

THE UPSIDE

STORIES OF HOPE, IMPACT, AND COMMUNITY
ACROSS ALABAMA

FALL
2026
Vol. 2

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Iron City Trykes/Birmingham AMBUCS is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to inspiring mobility and independence through providing therapeutic tricycles for children and Veterans with adaptive needs.

Learn more at: www.ironcitytrykes.org

Thank you

to our supporters,
volunteers, and partners
who make every YES
possible.

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THE UPSIDE

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From the Editor

There's something I love about the cover of this issue of THE UPSIDE.

At first glance, it might seem a little unusual for a publication from Iron City Trykes. After all, the rider on the cover isn't riding one of our traditional three-wheel AmTrykes. He's riding a bike. And I think that's exactly why I love it. It's a reminder that sometimes making an impact requires us to look beyond what we've always done and focus instead on what someone actually needs. That idea extends far beyond bikes. When we launched THE UPSIDE, we never wanted this to simply be an Iron City Trykes newsletter. We wanted to create something that celebrates the good happening all around us—the people, organizations, businesses, volunteers, families, and communities who see a need and decide to do something about it. Because there is a lot of good happening. Sometimes you just have to know where to look.

In this issue, you'll meet people who are finding their own ways to make a difference. Their work may look different. Their missions may be different. But there is a common thread: they saw an opportunity to make life a little better for someone else, and they acted on it. That's really what THE UPSIDE is about. It's about choosing to notice the good. Celebrating people who are making an impact. Sharing stories that remind us what is possible when people care enough to get involved. And maybe even inspiring someone reading these pages to ask: What can I do?

At Iron City Trykes, we're asking ourselves that same question as we continue to grow. Sometimes the answer will be an AmTryke. Sometimes it might be a traditional bike with a little extra support. And sometimes the answer may be something we haven't even thought of yet. That's okay. Because the goal has never really been about the equipment. It's about the person.

Thank you for picking up the Fall issue of THE UPSIDE. I hope somewhere in these pages you find a story that encourages you, inspires you, or simply reminds you that there is still an incredible amount of good happening in our community.

We just want to help tell you about it.

Zach White

Director of Marketing & Public Relations
Editor- The Upside
Published by Iron City Trykes

A photograph of a child wearing a red helmet and a dark shirt riding a bicycle on a paved path. The path is bordered by a grassy area and a dense line of trees. A black trash can is visible on the left side of the path. The scene is captured during the day with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image in a red, outlined font.

**“As I look out the kitchen window at
Graham riding his bike with his
brother and neighborhood friends, I
just wanted to tell you how grateful
I am for giving him this freedom!
Thank you!!”- *Graham’s Mom***

It's About the Ride, Not the Tryke

For years, when people have heard the name Iron City Trykes, they've understandably pictured three wheels. And while adaptive AmTrykes will always be at the heart of what we do, we're learning that sometimes the best way to fulfill our mission is to look beyond the tryke. Earlier this summer, we had the opportunity to provide a local child with something a little different—a traditional bicycle equipped with adaptive stability wheels. It offered the extra support the rider needed while allowing them to experience riding a more typical bike.

A few weeks later, another opportunity came our way. Graham and his family traveled from Virginia to Alabama for two weeks of intensive therapy. During his time here, Graham's therapist recognized that he would be a great candidate for a traditional bicycle with stability wheels and connected his family with Iron City Trykes.

Having recently completed our first setup like this, we knew exactly what we needed to do. We were able to get Graham fitted, prepare his new bike, and have everything ready before his family headed home. At the end of their two weeks in Alabama, Graham's new ride was strapped to the back of the family van, ready for the long trip home to Virginia. And somewhere along the way this summer, one bike became a few. Each represented a rider who didn't necessarily need everything an AmTryke offers, but still needed a little extra support to experience the freedom, confidence, and joy of riding.

It's about the ride.

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It has also reinforced something important for us: Our mission isn't about putting every rider on an AmTryke. It's about helping every rider find the right way to ride.

That's also why our relationships with physical and occupational therapists are so important. They know their riders. They understand their abilities, challenges, and potential. Our job is to listen, collaborate, and then do everything we can to help make the right equipment available. Every rider is different. So the solution doesn't have to look the same.

But perhaps the best explanation of why this matters arrived in a message from Graham's mom a few weeks after he returned home: “As I look out the kitchen window at Graham riding his bike with his brother and neighborhood friends, I just wanted to tell you how grateful I am for giving him this freedom! Thank you!!” Freedom. That's it. Not a particular bike. Not a particular number of wheels. Not even a particular piece of adaptive equipment. The opportunity to look out the window and see your child riding alongside his brother and his friends. That's the ride we're really trying to provide. And we'll keep looking for whatever it takes to make it possible.



Build it. Then see why.

At Iron City Trykes, the volunteer experience doesn't have to end when the last bolt is tightened. There's something pretty special about watching a group of people gather around a collection of boxes, parts, wheels and instructions—and a few hours later see a row of brand-new adaptive bikes ready for riders.

But we think there's something even better. Seeing who gets them.

Throughout the year, Iron City Trykes welcomes groups into our space to help build the bikes we provide to children and adults with adaptive needs.

Sometimes it's a corporate team looking for a meaningful way to serve together. Other times it's a youth group, a group of students, a club or simply people in our community who want to help.

We provide the bikes, tools and guidance. They provide the hands.

And together, we build.

But We Don't Want It to End There Building an adaptive bike is certainly a great volunteer experience on its own.

There's teamwork, a little problem solving, usually plenty of laughter and the satisfaction of seeing several completed bikes lined up at the end.

But those bikes aren't being built to sit in our warehouse.

They have names waiting for them. That's why we love inviting our build groups to come back.

About once a month, typically on a Sunday afternoon, Iron City Trykes hosts a Fitting Day. Riders and their families come in, our therapists and volunteers work together to make final adjustments, and one by one, those bikes leave with their new owners. For the groups who helped build them, it's an opportunity to see the other half of the story. The box of parts they opened weeks earlier becomes a child's bike.

The handlebars they installed are suddenly being held by little hands. The pedals they tightened are turning. And the bike they rolled to the side when their work was finished? Someone is riding it.

From a Project to a Person There's a difference between knowing you've helped someone and actually meeting them. That's what we want our volunteers to experience. We don't simply want to give groups a service project. We want them to understand the impact of what they helped accomplish.

At a Fitting Day, they might see a child pedal independently for the first time. They may watch parents realize their child can finally ride alongside siblings. They might see a rider who has spent much of life being told what they can't do discover something they absolutely can. And suddenly, what happened during the build means a little more.

It wasn't really about assembling bikes. It was about creating an opportunity for someone to ride.

Bring Your Group. You don't have to know anything about bikes. Seriously. Whether you're part of a company, school, church, youth group, civic organization, team or simply a group of friends who want to do something meaningful together, we'll walk you through the process. Come build with us.

Then, when those bikes are ready to meet their riders, come back.

Watch the fitting. Meet the families. Cheer for the riders. Take pictures. Celebrate.

Build the bike. Then come see why you built it. We think you'll be glad you did.





COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

TumTum Tree Foundation

Raising a Glass. Raising Millions. Changing Children's Lives.

Some of the biggest impact in our community begins with a simple idea: Bring people together around something they love—and use it to do something good. For nearly four decades, the TumTum Tree Foundation has done exactly that.

Through its nationally recognized Wine Auction, TumTum Tree has brought together winemakers, chefs, businesses, volunteers and incredibly generous supporters with one shared purpose: enriching the lives of children in Alabama facing life-altering and life-threatening illnesses.

The result?

An extraordinary \$21.7 million donated to Alabama children's charities.

But the real story isn't the number. It's what those dollars make possible. It's therapy. Treatment. Research. Support for families. Opportunities for children. Resources for organizations doing difficult and important work every day. It's an entire community coming together to help take care of some of its most vulnerable children.

A Community Behind the Cause

The TumTum Tree Wine Auction has grown into the longest-running charity wine auction in the United States dedicated to raising money for children's charities. That longevity says something important. An event can have a great year.

A movement lasts because people continue to believe in it. Year after year, vintners travel to Alabama. Chefs prepare unforgettable meals. Sponsors step forward. Volunteers give their time. Guests purchase tickets, raise paddles and bid generously.

Then TumTum Tree does something even more important: It puts those resources back into the hands of organizations serving children. That's the kind of ripple effect we love celebrating in THE UPSIDE.

One organization strengthens another. One donor helps fund a program. One event provides resources that eventually reach a child and family who may never know the names of all the people who helped make it possible. They simply experience the impact.

37 Years—and Still Growing

This fall, the tradition continues with the 37th Annual TumTum Tree Foundation Wine Auction, November 5–7, 2026. The three-day weekend brings some incredible wineries and culinary talent to Birmingham for a series of experiences including vintner dinners, TASTE of TumTum, the Grand Tasting and live auction, and a Saturday celebration combining food, wine, friends and SEC football.

The Foundation has also named Jean-Noel Fourmeaux of VGS Chateau Potelle as its 2026 Honorary Chair. It's certainly a weekend for people who appreciate great wine and great food. But ultimately, that's not why it matters. It matters because every ticket purchased, every paddle raised, every bottle poured and every person who participates becomes part of something much bigger: Helping Alabama children and the organizations that serve them.

And after \$21.7 million of impact, that's something worth raising a glass to.

SAVE THE DATE

37th Annual TumTum Tree Foundation Wine Auction

November 5–7, 2026 | Birmingham, Alabama

Learn more about the Foundation, the 2026 Wine Auction and ticket opportunities at the TumTum Tree Foundation website. <https://www.tumtumtreefoundation.org>

DIFFERENCE MAKER



Marliese Delgado

- Physical Therapist, United Ability
- Iron City Trykes Volunteer Fitting Day
Therapist Adaptive Mobility Advocate
Passionate about helping children achieve
independence

Marliese Delgado: A Career Built Around Ability, Advocacy & a Love for Kids

Ask Marliese Delgado why she has spent nearly three decades serving children and families at United Ability, and her answer is remarkably simple: ***“I love these kids.”***

For those who know Marliese, that answer probably isn't surprising. As Lead Physical Therapist and Outpatient Coordinator at United Ability, Marliese has spent her career helping children with disabilities discover what they can do—and advocating for them when the world too often focuses on what they can't. In a 2024 interview, Marliese offered another glimpse into what has driven that work: ***“I hate injustice, and if you work with people with disabilities, you start finding a lot of injustice.”*** That conviction has made Marliese much more than an exceptional physical therapist. It has made her an advocate, an encourager, a problem solver and, for countless children and families over the years, someone firmly in their corner.

The best therapists have a remarkable ability to make hard work feel like something else entirely. One United Ability parent perhaps described Marliese's gift best when talking about his young son, Penn. Penn has a rare genetic diagnosis resulting in global developmental delays and blindness. But when Penn spends time with Marliese, he doesn't necessarily think he's working on physical therapy.

According to his mom, he thinks he's playing.

Behind that play, however, is a veteran therapist who understands how to challenge a child, celebrate progress and create opportunities for growth—all while allowing that child to simply be a kid.

It's an approach that has impacted generations of families during Marliese's career at United Ability. As a Longtime friend of Iron City Trykes, we have also been incredibly fortunate that Marliese's impact hasn't stopped at the doors of United Ability. For years, she has been a supporter, advocate and volunteer.

Marliese understands something that is foundational to our work: ***providing the right adaptive equipment begins with truly understanding the rider.*** Physical and occupational therapists are often the bridge between a child who wants to ride and the equipment that can make it possible. They understand positioning, strength, mobility and function—but they also understand the child and family behind all of those clinical considerations. Marliese has brought that knowledge, experience and heart to Iron City Trykes time and time again.

She loves these kids. For Iron City Trykes, for United Ability, and most importantly for the countless children and families whose lives she has touched, we're incredibly grateful that she does.

Thank you, Marliese, for a career spent seeing ability, fighting for inclusion and helping kids discover just how much is possible.

AT Alabama

What If the Right Tool Could Change Everything?

Sometimes the difference between “I can’t” and “I can” isn’t ability. It’s access.

A different way to communicate. A piece of technology that makes a home more accessible. A device that helps someone work independently. Adaptive recreation equipment that opens the door to something they never thought they could do. Sometimes, it’s simply finding the right tool.

That’s what made our recent visit to the **AT Alabama Conference** so exciting. Hosted in Birmingham, AT Alabama brings together individuals with disabilities, families, educators, therapists, service providers, advocates and innovators around assistive technology - and the possibilities it can create.

Walking through the conference, those possibilities seemed to be everywhere. Presenters shared ideas and experiences from the field. Vendors demonstrated products designed to remove barriers. Professionals exchanged resources. People with disabilities shared what actually works in everyday life.

“I didn’t even know that existed.”

Technology With a Purpose

When we hear the word **technology**, it’s easy to picture computers, phones and the latest gadgets. Assistive technology is much bigger than that. It can be sophisticated, but it can also be remarkably simple.

The common denominator isn’t how advanced the technology is. **It’s what the technology makes possible:** greater independence, communication, education, employment, recreation, participation and connection.

That’s something we understand at Iron City Trykes. A bike may look like recreation to most people. Put the right adaptive bike underneath the right rider, though, and suddenly it can mean independence, confidence, exercise, inclusion - and the opportunity to ride alongside friends and family.

The equipment is simply the tool. What it unlocks is the story.

More Than a Conference

One of the organizations behind AT Alabama is **Accessing Potential Through Assistive Technology (APTAT)**, Alabama’s statewide assistive technology program. APTAT helps people of all ages discover and access tools that can help them live, learn, work and participate more independently.

One of the most valuable parts of the program is the opportunity to explore technology before committing to it. Alabama residents can see demonstrations and borrow devices for short-term use - an important option for families and individuals trying to determine whether a particular solution is truly the right fit.

APTAT also provides education and training and helps people explore funding options that can make assistive technology more accessible. AT Alabama may happen for a couple of days each year, but the resources behind it are available throughout the year.

DID YOU KNOW?

APTAT is a year-round resource for Alabamians.

Individuals and families can explore assistive technology, see device demonstrations, borrow equipment for short-term use, receive education and training, and learn about possible funding resources.

Learn more: accessingpotential.org

Put the Right People in the Same Room

Maybe that was our biggest takeaway from AT Alabama: there is so much innovation happening in the world of disability and accessibility. But innovation doesn't accomplish much if the people who need it never know it exists.

Put the person who created the technology in the same room with the therapist who understands the need. Put the therapist in the same room with the parent searching for an answer. Put the parent in the same room with another family who has already found one. And most importantly, make sure the voices and experiences of people with disabilities are part of the conversation.

That's when possibilities become solutions.

We left AT Alabama with new ideas, new connections and an even greater appreciation for the people working every day to remove barriers.

**Because sometimes changing someone's world doesn't require
changing the person at all.
Sometimes you just need to change what's possible around them.**



THE KIDS WHO INCLUDE

*Sometimes changing someone's world starts with three little words:
“Come with us.”*

We spend a lot of time talking about inclusion.

We create programs for it. We hold trainings about it. We design accessible spaces, adaptive equipment and specialized opportunities intended to make sure everyone has a place. All of those things matter.

But sometimes kids make inclusion look remarkably simple.

“Come sit with us.”

“Want to play?”

“Come ride.”

No program. No committee. No big announcement. Just an invitation. And for a child who is accustomed to watching from the sidelines, those few words can mean everything.

THEY NOTICE DIFFERENCES. THEN THEY MOVE ON.

Children notice differences. They notice the wheelchair, the walker, the ways someone communicates differently, or the friend who

can't run quite as fast. They might even ask questions. That's okay.

What children often do remarkably well is accept an answer and move forward: Okay. So how can we play?

Instead of focusing on why someone can't participate, kids can be incredibly creative about figuring out how they can. Maybe the rules change. Maybe everybody slows down. Or maybe none of that is necessary at all. Sometimes all that's needed is for somebody to make room.

THE BIKE CAN PROVIDE ACCESS.

Another kid saying, “Come ride with us,” creates belonging.

THAT'S THE PART YOU CAN'T ORDER FROM A CATALOG.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING THERE AND BELONGING

There's an important distinction between being included in a space and actually feeling like you belong there.

A child can be in the classroom and still feel alone. They can attend the birthday party and never really become part of it. They can be on the playground but spend recess watching everyone else.

True inclusion isn't simply allowing someone to be present. It's noticing when they're not part of what's happening - and doing something about it.

A teacher can create an inclusive classroom. A coach can create an inclusive team. A parent can create opportunities. But another child can offer something adults simply can't manufacture: friendship.

THE KIDS ARE WATCHING US, TOO

Children notice who we invite. They hear how we talk about people who are different from us. They see whether our first instinct is “They probably can't do that” or “How could we make this work?”

We don't have to teach children to pretend differences don't exist. We can teach them something better: Different doesn't mean less. Different doesn't mean someone always needs our help. And different certainly doesn't mean someone doesn't want to be invited.

At Iron City Trykes, we spend a lot of time thinking about equipment: seats, handlebars, pedals and supports that help a rider move safely and independently.

Those details matter enormously. But even the perfect bike can't create the moment we're ultimately hoping for.

The bike can provide access. Another kid saying, “Come ride with us,” creates belonging.

That's why some of our favorite stories aren't really about bikes. They're about what happens afterward: a child riding beside a brother, neighborhood kids making another lap together, or a rider who once watched everyone else suddenly becoming part of the group.

THREE LITTLE WORDS

Maybe creating a more inclusive community doesn't always begin with a massive initiative. Maybe it begins on a playground, at a lunch table, in a neighborhood, at church, on a ball field - or beside a couple of bikes in a driveway. Maybe the person who changes someone's day isn't an organization, therapist, teacher or parent. Maybe it's a kid who notices someone standing just outside the circle and says: “**Come with us.**”

That's inclusion. And our kids might have more to teach us about it than we realize.

THE LITTLE CHALLENGE

This week, notice who's outside the circle.

Sit with them. Invite them. Include them.

You don't have to make it weird. Just say:

“Come with us.”

Fall Fun Challenge

Big ideas for little difference-makers.

How many can you complete this fall? Color the square, add a check mark, or challenge your family to do them together.

☐ Ride a bike	☐ Help a neighbor	☐ Make someone laugh	☐ Find a red leaf
☐ Try something new	☐ Thank a teacher	☐ Pick up 5 pieces of litter	☐ Invite someone to join in
☐ Give a compliment	☐ Do something kind quietly	☐ Spend an hour outside	☐ Help make dinner
☐ Call a grandparent	☐ Donate something you outgrew	☐ Share what you're grateful for	☐ Cheer someone on

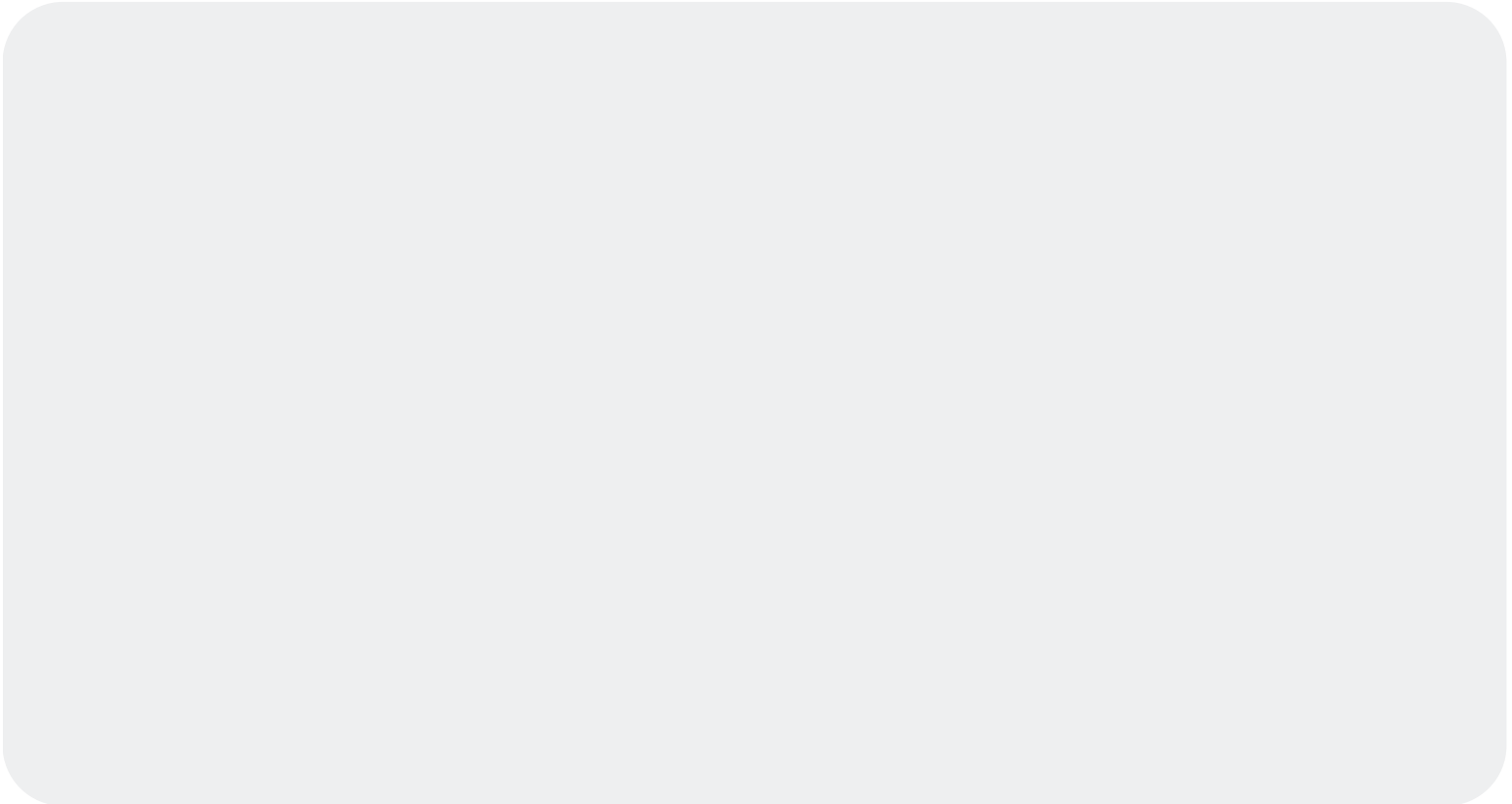
BONUS: DO SOMETHING AWESOME THAT ISN'T ON THE LIST.

Design Your Dream Ride

If you could ride ANYTHING, what would it look like?

Add colors, lights, flags, a basket, giant tires, a horn, rockets - whatever you can imagine. There are no wrong answers.

DRAW HERE!



MY RIDE WOULD...

Be called: _____

Have this superpower: _____

Take me to: _____

Best feature: _____

Different rides. Different riders. Endless possibilities.

On the Horizon

Things Worth Watching Across Our Community

There is always something good on the horizon. As fall arrives, our community calendar is filling with opportunities to connect, give back, and support organizations doing incredible work throughout Central Alabama.

TUMTUM TREE FOUNDATION WINE AUCTION

NOVEMBER 5-7 | BIRMINGHAM

One of Birmingham's signature philanthropic weekends returns this November, bringing together acclaimed vintners, incredible food and generous supporters to raise critical funds for children's charities across Alabama.

FALL FITTING DAYS

IRON CITY TRYKES | SELECT SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

The best days at ICT are the days bikes meet their riders. Therapists, volunteers and families gather as adaptive bikes are customized and sent home with their new owners. Interested in seeing the impact firsthand? Come volunteer with us.

ADAPTIVE RECREATION KEEPS GROWING

ACROSS ALABAMA

From adaptive cycling and accessible outdoor recreation to new assistive technologies and inclusive programming, organizations across our state continue finding ways to replace "you can't" with "let's figure out how." THE UPSIDE will keep sharing those opportunities and the people behind them.

SAVE THE DATE **Santa Hat Stroll** DECEMBER 13

Grab your Santa hat! Riders, families, volunteers and friends will come together to celebrate the season, our riders and another year of creating freedom. More details coming soon! www.ironcitytrykes.org

WHAT'S ON YOUR HORIZON?

Know about an event, program, organization or opportunity that deserves a little more attention? Tell us about it. THE UPSIDE was created to share the good happening throughout our community - and we'd love your help finding the next story.

The next great thing on our horizon might already be happening in your neighborhood.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Everyone Can Make a Difference

After reading the stories in this issue, you may be wondering how you can help create more of them. The good news is that making a difference doesn't require a special title, unique skills, or extraordinary resources. It simply begins with a willingness to get involved.

Volunteer

Nonprofits throughout our community depend on volunteers to serve families, support events, mentor youth, organize programs, and meet countless other needs. A few hours of your time can create a lasting impact.

Donate

Financial support allows organizations to continue serving others, expand programs, and respond to emerging needs. Every gift—regardless of size—helps move a mission forward.

Share Your Talents

Whether you're a teacher, therapist, coach, photographer, writer, accountant, builder, marketer, or business professional, your skills may be exactly what an organization needs.

Attend Events

Community events create opportunities to learn, connect, and support causes making a difference across Central Alabama.

Become an Advocate

One conversation can change everything. Share a story. Recommend a nonprofit. Introduce a potential partner. Help connect people with opportunities to serve.

Encourage Others

Never underestimate the power of encouragement. A kind word, a thank-you note, or recognition of someone's efforts can inspire them to keep going.

Start Where You Are. You don't have to change the world overnight.

Interested in sharing a story, recommending a Difference Maker, or highlighting an organization in a future issue of The Upside?

We'd love to hear from you.

The Upside

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BIRMINGHAM AMBUCS

www.ironcitytrykes.org

