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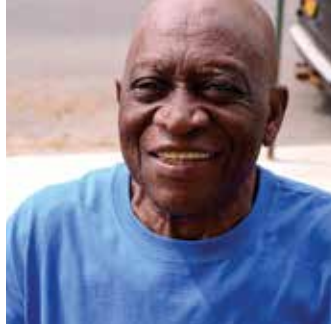
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Counseling center makes seeking help affordable



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BRIDGE TO HONOR PETS

Eagle Scout project honors pets and comforts owners

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ON THE COVER: This month in Berry Farms Local, we proudly celebrate our seniors. We've put together an excellent list of senior activities and exclusive discounts available from local businesses and organizations in the area. Enjoy all that our community has to offer.

ADVERTISING INFORMATION Interested in advertising to over 7,000 homes in south Franklin? We can promote your business through direct mail delivery and social media promotions. We offer very creative opportunities to local businesses, reach out today for more details. Contact Jeff at 615-828-2542, or email jbryant@wilcolocal.com

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COUNSELING CENTER HAS A BRAND-NEW HOME

JASON ZASKY

Twenty years ago, Refuge Center CEO Amy Alexander and co-founder Jennifer Thames-Hamilton came to the realization that there were few opportunities for affordable counseling in Williamson County. Aiming to offer therapy to individuals, couples, and families who could not afford the fees, they created Refuge Center and began offering counseling services on a sliding-scale fee structure based on income.

In the two decades since, the Center has become the largest counseling center in the region, having provided more than 337,000 sessions since opening its doors in December 2005. The most common “presenting issues” among clients are anxiety,

depression, addiction, and grief & loss, though the Center’s 70 counselors and therapists (including 15 full-time staffers) address a wide range of issues that also include pre-marital counseling, marital issues, and divorce adjustment, among others.

“We served more than 4,000 clients last year, and 89 percent of those clients paid between \$25 and \$125 per session,” offers Tate Foster, marketing manager for the Refuge Center, noting that upwards of 20 percent of the sessions were provided to kids and teenagers. That’s well below the typical cost range for counseling services in Williamson County.

In 2024, the Refuge Center also moved into a \$13 million building on Long Lane, encompassing 15,200 square feet of space.

“We were fundraising and dreaming and planning for over a decade,” says Foster, who describes the brand-new building as



“lodge-like, with very Pacific northwest vibes and a lot of wood and stone.... Everything is designed to cultivate healing and inner peace, whether it's before or after a session,” he adds. The grounds also feature four acres of walking trails, a healing garden, an outdoor prayer chapel, a playground for children, and a spacious multi-purpose room for seminars and group activities.

Connecting With a Refuge Center Counselor

Finding a therapist at the Refuge Center is a straightforward process that begins with calling and setting up an intake appointment. This hour-long chat helps the intake specialist understand your goals and match you with the right counselor.

“Our intake specialists will give you a few names, and you can look at those individuals on our website. During the call, they also provide your sliding-scale rate,” explains Foster.

There are also other ways to get to know more about the Refuge Center, which offers tours of the facility each Tuesday at 4 pm.

“For donors or community members, the first step to find out more would be one of our Connections lunches, which are held the first and third Thursday of each month at noon,” advises Foster, before noting that attendees receive a tour of the building and

watch a client story video, while also sharing information about themselves and their work.

Finally, the Refuge Center also sponsors special events that are held off-site, like Live Intentionally 2025, which will take place on February 14, 2025, between 8 am and noon at Church of the City in Franklin.

“It’s an event we host every year. This year the topic is on addiction, and will feature speakers on topics like sex addiction, technology & social media, eating disorders, and opiate addiction,” concludes Foster, who encourages interested parties to visit the Refuge Center’s new home.

“It a unique building, especially for counseling on a sliding-fee scale. There is nothing else like it in the country.”

CONTACT:

The Refuge Center for Counseling
4317 Long Lane, Franklin
615.591.5262
refugecenter.org/

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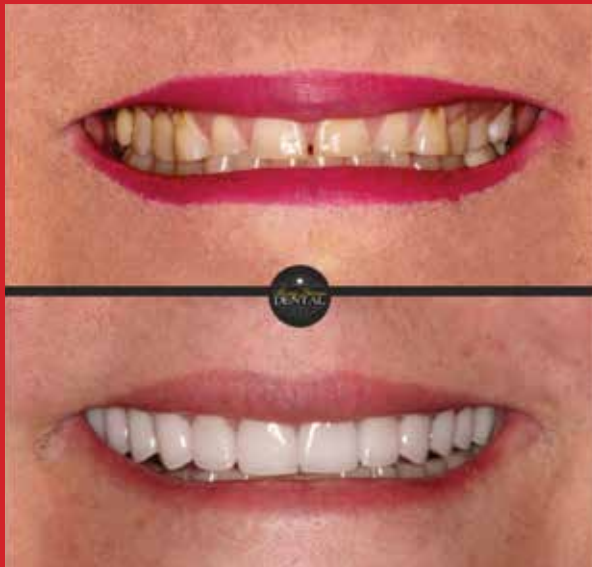
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FINDING THE PERFECT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Tom Thousand spent many years helping low-income residents with home repairs. After retirement, he knew he wanted to continue helping people in his free time.

He answered the call to serve through AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP. Since 2010, he has volunteered to deliver meals to those in need, transported donated food to food pantries and captained boats on a nearby lake for group trips. Thousand was there when his neighbors needed rides to medical appointments and the Red Cross needed help delivering blood in his community.

All across the country, AmeriCorps Seniors connects people aged 55 and older with opportunities to volunteer in their communities. The program matches each volunteer's interests and skills with local non-profit organizations. More than 140,000 older Americans serve their communities yearly through three core programs - the RSVP Program, the Foster Grandparent Program and the Senior Companion Program.

Many older adults look for variety, flexibility and benefits when searching for a way to volunteer.

"Since it was established in 1971, our RSVP program has been one of the nation's largest older adult volunteer programs," said Atalaya Sergi, national director, AmeriCorps Seniors. "The program has a wide variety of service opportunities that allow volunteers to help address our nation's most pressing challenges. For our volunteers, RSVP takes the guesswork out of choosing how and where to volunteer their time and energy."

Opportunities vary by city and state, but the RSVP program offers volunteers diverse ways to serve through local organizations. Examples include packaging meals for people with disabilities or other older adults, working in a call center for fraud victims, coordinating poetry workshops at a community center to stimulate the minds of those participating or transporting cancer patients to medical appointments. Service could also involve workforce development and job training or providing disaster preparedness assistance.

PAGE 14 >

Caring for Mature Skin: Expert Tips for Seniors

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Routine Skin Checks: Regular visits to your dermatologist can catch issues early and ensure your skin stays healthy.

Gentle Cleansing: Choose mild, non-irritating cleansers to protect your skin's natural barrier.

Stay Hydrated: Drinking plenty of water is essential for keeping your skin supple and reducing dryness.

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There are even select programs specifically designed to support veterans.

Mark Piscatelli volunteers at veterans' coffeehouses. Coordinated through his local AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program, the coffeehouses allow veterans to gather and socialize with each other and with volunteers. The social setting creates a safe space, fostering community and stability for everyone involved. Guest speakers frequently visit and provide new and updated information to attendees on local and national veterans' services.

"AmeriCorps Seniors has created a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about veterans, veterans' issues, what they've experienced, what they currently experience and what some of their concerns are going forward," Piscatelli said.

David Langlois, a fellow volunteer, concurs.

"I really think that the bottom line is to support our veterans," he said.

Older adults need volunteer programs that fit their lifestyles and allow them to choose how, where and the frequency of their service. Commitments range from a few hours to 40 hours per week. This flexibility allows Piscatelli and his fellow volunteers to participate without feeling overwhelmed by time obligations.

Volunteering is more than a way to fill time, however. Research from sources such as the National Institute on Aging suggests that older adults who are engaged in social and community activities maintain mental and physical health longer than those who are not.

"After one year of service, 88% of our volunteers reported a decrease in feelings of isolation," Sergi said. "Plus, 78% of volunteers felt less depressed. That uplifts spirits and significantly impacts and benefits people's lives."

Yolanda Dave is an example of the positive impact of volunteering on the community and the volunteers themselves. She started volunteering more than 20 years ago because helping her community with hunger, isolation and literacy issues empowered her to be part of the solution. It's more than that, though. She also benefits from the experience.

"I love volunteering," Dave said. "You meet wonderful people of all ages. I get to share my skills, my experience. It keeps me active, mentally and physically, which is very healthy."

Volunteers like Thousand, Piscatelli, Langlois and Dave support people in need and strengthen their communities and neighborhoods. If you're 55 or older and looking for the right volunteer opportunity, visit [AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment](https://www.AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment) to explore opportunities near you.

You Don't Have to Walk This Road Alone

We exist to offer excellent, accessible, and affordable mental and emotional healthcare services in support of a transformational impact on communities.

The Refuge Center serves over 4,000 kids, teens, adults, couples, and families every year. Our clients come in battling issues such as anxiety, depression, trauma, addiction, marital issues, grief & loss, and so much more. They leave better equipped and able to weather the storms of their daily lives. This is all done at a cost that offers dignity to the client and meets them wherever they are financially. Our services are offered on a sliding-fee scale that ranges from \$25-\$125 based on annual income.

We provide traditional talk therapy and various other modalities such as EMDR, Neurofeedback, Movement Therapy, and Music Therapy. Additionally, we offer support groups and intensives for issues such as grief and loss, chronic pain and illnesses, men's and women's core emotions, women affected by childhood sexual abuse, loved ones affected by opioids, and parenting.

Located at 4317 Long Lane Franklin, TN 37064

Go to refugecenter.org to get more info, see how we can help, and to support us financially. Give us a call at 615-591-5262 to schedule an intake session.

Don't miss our 2025 Speaker Series, "Live Intentionally" held at Church of the City, Franklin on February 14 from 8am-12pm. This year's theme is on Addiction and its different forms, entitled: Life Out of Control: No One is Beyond Saving.

Hear from Dr. Stephen Loyd, and others on forms of addiction such as opiod, sex, gambling, social media/technology, eating disorders, and the psychology of addiction. To get more info or register, go to refugecenter.org/events.



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BERRY FARMS DENTAL BERRY FARMS

Berry Farms Dental, located in Berry Farms, will be offering all seniors, age 65, plus 15% off All Dental Services for the month of February.

CHRONICLES OF YARNIA: FRANKLIN'S ADULT KNIT & CROCHET GROUP

The Williamson County Library, 1314 Columbia Ave., Franklin
Tuesday, February 4, 5 – 7 pm

Join this group to meet new friends sharing the same interest in creating handmade items. New people are welcome.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOK SALE

The Williamson County Library, 1314 Columbia Ave., Franklin
February 7 – 9 Fri. & Sat. 9 am – 5:30 pm
Sun. 1 – 5:30 pm A New Fun Outing



ADULT BINGO NIGHT AT THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY LIBRARY

1314 Columbia Ave., Franklin

Monday, February 10, 5 – 6:30 pm

Tuesday, March 4, 5 – 6:30 pm

Free to participate

Unwind and have some fun at Bingo Night! Whether you're a bingo pro or new to the game, this evening is perfect for anyone looking to relax and meet new friends. We'll play multiple rounds of bingo with the chance to win exciting small prizes. Bring your good luck charm and enjoy a community night out. Pre-registration is recommended.

LITERARY LADIES BOOK CLUB FEBRUARY MEETING

Williamson County Library, 1314 Columbia Ave., Franklin

Monday, February 24, 6 – 7 pm

Monday, March 17, 6 – 7 pm

The Literary Ladies Book Club is a group just for the girls. We like to discuss in-depth the merits and plot points of various works and welcome new and different perspectives. In February, the club is discussing Whiskey Love by Joy Allyson, and in March, the club will feature The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon.

LOST AND FOUND: THE AMAZING LEGACY OF MARY BANKS

Williamson County Library Franklin Branch

1314 Columbia Ave.

Saturday, February 1, 2025

This year, The African American Heritage Society of Williamson County is proud to honor the descendants of Randle and Polly Brown. Randle and Polly Brown were enslaved by Nicholas "Bigbee" Perkins at Meeting of the Waters in Forest Home. After emancipation, Randle and Polly raised their family in the 6th Civil District of Williamson County as farmers. Their daughter, Malvina, married Thomas Southall, and their descendants spread far and wide. Their legacies are teachers, postal workers, authors, and civic leaders. This year's photograph exhibit, curated by renowned local historian and genealogist Thelma Battle, celebrates this legacy. The exhibit will be displayed in the Special Collections Department at the Main Library in Franklin. Sponsored By: The African American Heritage Society of Williamson County.

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Nov. 22 Home	Chestatee HS
Nov. 25 Tournament (N)	Ray Tucker Classic
Nov. 26 Tournament (N)	Ray Tucker Classic
Dec. 2 Away	Shelbyville Central
Dec. 6 Away	Columbia Central
Dec. 9 Home	Shelbyville Central
Dec. 10 Away	Fairview
Dec. 13 Home	Franklin
Dec. 17 Away	Brentwood
Dec. 20 Home	Fairview High School
Dec. 26 Tournament (N)	Galesville Holiday Tour.
Dec 27-28 Home (girls only)	Spartan Classic
Jan. 3 Home	Columbia Central
Jan. 7 Home	Ravenwood
Jan. 10 Away	Page High School *
Jan. 14 Home	Nolensville *
Jan. 17 Away	Independence
Jan. 21 Away	Franklin High School
Jan. 24 Home	Centennial
Jan. 28 Home	Brentwood
Jan. 31 Home	Page
Feb. 4 Away	Ravenwood
Feb. 7 Home	Independence
Feb. 11 Away	Nolensville
Feb. 14 Away	Centennial

PAGE

Dec. 3 Home	Rockvale
Dec. 5 Home	Mt. Juliet
Dec. 10 Home	Hendersonville
Dec. 13 Away	Ravenwood
Dec. 17 Home	Centennial
Dec. 19 Knoxville	(N) 5 Star Preps
Dec. 20 Knoxville	(N) 5 Star Preps
Dec. 21 Knoxville	(N) 5 Star Preps
Dec. 27 Home	(N) Music City Hoopfest
Dec. 28 Home	(N) Music City Hoopfest
Dec. 30 Home	(N) Music City Hoopfest
Dec. 31 Home	(N) Music City Hoopfest
Jan. 3 Tournament	(N) Shackle Island Shootout
Jan. 7 Away	Brentwood *
Jan. 10 Home	Summit *
Jan. 14 Away	Franklin *
Jan. 17 Away	Nolensville *
Jan. 21 Home	Ravenwood *
Jan. 24 Home	Independence *
Jan. 28 Away	Centennial *
Jan. 31 Away	Summit *
Feb. 4 Home	Brentwood *
Feb. 7 Home	Nolensville *
Feb. 11 Home	Franklin *
Feb. 14 Away	Independence *

INDEPENDENCE

Nov. 19 Home	Stewarts Creek
Nov. 23 Home	Bartlett
Nov. 23 Home	Maryville
Nov. 25 Home	Grissom AL
Nov. 26 Home	Blackman
Dec. 3 Away	LaVergne
Dec. 6 Home	Hillsboro
Dec. 10 Home	Whites Creek
Dec. 13 Away	Nolensville
Dec. 17 Home	Ravenwood
Dec. 20 at Riverdale	Brentwood Academy
Dec. 21 at Riverdale	Bearden
Dec. 26-28 Away	BGA Christmas Tour.
Dec 27-28 Away (girls only)	Spartan Classic
Jan. 3 Away	Cane Ridge
Jan. 7 Home	Franklin
Jan. 10 Away	Centennial
Jan. 14 Away	Brentwood
Jan. 17 Home	Summit
Jan. 21 Home	Nolensville
Jan. 24 Away	Page
Jan. 28 Away	Ravenwood
Jan. 31 Home	Centennial
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EAGLE SCOUT HONORS DOG BY BUILDING RAINBOW BRIDGE

Dozens of folks with a shared love, the love of pets, gathered at Williamson County Animal Center on Monday, December 9, for the dedication of a memorial built by a local scout to honor the bond between people and pets who have passed. Benji Barry of Troop 16 in Franklin said that his Eagle Scout project is a place for community members to celebrate the love and memories of pets. Benji's project, dubbed "Reagan's Rainbow Bridge," is dedicated to his family's chocolate lab, Reagan, who passed at the age of 15 years in 2022.

"She was my best friend," said Benji. "And, as I thought about her, I realized that this bridge would serve as a way to memorialize not just her, but all pets that people have lost." For those who are not familiar, The Rainbow Bridge is a poem that, in Benji's words, "describes a beautiful place just beyond the horizon where pets go after they pass. A place where they are restored to health and happiness, free to run and play, waiting to be reunited."

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< FROM PAGE 24

Williamson County Mayor, Rogers Anderson expressed his appreciation for the project and noted the positive influence that animals have in the lives of many humans. Anderson also made a point to recognize Benji's parents, Lance and Mindy Barry, for their behind-the-scenes contributions.

Among others in attendance, were a number of Benji's family members, in addition to his parents, several of his scout leaders, WCAC Director Ondrea Johnson, shelter staff members, and volunteers.

Benji was given the honor of placing the first collar on the bridge, Reagan's collar, and then others in attendance added to it following the ceremony. All are invited to memorialize their beloved pets

who have passed by hanging a collar or other object on the bridge at any time. The bridge is located at the entrance of the wooded walking trail adjacent to the public dog park at WCAC.

WCAC (www.adoptwcac.org) is open to the public Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.; Saturday, 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., and closed Sunday.



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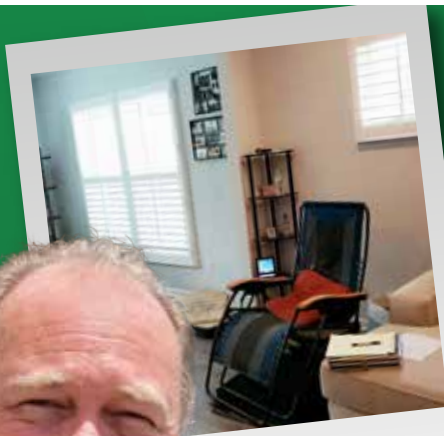
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Chocolate Raspberry Torte

INGREDIENTS:

2 CUPS WHITE SUGAR
1 ¾ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
1 CUP UNSWEETENED COCOA POWDER
1 ½ TEASPOONS BAKING POWDER
1 ½ TEASPOONS BAKING SODA
1/2 TEASPOON SALT
2 LARGE EGGS (ROOM TEMPERATURE)
1 CUP MILK (ROOM TEMPERATURE)
½ CUP VEGETABLE OIL
2 TEASPOONS VANILLA EXTRACT
1 CUP BOILING WATER
1/2 CUP RASPBERRY JAM
2 CUPS FRESH RASPBERRIES

FROSTING

1 CUP OF ROOM TEMPERATURE UNSALTED BUTTER
1/2 CUP COCOA POWDER
5 CUPS OF CONFECTIONARY SUGAR
2 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
3-4 TABLESPOONS MILK

(if you have raspberry juice you can substitute half milk/half raspberry juice)

From the kitchen of **Ruth Woetzel**

DIRECTIONS TORTE

Gather all ingredients.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour two 9-inch round baking pans.

Stir sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl.

We put all dry ingredients into a sieve, and then all ingredients are well combined.

Add room temperature eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; mix for 2 minutes on medium speed with an electric mixer.

Stir in the boiling water. The batter will be thin. Pour equal parts of the batter into the two prepared pans.

Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 30 to 35 minutes. Cool in the pans for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

We put a layer of raspberry jam, chocolate icing, and fresh raspberries between the 2 cakes. Then decorate with chocolate icing and fresh raspberries on top.

DIRECTIONS FROSTING

1 cup of room temperature unsalted butter

1/2 cup cocoa powder

5 cups of confectionary sugar

2 teaspoon vanilla extract

3-4 tablespoons milk (if you have raspberry juice you can substitute half milk / half raspberry juice)

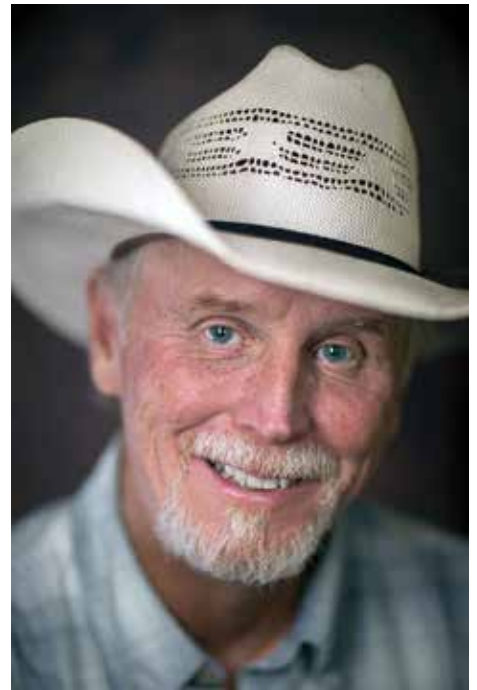
With a hand mixer, whip the room temperature unsalted butter and cocoa together until smooth. Once all creamed together, add vanilla extract. On low speed, slowly add the confectionary sugar one spoon at a time. As frosting gets thick, add milk (or raspberry juice)

one tablespoon at a time until the mixture reaches desire consistency. Scrape side and whip until smooth and fluffy.

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Michael Dominic Tedesco is a photographer in Nashville, formerly New York City. Clients include: Mutual of America, Farm Bureau Insurance, Penguin Publishing Group, Gotham Books, Avery Books, Bloomberg Markets, Men's Health, Women's Health, Men's Fitness, The Source, CMJ, St. Johns University, Decker Design, Jujamcyn Theaters, Journal Communications, Warner Music Nashville, University of Tennessee, Meharry College, Edge Artist Management and many Departments of Agriculture in the United States. View more work at www.tedescopictures.com



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