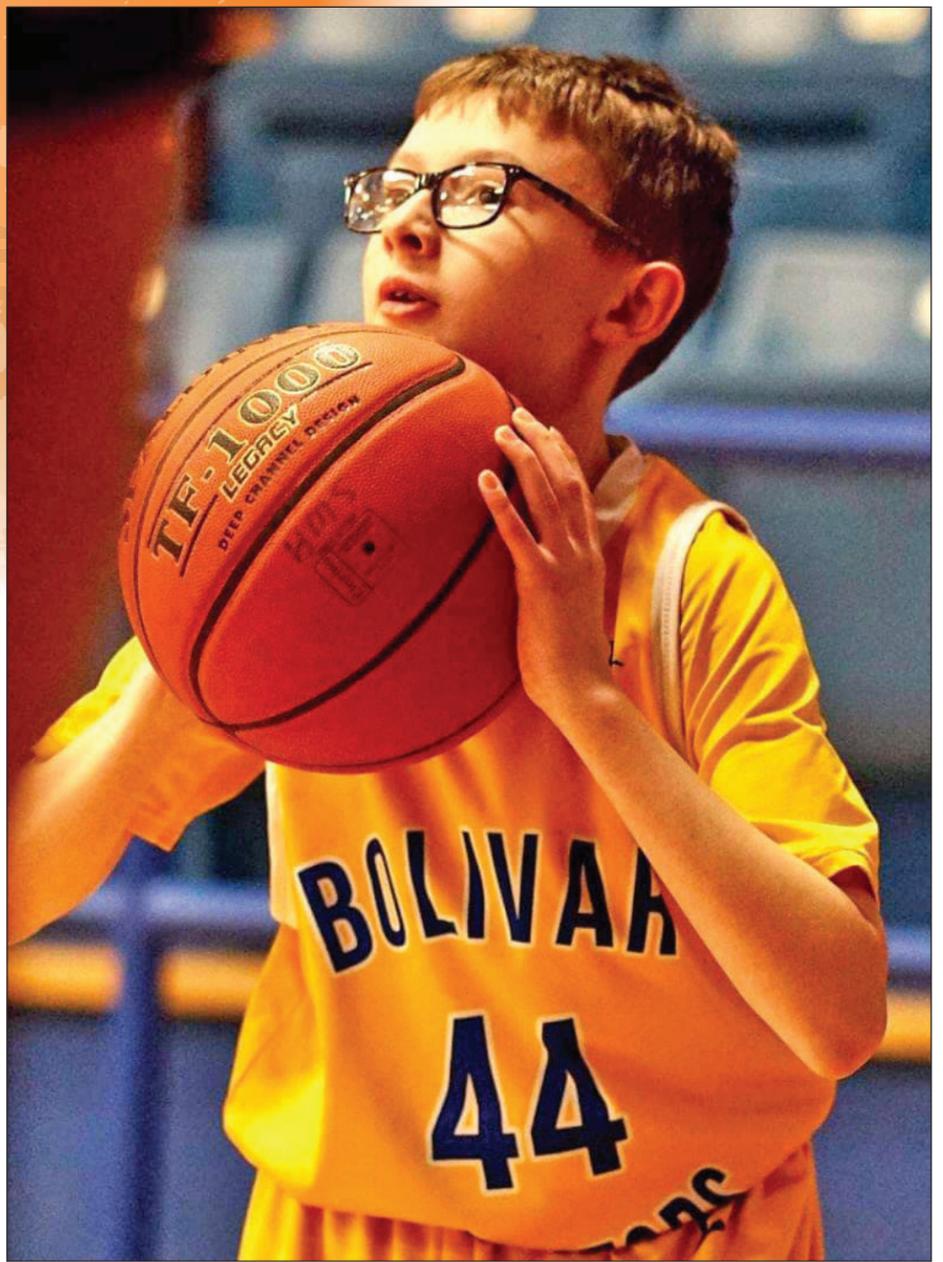
"The boys are all fiercely protective of him and have learned a lot from him as well as him learning from them," she said. "It's been a really great experience for the boys and Landon."

Carr said Hayes' teammates help to look out for him. They also sit with him at lunch and help him get to games and practices when his family is at work, she said.

On a post shared to the Bolivar Athletic Booster Club Facebook page, Carr credited BMS basketball team, along with Willard's coaches, players and cheerleaders for helping Hayes score and cheering for him afterward.

BMS coach Travis Gregory said Hayes is the ideal example of a teammate.

"He's a Liberator through and through," Gregory said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS/JENNIFER CARR

BMS student Landon Hayes readies for a shot during a game.



Hayes drives the ball to the goal.



Hayes, pictured center, grins alongside his team.

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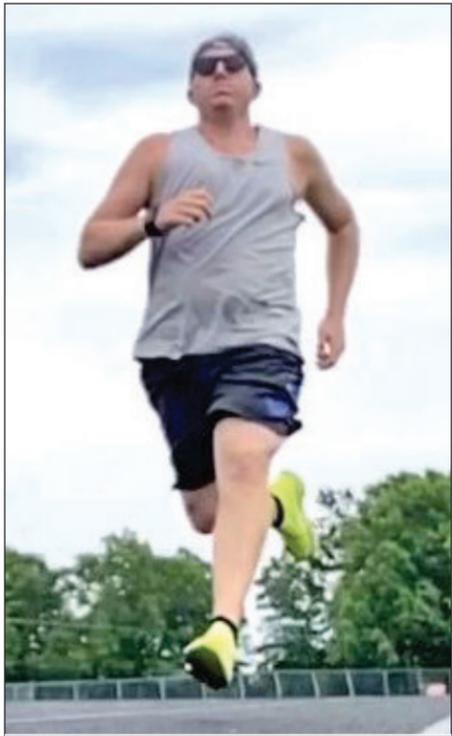
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Ragsdale skips the streets for a run at the track. The Marshfield teacher has always found a way to put a creative spin on his endeavors.

Make running FUN again

Ragsdale races the roads of Marshfield

By Shelby Atkison
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As a teacher at Webster Elementary, Michael Ragsdale is no stranger to setting goals. After all, it was the school's motto last year. While Ragsdale had always ran after college, he began to take the healthy hobby more seriously about 5 years ago.

"When Webster had the main idea of setting goals last year, I decided I was going to set a goal of running 1,000 miles in a school year," he said. "9 months."

Enter COVID-19. According to Ragsdale, the impact of the coronavirus sent him into a sort of depression due to drastic changes in routine and sense of normality. However, that's when he



It's a map! It's a bird! It's a blue-jay! Ragsdale puts his creativity on display with this GPS drawing of the Marshfield mascot on the first of March.

began to push toward his goal of overall health even more.

"When I finished the 1,000 mile goal I needed something else," Ragsdale said. "I started following this guy who ran every street in San Francisco and I thought well... I don't have a big city like that but let's see if I can run every street in Marshfield."

By the summer, Ragsdale had completed his initial thousand mile goal and completed the task of running every street in the city limits of Marshfield. As he was posting the completed roadmaps on social media, he noticed the accuracy of the tracking in the lines he was creating as he ran.

"I started wondering if I could turn that into shapes or objects so I took a map of Marshfield, flipped it, rotated it and started seeing images within the streets," he added. "From there it just took off."

For those who know Michael Ragsdale, this artistic side is nothing new for him. In addition to his teach-

ing career, he's a self-published author of a cartoon character named Ace the Donkey.

"Ace the Donkey is a character I created that's a complete play on words," he said. "I was doing these little doodles here and there and I've always been inspired by wordplay so I took the original term for a donkey and I drew him in a hole, then on a jack..."

Ace the Donkey lives out his adventures among the pages of a humor categorized coffee table book, which is available at Ragzillo.com.

"I thought of every word with that root word and tried to create one a week for a year. I got that plus 10 and I'm still coming up with some as we speak," said Ragsdale. "I'll actually have another series called Ace and Friends coming out soon."

For more of Ragsdale's art - map or book, find him on Instagram @ragzillo. Who knows, maybe Ace will make an appearance on the streets of Marshfield someday.

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Caregivers support one another through Alzheimers



By Sarah Bicknell
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“You can’t lose your sense of humor,” said Karen Chandler of Marshfield. “You have to have that when dealing with something like Alzheimer’s.”

As a caregiver, she has learned to be open and have a support system. Chandler’s husband, Leon, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2010. She started attending a support group in Marshfield a year ago.

“I went through a caregiver class before that, which really helped,” she said. “When you’re a caregiver, you think you’re going through something alone, but when you attend groups like this you realize you’re not the only one.”

With Alzheimer’s, Chandler said there’s both good and bad days, but on the rougher days, she’ll sometimes take him into town just to get out of the house.

“When Leon’s having a really bad day, I bring him into town. Even if we go to get an ice cream or just grab a soda, then when we come back he’s in a better mood.”

Bill Curnutt has a video conference with his wife, Audrey, every Friday at 12:30 p.m. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s 11 years ago.

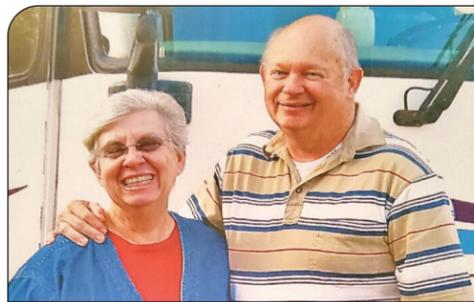
“My wife and I love to travel,” he said. “We were on a trip to Alabama and I asked her to look through the map to find a rest stop. She enjoys searching through maps. Well, she looked at me and said, ‘I don’t know where we are.’ She said she had no idea where we were at all.”

A year later, Curnutt decided to have Audrey tested and a doctor diagnosed her with Alzheimer’s. After checking with two more doctors, he realized she had it.

“I studied more about the disease,” he said. “I started going to a support group at Cox’s Hospital in Springfield for three years to learn about caring for a loved one and learn to adjust my lifestyle. It’s really a change for everyone involved.”

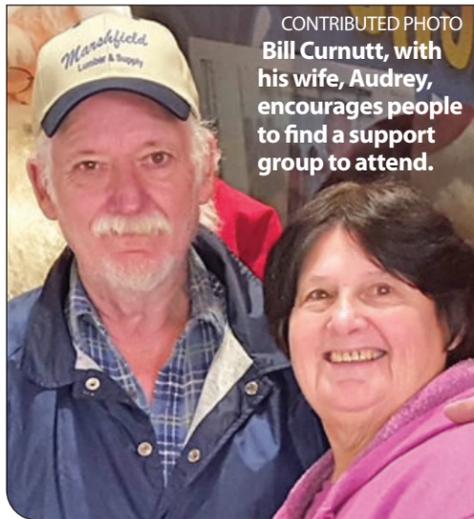
Harriett Boggs of Marshfield said it’s important to exercise patience with loved ones and not to argue with them.

“If you argue with them, then they immediately shut down,” she said. “You just have to run with it. Sometimes, there’s funny moments when a loved



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Karen Chandler of Marshfield, pictured with her husband, Leon, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2010.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bill Curnutt, with his wife, Audrey, encourages people to find a support group to attend.



MAIL PHOTO BY SARAH BICKNELL

Chris Parker creates muffs (Twiddlemuffs) for individuals with Alzheimer’s and dementia.



MAIL PHOTO BY SARAH BICKNELL

The muffs can be crocheted or knitted and then you sew buttons, bows, ribbons, flowers, trim and beads.

one will do something that really makes you laugh. It may not make sense, but again just gotta roll with it.”

Chris Parker, who developed the dementia and Alzheimer’s support group in Marshfield, said she creates muffs — or Twiddlemuffs.

“They can be crocheted or knitted and then you sew buttons, bows, ribbons, flowers, trim, beads or anything you can find with different textures on them, inside and out,” she said. “The idea is that a dementia patient can sit and fiddle with them and it is calming for them. There is also something similar called a Fidget Blanket, with the same idea, where you sew items to them and the person can sit and fidget with them when they are agitated.”

Parker said they (SeniorAge Agency) actually sent some of each to a group in Kansas City, who took them to the airport to give to Alzheimer’s patients who were flying to keep them calm on the plane during flights.

“I have the patterns and will share if anyone wants to make them,” she said. “There is no right or wrong way. I just use leftover buttons and bows and

rings and things, whatever I have on hand. They are fun to make. I have one lady who wants to help, but does not crochet, so I make the muffs and she

decorates them for me.”

More than six million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s and it’s the most common cause of dementia, according to the Alzheimer’s Association.

“There are several forms of dementia,” said Parker. “Alzheimer is the most common one. Sixty to seventy percent of people with dementia have Alzheimer’s. There is frontotemporal dementia, which is mainly memory. There is dementia with Lewy bodies. A Lewy body is like a little protein that congregates and kind of prevents the cells from speaking to each other. Then there is vascular dementia, which can be caused from strokes and things like that.”

With the group, Parker said she occasionally plays a short video or gives out information to pass along, like how to survive the holidays.

“Mostly it is a place for people to vent, cry, share and help each other through difficult situations,” she said. “I became interested through my job and seeing many people dealing with this. I became certified to be a Support Group facilitator about three years ago. Since then, my group has grown. We often have about nine participants. I think people need this support. Alzheimer’s is a devastating disease, both for the person who has it and for the family who must see their loved one gradually fade away from them.”

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'Whatever it takes'

The road to recovery from COVID-19

By Kathryn Skopec

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Dave Jones, 46, of Stockton, received a dreaded phone call from his local health department as he was still absorbing the loss of his father, Marvin Jones, at the very tail end of 2020.

"After our dad's funeral, I received a phone call from the health department saying I'd been exposed to COVID-19," Dave said, pausing from his work at The Boathouse Restaurant and Lounge in Stockton on a rainy March morning, without any visible hint he had gone through a severe case of COVID-19 just two months prior.

In late December, after getting that call from the health department, Dave and his wife, Christy, went to Citizens Memorial Hospital in Bolivar to get tested for COVID-19.

Dave's results came back positive for COVID-19 and pneumonia, a serious complication of the disease. He was sent home with an inhaler and told to return to the hospital if his condition grew more serious.

Three days later, on Friday, Jan. 1, it certainly did.

"I couldn't breathe," Dave said. "Christy took me to the emergency room."

Since Christy had also tested positive for COVID-19, she dropped Dave off at the door of the hospital, and he was taken to the emergency

room on a wheelchair, where tubes were inserted into his nose for oxygen to pump 300 liters of air per minute into his system.

"I still couldn't catch my breath," Dave said. "The last thing I remember is the doctor coming in and telling me, 'There is nothing we can do for you. We've got to sedate you and get you out of here.'"

Dave said he was told he could end up in hospitals ranging across the state of Missouri, such as St. Louis, Kansas City, Joplin and Columbia — any hospital that had a bed and ventilator.

Fifteen days later, Dave woke up to discover he had been moved to Cox South Hospital in Springfield, after not having been consciously aware of his considerable road to recovery through those 15 days.

"I woke up on the fifteenth of January," Dave said. "The first three or four days I was there, the doctors and nurses were calling my wife, telling her I wasn't going to wake up — that I was dying."

Dave said that while at Cox South, he was sedated. Any time he would begin to wake up, he would reflexively reach for the tubes in his throat to take them out.

One factor which Dave credits as helping his recovery is the doctors experimenting by adding a plasma transfusion for his treatment.

Convalescent plasma ther-

apy uses blood from people who have recovered from an illness to help others recover. Blood donated by people who have recovered from COVID-19 has antibodies to the virus that causes it.

The donated blood is processed to remove blood cells, leaving behind liquid and antibodies. These can be given to people with COVID-19 to boost their ability to fight the virus, according to the Mayo Clinic.

After another experimental drug was added to his treatment, Dave said he was finally able to wake up two days later on his fifteenth day in the hospital.

"They woke me up, and my eyes opened up," Dave said. "I was so sedated I couldn't move my arms. I had no fight left in me to grab that tube. I just had to lay there and listen to them."

As soon as the tube was removed from his throat, the doctors and nurses began asking Dave questions to garner where he was at mentally. He could answer what his name was and the date of his birthday, but he didn't know what day it was, what month it was or who the current U.S. President was.

Twenty minutes later, though, Dave could name his address, his phone number and his social security number, as well as begin to move his arms and legs and then sit up in bed. Shortly later, he learned for the first time that he was in Springfield.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/DAVE JONES

From left, Cheyenne, Dave, Christy and Jeanette Jones smile for a photo. Two months ago, Dave persevered through a serious case of COVID-19.

"Everything started coming back, but that was 15 days that I had lost," Dave said. "Christy, she was there for the 15 days, getting phone calls from the nurses everyday."

Two hours after being awakened, Dave was already up and walking.

"The doctors just couldn't believe that," Dave said. "I just said, 'Whatever it takes to get out of here, I'm going to do it.' ... All I wanted to do was go home and be with my wife and kids."

One of the first things Dave did after being woken up was try to call and text his family. "They were happy to get phone calls and be able to call me," he said.

Reflecting back on his journey to recovery, Dave said the experience "makes you look at things different."

"The nurses said that I was a miracle," Dave said. "One out of 10 people live when you come off the ventilator."

Because of this, "It makes you be a nicer person to other people," Dave said in reflection.

Once Dave was able to leave the hospital, it took him

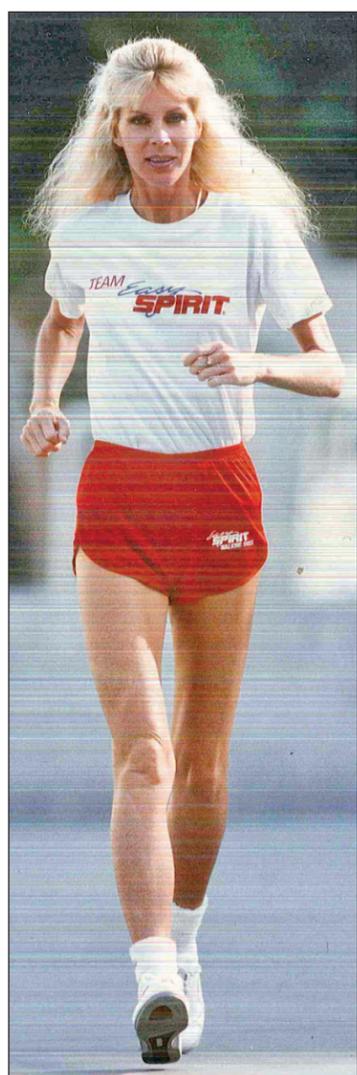
around three to four weeks for the effects of his treatment to wear off, he said.

"It's been almost two months now since I've been out, and I feel like I'm pretty close to a hundred percent back to normal," Dave said, but added one doctor told him he would look at three months for a full recovery, with another doctor adding there could be a year to full recovery. "But I feel fine now."

Speaking on personal advice for others as COVID-19, Dave spoke on the importance of social distancing, wearing face masks and vaccines.

"You hear a lot of people say that they're not going to take the vaccines," he said. "We've been getting vaccinated for 100 years or better — for the chickenpox, smallpox, measles, mumps. Where's the logic to not get vaccinated now? You bet, as soon as the shot's available for me, I'm going to take it."

Summing up his road to recovery, Dave said he wanted to thank all of the staff at Citizens Memorial Hospital and Cox South, as well as everybody who prayed for him.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/
VIISHA SEDLAK

Bolivar resident Viisha Sedlak competes in a race-walking event.

Walking through it

By David Talley

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Decades ago, Viisha Sedlak was walking the runways of fashion shows in Tokyo and Paris.

Now, she's racewalking — a little recognized but widespread activity and Olympic sport — the streets of Bolivar.

Sedlak, a former world-ranked athlete in the U.S. Olympic program, recently moved to Bolivar and has since made it a personal mission to share her sport with others.

She hosted a free clinic on racewalking at Bolivar's Hibbett Sports earlier this year in an attempt to "contribute to wellness and sport education in the Bolivar area."

"I have coached athletes worldwide, but hope to offer my knowledge and encouragement to my new community," she said.

Sedlak has been quoted in articles about her efforts to spread the sport in the L.A. Times, Christian Science Monitor, the New York Times and the Tampa Bay Times. She's also the subject of a

1992/1993 "rare" official trading card, for sale on Ebay for \$7.

"Born in 1948 and currently a resident of Boulder, Colorado," her trading card reads. "Former fashion and print model in Europe, Japan & the USA. An athlete, author, artist & speaker, she founded the American Racewalk Association in 1988."

Sedlak came to success in the sport after climbing to the top of another.

"I was ranked third in the world female ultramarathoner when I changed my sport to racewalking," she said. "I was ranked number one in the world for ten years as a masters female walker."

Sedlak said she's worked to win over new participants to the sport one step at a time.

"It's the up-and-coming sport," she says. "We have people coming up to us asking where they can read about walking. I'm scrambling to be able to get this information out to people."

According to the USA Track & Field website, "racewalking combines the endurance of the

long distance runner with the attention to technique of a hurdler or shot putter. Producing less impact, this technically demanding event continues to grow in popularity across the younger and older age groups for its fitness and competitive aspects."

That's a critical part of the activity, Sedlak said, and it's part of why it should appeal to the Bolivar community.

"It's very good for you and it's not hard on your joints," she said.

According to USATF, racewalking differs from running in that it "requires the competitor to maintain contact with the ground at all times and requires the leading leg to be straightened as the foot makes contact with the ground."

"It must remain straightened until the leg passes under the body," the website states. "Judges evaluate the technique of race walkers and report fouls which may lead to disqualification. All judging is done by the eye of the judge and no outside technology is used in making judging decisions."

Sedlak said the judging aspect "adds an intellectual dimension that I think enhances the sport. You have to stay focused, you can't slop around mentally or physically

and I like that."

But, she said, the sport is actually fairly easy to get into.

First, she said, consider the racewalking form.

Form includes posture, arm motion and the distinct stride.

"You must keep your knee straight from the time your forward foot contacts the ground until it passes under your body," according to an article on VeryWellFit.com. "You must keep one foot on the ground at all times. This results in the hip rotation that is the hallmark of racewalking."

Mistakes to avoid include not keeping one foot on the ground at all times or bending the front leg, which can slow down a walker.

It's also important to avoid using the wrong arm swing, overstriding or leaning too much.

Master those aspects, and participants can find a fun, rewarding workout, she said.

"You can't succeed in a sport without learning discipline, perseverance and commitment," she said. "I promote walking and racewalking to not only motivate people to get fit, but so they develop those three traits. My sport has brought me discipline, perseverance, and commitment and I enjoy giving it to others."

Missouri tackles Tobacco 21 law

By Rance Burger
ranceb@ccheadliner.com

Teenagers in Missouri are still finding ways to buy tobacco products, then smoke, chew or vape as the state waits to adopt its version of a federal law that raises the minimum age of tobacco sales from 18 to 21.

A southwest Missouri lawmaker has taken aim at tobacco use among teens with the Clean Air Act, a bill up for debate in the Missouri General Assembly in the 2021 session. State Sen. Lincoln Hough, R-Springfield, sponsors Senate Bill 124, which would reaffirm the federal tobacco law enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Donald Trump in December 2019.

The Clean Air Act, if passed into law, would classify vape products, juuls and other electronic smoking devices as tobacco products. Legally, they would be treated the same as cigarettes and taxed like cigarettes.

The penalties and fines for business owners found guilty of selling vape products to persons under 21 would also increase if the Clean Air Act becomes law.

Some cities and counties have passed local versions of "Tobacco 21" laws, which restrict the purchase of any tobacco product to persons ages 21 and up.

A total of 24 cities like Branson West, Monett and Joplin have passed Tobacco 21 laws, as have larger cities like Columbia, Jefferson City and Independence. That's according to ACT Missouri, a Jefferson City-based organization that works with the national Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation to promote Tobacco 21 initiatives.

Hough filed similar legislation in 2020. It made it past the committee stage, but never came up for a third reading or final vote in the Senate in a COVID-19 impacted session.

The American Lung Association graded Missouri with four F's and a D grade in its 2021 State of Tobacco

Control report. Missouri scored poorly for its funding of tobacco use prevention funding, its quality controls for smoke free air, its 51st-rated tobacco tax of 17 cents per pack of cigarettes and its lack of regulation of flavored tobacco products. The D grade came for Missouri's access to smoking and tobacco use cessation services.

"During the 2021 legislative session, the American Lung Association in Missouri will continue to focus on lung health and work with public health partners to increase funding for tobacco control efforts in Missouri. The Lung Association will also look to pass local or state laws to provide comprehensive protections from secondhand smoke in public places and workplaces.

Missouri has the lowest tobacco tax in the nation, therefore, the Lung Association will look to increase the tobacco tax in Missouri," the report reads.

Businesses that sell tobacco products, vapor products, rolling papers or "alternative nicotine products," are required to register with the

Missouri Department of Revenue on a yearly basis, and pay a \$50 fee each year in order to maintain their license to sell tobacco products. The funding gathered from the registration fee is used to enforce Missouri's tobacco laws and provide citizens with access to resources for smoking and tobacco cessation programs.

Ron Leone, executive director for the Missouri Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, spoke against the bill at a Senate Committee on Seniors, Families, Veterans and Military Affairs hearing. Leone's major issue was the increase in fines and penalties that would be placed on business owners.

"This particular provision makes even less sense because what typically happens when somebody sells to a minor, (the business) fires that clerk and that clerk is gone, they go somewhere else to find another job," Leone said. "And the small business owner is left to deal with paying the fines and

Youth smoking in Missouri

According to ACT Missouri
-More than 95 percent of long-term smokers start before age 21.
-Underage smokers primarily get tobacco from their peers.
-E-cigarette use in Missouri youth has more than doubled in the last five years.
-The average smoker's health care costs are more than 40 percent than a non-smoker's.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

A FEDERAL LAW passed at the end of 2019 raised the minimum age for the purchase and use of tobacco products from 18 to 21. Missouri has the lowest tax on cigarettes in the nation at 17 cents per pack.



JUULS are nicotine or THC vaporizing devices that charge electronically through the use of USB ports.



VAPE PENS are one of several ways that vape users can consume nicotine products offered as alternatives to cigarettes.



WHILE SOME CITIES HAVE ENACTED TOBACCO 21 LAWS, the state of Missouri has not adopted statewide legislation that raises the minimum age to purchase and consume tobacco or nicotine products from 18 to 21.

suffering the consequences."

The Senate committee recommended the bill's passage on Feb. 3, and referred Senate Bill 124 back to the Missouri Senate as a whole.

Leone also took issue with the classification of electronic cigarettes and vapors as tobacco products because "they don't contain tobacco, they contain nicotine."

Committee chairperson Sen. Bill White, R-Joplin, reminded Leone of the "problem that apparently is not being addressed of minor usage and the cost of health care and injury to those minors."

"I'm not here saying any of these products are good for you in any way, shape or form," Leone said. "My members are good actors. I can't tell you what the members that I don't repre-

sent are doing, but my members follow the law. They sell a lawful adult product to adults."

"Your good actors, though, should not then be impacted by an increase in fines or a reduction in the or an increase in the duration where you could not sell these products," White responded. "If they're adequately supervising their staff, they should have minimal concern about an increase in penalty and increase in duration of non-sales, because they are, as you say, good actors, there's always going to be a little slip-through."

The work of the Missouri News Network is written by Missouri School of Journalism students and editors for publication by Missouri Press Association member newspapers. The Missouri News Network contributed to this report.

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"THE MASS THAT Jack BUILT"

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Found the brain tumor here ... Jack Dennison points out the crash scene where he accelerated and hit the side of a building with full force during a medical event, totaling his mother's car on Dec. 17, 2020.

By Joy Beamer
joyb@buffaloreflex.com

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, a Buffalo teenager was involved in a one-vehicle crash Thursday, Dec. 17, east of Buffalo, as published in the Buffalo Reflex.

Jack A. Dennison, 18, was eastbound on Mo. 32, two miles east of Buffalo, at 2:50 p.m. Dec. 17, when the 2010 Mazda CX-7 he was driving pulled into a parking lot and almost came to a stop. The driver had some type of medical issue, and the vehicle accelerated and struck a building. Dennison was taken by ambulance to Cox South Hospital, Springfield. He was wearing a seat belt.

In the emergency room, the doctor told the family that Jack had a brain tumor. The doctor said it appeared the tumor was growing from the brain's lining inward and did not seem to be attached to the brain. At that time, doctors assumed the tumor was benign.

On Dec. 24, 2020, on the Buffalo

Reflex website, Dennison reported back to his story, "The seizure was caused by a meningioma, a tumor on the lining of the brain. This one is pressing against the right side of my brain, the side that controls language. During these episodes, I can't actually comprehend English. The seizure was estimated to have lasted 10 minutes by medical staff, and I'm still recovering. I'll feel off for at least two more weeks."

Little did Jack know, the crash was actually a medical discovery that would lead his family to an unexpected stay in Memphis, Tenn. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital doctors ultimately diagnosed him with anaplastic astrocytoma, a grade 3 brain tumor.

His grandmother Margaret Parks Jones had suggested contacting St. Jude in Memphis for a second opinion. Then, on the evening of Dec. 25, 2020, the phone rang. It was a neurosurgeon from St. Jude at 8 p.m. on Christmas night. The doctor asked the mother about Jack's condition and emergency room diagnosis. He proceeded to tell her to

pack their bags and come to Memphis on Monday and be prepared to stay. Doctors did more scans on Monday. The surgery was Tuesday afternoon.

Jack's grandmother started a fundraising page called Jack's Brain Tumor Recovery Fund.

She writes, "The pathology report came back that the tumor was cancer. Jack began treatment last week. He will be part of an immunotherapy clinical study for two years. He will have six weeks of radiation, then 51 biweekly infusions (in Memphis). Jack will not be able to come home until April 8, four weeks after his last radiation treatment."

"Amanda, his mother, had to purchase a new (to her) car to travel between home and St. Jude's because her car totaled in the accident. During this time, Amanda, a single mom, will not be receiving any of her wages. She will be making some trips home to see Olivia, Jack's sister. Any amount that you can donate is appreciated."

His family and friends stand beside him in the fight, naming themselves

"Jack's Warriors." Jack's Facebook page, "The Mass That Jack Built," is a page for his friends and family to read updates and share support for the family. The public is encouraged to post words of encouragement.

A blog by his mother is ongoing, and Jack's Warriors follow her, too. The blog, "Raising Two Kids & A Brain Tumor," is an outpouring of love, emotion and a historical record of Jack's journey through brain cancer told with Amanda Heinz's whole heart.

According to Mom, Jack is the warrior and has kept his sense of humor through all of this challenging experience.

An Etsy shop is open titled "JacksWarriors," selling affordable T-shirts and more Jack's Warriors swag. Money helps supports the family, too.

Friends have also started a raffle page to raise money to help the family. The "Mass that Jack Built Raffle Page" offers bids on donated gift packages, and proceeds to the family.

The public is encouraged to participate in these virtual fundraisers to help Jack and his family get through this challenging medical journey without worrying about the financial burden.



Jack Dennison is recovering after surgery at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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Come bark to me

Stockton Middle School therapy dog adjusts to life in a pandemic

By Aaron Pyle
aaronp@cedarrepUBLICAN.com

In a time like today, with the COVID-19 pandemic, isolation has become the new normal. Many people are struggling or have struggled with the psychological and physical toll isolation can bring. Luckily for the Stockton Middle School, there has been a help to resolving this issue.

He goes by the name Domino and he's an emotional therapy dog. Domino is a Great Dane to be exact.

Originally, Domino was introduced to the public at the SAMA Back-to-School Fair on Aug. 4, 2018.

Domino is trained to work with people who have disabilities as a professional therapy dog. Domino serves as a friendly and calming influence to help students who develop emotional issues, need assistance managing stress or have emotional outbursts during the day.

Domino began training for emotional therapy when he was just a six-month-old puppy in Concordia, Kansas, with the CARES (Canine Assistance Rehabilitation Education and Services) program.

Tests during the program included going to a mall where he had to sit. The trainers then left the dog's view for five minutes. During the five-minute period, Domino had to hold his ground and resist the temptation of going from another person who called him or accepting a treat from a stranger. In another test, Domino had to keep from chasing tennis balls rolled to him while he was staying in place.

During the time of training, Stockton Middle School teacher and current owner, Lyndzie O'Keefe, as well as middle school librarian Kim Schmid attended a five-day training seminar to qualify as handlers for Domino.

Now five years old, Domino has been with the Stockton Middle School since the fall of 2018. His birthday is soon approaching on Wednesday, March 31.

During the last year, Domino has been in and out of the middle school with the increased risk of COVID-19 in school systems. According to O'Keefe, the owner, Domino has been in the "yellow" which means he cannot be at the school.

"Social distancing does not happen when he is here and he is touched by a lot of hands," O'Keefe said. "So it was decided it would be safer to keep him at home when there's an increased risk."

All in all, Domino has spent more weeks in "yellow" than in "green" this year.

"We're in a good place right now and he's been here consistently for about three weeks," O'Keefe said. "Earlier in the year, it was very intermittent. Maybe a total of six weeks all year, including these last three."

O'Keefe also added, "It is a rough year. Things are better when he is here. But the truth is that he has not been able to do his job much this year. We all are saddened by it, but none more than Domino himself."

Although Domino has been gone for a portion of the year, students still feel his impact. O'Keefe stated students love him and always ask about him. Whenever in the classroom, Domino tends to regularly elicit smiles and good feelings from everyone he encounters, child and adult, alike.

One of the areas Domino helps out the most is dealing with students who have emotional issues, stress or outbursts.

In a previous CCR article posted by Stephen Buus in 2019, O'Keefe stated, "We've seen it a couple of times where they've been upset and escalating, and there's just something about sitting down next to a dog who's going to love you even if you're angry," O'Keefe said. "It's the therapy of just petting, slowing down just long enough to breathe and pet a dog who's just going to sit there while you're angry. Teachers, we love kids but we're human too, so when we get frustrated and don't know how to handle it, he'll just sit there and let you be frustrated."

Lyndzie added she posts updated pictures of Domino through her classroom Instagram page as proof of life.

Domino also wears a red vest to indicate his purpose, has a personal school-issued photo ID card and not to mention his own Facebook page which can be found at Domino: Stockton R-1 Schools.

With COVID-19 numbers dwindling, Domino will look to return and serve the Stockton Middle School more frequently throughout the year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS/
LYNDZIE O'KEEFE

Domino, pictured in the middle, gathers with his fellow students to celebrate the holiday season.



Domino receives pets from a Stockton Middle School student.



Domino lays with a student while he reads over an assignment during class.



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ROGERSVILLE AD SPURLIN

TRADING IN SIDELINES FOR STANDS, FAMILY

By Bryan Everson
bryane@marshfieldmail.com

Look down a sideline, behind the dugout or down a hallway at a Logan-Rogersville High School sporting event and you're likely to find Joe Spurlin.

For the next few months, at least. Then you might have to look up into the stands.

Spurlin announced near the beginning of winter that his fifth year as athletic director for the Wildcats would be his last. He returned to the school in April 2016 with Mitch McHenry, son of current Rogersville softball coach Denny, to help fill the shoes of Rod Gorman. Before leaving for Kickapoo, Mitch took the reins as boys basketball head coach from Gorman, who had held that role for 20 seasons, while Spurlin took on the duties Gorman held as athletic director.

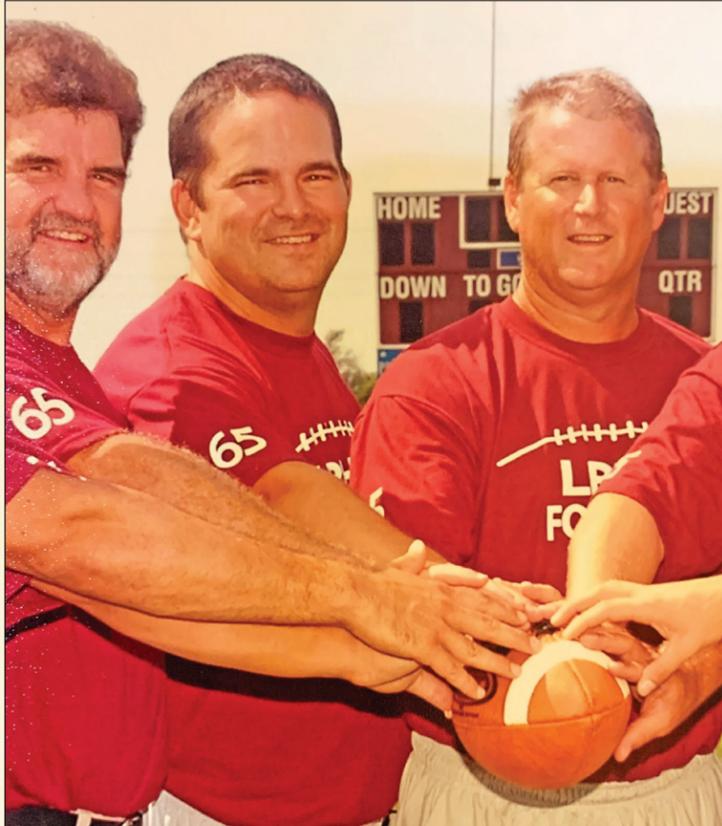
Spurlin's timing for hanging it up has much to do with family, including his daughter Emma, who played a significant role as a freshman on the varsity girls basketball team this year.

"When you get around 25 years, you have to start to run numbers and consider what the plan is," said Spurlin, also an assistant principal and the school's A+ Program coordinator. "When I came [back] out here it would have been about 25, but the fact of retiring wasn't even in my mind then."

"Now, I have a freshman and a sixth-grader [Eva], and it comes down to next year being able to go to their stuff, their sports. When you're trying to go to games with a sophomore's athletic schedule, and a seventh-grader's, and top of it do your athletic director duties, it's pretty tough. You can't be at three places at once."

"I've tried, it's hard."

A Missouri Southern State grad, Spurlin started his journey in 1991 at East Newton, coaching "everything" as he put it — football, freshman basketball, track — for four years.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOE SPURLIN

Outgoing Logan-Rogersville Athletic Director Joe Spurlin (third from left) is pictured as part of the Wildcats football coaching staff in 2008.

Then it was off to Mountain Grove for a year.

"Being from Ava, that's where I went to high school, the people there couldn't handle that I was at the archrival school," Spurlin said. "The next year I was offered a job at Ava."

In addition to girls basketball and track, Spurlin spent two years as an assistant before taking the head role of Ava's varsity football program for three seasons (1998-2000). "It was really nice that I got to do that there," said Spurlin, who led the program to a pair of district titles in that short span. "I appreciate Ava giving me that chance."

Taking advantage of the single life, Spurlin picked up after that and left to spend a year as offensive quarter at Winnetonka (Kansas City). After that, he left for a position as math teacher and offensive line coach at Kickapoo under Missouri Sports Hall of Fame inductee Kurt Thompson.

"At that time I met Rhonda," said Spurlin, referring to his

wife (the couple married in June 2004). "That changed things. People say I moved around a lot, but for the last two years I was in two districts: Springfield and Rogersville. Coach Thompson left for Republic and there was a job opening in Rogersville."

Said Rhonda, "Joe was phenomenal as far as taking [Colton] in and treating him like his own. He's made a lot of sacrifices for us as a family. My son is the one who wanted to come to Rogersville, so he said he'd try to get a job here."

She added that Joe returned from Glendale — he served as AD there following his first stint at L-R before being hired for his current role — because he wanted to be in the same school system as the couple's girls were when they reached high school.

"He's a really good husband and dad; an all-around great guy," Rhonda said. "I feel pretty fortunate. And believe me, he gives me a hard time just like he does the kids."

Emma chimed in, "I thought

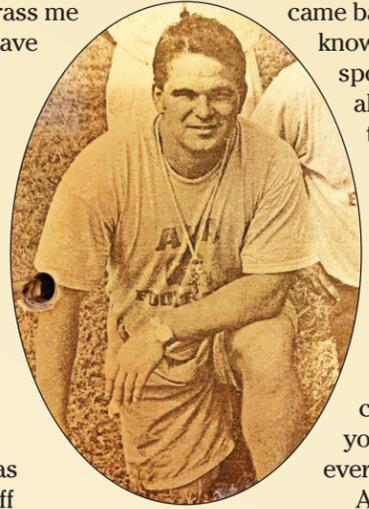
he would embarrass me more; but I still have another semester with him, so I don't know. He embarrasses my friends more than me."

Coaches will tell you the impact Spurlin has had to help make their jobs easier.

"Joe [has handled things] as far as putting stuff on the MSHSAA website, tweeting things about our teams — whether it be schedules or changes to schedules," Denny McHenry said. "When he first took over, I'm like, 'You wanna give me your password and I'll put stuff in?' And he was like, 'No, I'll do that.' The only thing I've ever done is put my scores in."

"When I've asked for something that I really need for our program, I've gotten what I've asked for. Before, I had to raise the money or come up with the money for most of our equipment. He's taken a great deal of the work that we've had to do before off my plate to where I could do my job here [in the classroom], and do my job on the field without a lot of those other headaches coaches a lot of times have to handle."

Added boys and girls soccer coach Brett Wubbena, "Before he came back as an AD, Joe was right next to me down in the math hall; I got to know him first as a math teacher. I was extremely happy that he



Spurlin in his first year of coaching at Ava High School in 1998.

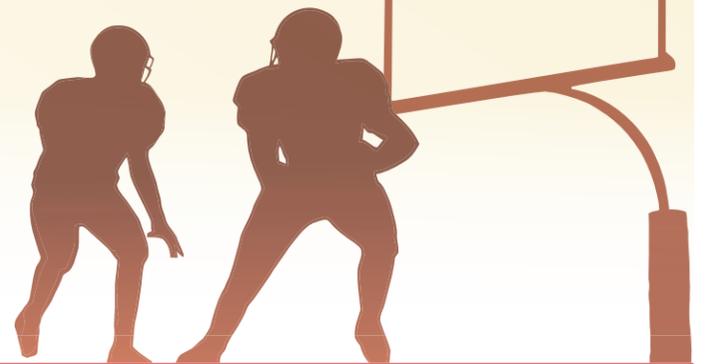
came back [as AD]. He knows and loves sports. I was actually going to try to get him to be my assistant in soccer [before he went to Glendale]."

"He's a great guy. He'll do as much as he can to help you out whenever he can."

Aside from watching his girls, what's next for Spurlin? That depends who you ask.

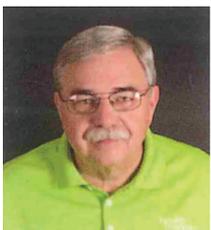
"I think he's looking forward to retirement," Rhonda said. "We're going to do some traveling and he always teases everybody that he hasn't gotten to play golf since he married me, the warden."

"If it means getting to play more golf, that'd be great," Joe agreed. "I know I won't be able to just sit around; something will come to me. But I'm looking forward to being a parent and a dad full-time."



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New parents have a **Lifeline**

The Haven in Buffalo provides free diapers, hygiene products

REFLEX PHOTOS BY ANDREW C. JENKINS

Carrie Hulsey, left, and her daughter, Calees Sewell, stand in front of the entrance to The Haven, housed in the lower level of Buffalo United Methodist Church's former fellowship hall.



By Andrew C. Jenkins
andrewj@buffaloreflex.com

2020 was a whirlwind year for most everyone, but perhaps no segment of the population was under more stress and strain than new parents. Giving birth to and caring for an infant is a challenge in the most normal of years, but doing so during a pandemic is an adventure, to say the least.

On the one hand, new parents might be able to spend more time than usual with their newborn, if their jobs allow for working from home. But juggling work duties and parental duties in the same space presents a set of challenges all its own.

A helping hand

One area organization that is stepping up to help ease the economic burden of parents with young children is The Haven in Buffalo. The organization is a faith-based family resource center that offers a free diaper bank and also provides community members in need with wipes, period products and some hygiene items.

Carrie Hulsey, founder of The Haven, said that The Haven gave away 38,026 diapers in 2020.

"We've started seeing an upswing in new families coming in because of COVID," she said. "One week, we had seven new families, which was unusual."

Hulsey said that on average, The Haven usually sees about one new family each week, in addition to the clients who come regularly. She said that of the seven new families that came in that one particular week, all of them had experienced either a job loss or a reduction in hours due to COVID-19. Hulsey said some of the affected clients were home health care workers.

Hulsey said that for the foreseeable future, she does not expect a decrease in the number of clients requesting help from The Haven.

"All this past year, the need has definitely been going up," she said.

New location

The Haven recently moved to a new

location in Buffalo. It is now housed in the lower level of Buffalo United Methodist Church's former fellowship hall. Parking by the sidewalk that leads to The Haven is available on Madison Street, on the north side of Buffalo UMC, which is at the corner of Pine and Madison streets.

This is the fifth location of The Haven since the organization began about six and a half years ago. It originally opened in September 2014 in a storefront on the southeast corner of Maple and Commercial streets in Buffalo. In June 2017, it moved to an office space above Buffalo City Hall on the square. In September 2018, the organization moved to a building on North Ash Street in Buffalo. In August 2019, The Haven opened for business at its fourth location at the southwest corner of Lincoln and Pine streets, across from the Buffalo Post Office. This past summer, The Haven moved to the Buffalo UMC space, which has more room, and it officially opened its doors in July at the current location. The space was formerly where GED classes were held.

The larger space means The Haven has enough room to have all its supplies in the same building, under one roof. At its most recent previous location, many supplies were kept in a shed outside because space was at a premium. Unfortunately, the shed was destroyed by straight-line winds this past spring.

"We found pieces of the shed a block and a half away," Hulsey said. "Three pieces we never did find. That was a mess."

Some of the products were lost in the storm, but Hulsey said she was able to salvage most of the merchandise.

Such scenarios should be avoided now that The Haven can store all of its items in the primary building. The additional warehouse space has made everyday maneuvering easier, Hulsey said.

The added space has also meant families can comfortably come inside The Haven so that Hulsey and her crew, including daughter Calees Sewell, can



Carrie Hulsey, who founded The Haven, points out some of the many items available to young children at the faith-based family resource center.

visit with them and check in with them. Those conversations allow the families to ask questions and gain valuable information.

In the midst of a pandemic, the extra room also provides more space for COVID-19 concerns.

"I can have volunteers now outside of the family, and we can still maintain distance," Hulsey said.

How to get aid and provide aid

The Haven primarily serves families with children, as well as women who need period products. The organization has done away with its previous points system, which Hulsey said became too complicated and confusing. Now she just asks clients what they need. Hulsey added that The Haven is no longer providing supervised visitations, either.

The Haven doesn't have any hard-and-fast qualifications or requirements for those seeking help. The organization tries to assist any families that need diapers, wipes, hygiene items, period products or newborn kits. Hulsey said that in the future, she might try to organize more parenting classes.

Hulsey estimated that 90 to 95 percent of The Haven's clients are from Dallas County, though she said some families are from neighboring areas, such as in Hickory, Polk and Laclede

counties, or Fair Grove in northern Greene County.

As word is spreading, Hulsey said more and more churches and groups from outlying areas are coordinating diaper drives and events to help support The Haven. The Hickory County R-1 (Skyline) Schools north of Urbana even planned a "kiss the goat" fundraiser to benefit The Haven.

For organizations and individuals who want to help, The Haven is in need of adult hygiene items, such as shampoo, as well as tampons. And The Haven can always use children's items, too. Hulsey said almost as soon as she receives products such as toothpaste and baby wash, they go out the door.

The Haven's annual diaper drive in February was not as successful this year as in some years past. However, Hulsey said that could be because a couple weeks during the month were hampered by harsh wintry weather.

Anyone who would like to donate to The Haven's cause or who is interested in volunteering may contact Hulsey at (417) 414-3003.

The Haven's regular hours of operation are noon to 6 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The Haven is closed Wednesdays and on the weekend.



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