

October 2024

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FREE

# FARMVILLE

*the Magazine*

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# Publisher's Notebook

## Racing into fall

It seems almost overnight that summer was rushed out and fall ushered in. Even a diehard summer girl such as myself has to admit that these cooler temps make the days and nights much more comfortable. Bring on fall!

Speaking of racing, on this month's cover Farmville native Jordaine Penick raises her hands in a victory salute. For those that haven't heard, this teen is making a big name for herself on the race track as a champion and also has her name in the South Boston Speedway history books. Turn to Page 10, as Brian Carlton and John Karratti share all the details.

We are also pleased to share the stories of groups making a big difference in our community. On Page 14 discover how PE's Kids came about to help young people within our community in need. The headline, 'A little help goes a long way' is most appropriate and you can make a real difference in a young person's life.

On Page 19, 'A new beginning for Madeline's House' is an excellent



**Betty Ramsey, Publisher**

example of a community coming together to help those in need. A safe place for domestic violence survivors to find shelter and a new beginning, Madeline's House serves multiple counties. More than shelter, the new program focuses on both intervention and prevention.

*Farmville the Magazine* strives to tell the story of our community. We are blessed and grateful to be a part of this community and are thankful that there are so many great stories to share.

Within these pages you will find more stories and we hope you will enjoy reading them as much as we enjoy bringing them to you. This is a magazine about and for you, we welcome your ideas and invite you to share with us what you would like to hear more about by sending us a note at P.O. Box 307, Farmville, VA, 23901, giving us a call at (434) 392-4151 or sending me an email at [Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilletheMag.com](mailto:Betty.Ramsey@FarmvilletheMag.com).

We publish *Farmville the Magazine* in March, April, May, summer, September, October, November and December. We invite you to pick up a copy of the latest issue as there is sure to be someone you know inside — a neighbor, a family member, a friend or perhaps even you!

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# FARMVILLE

*the Magazine*



Family Tradition

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On the Cover: Jordaine Penick celebrates after earning her first HEAT Hornets Division championship at South Boston Speedway. Photo by John Karratti.



PE's Kids

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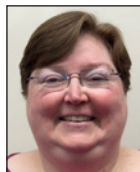
Madeline's House

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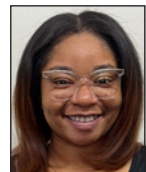
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# Cousins continue a family tradition



Jordaine Penick, center, poses with her family, crew and supporters. Photo by John Karratti.





**Max Sangillo, of Farmville, left, gets some last-minute advice from a team member before the start of a practice session.**

### By Brian Carlton and John Karratti

Farmville native Jordaine Penick got her racing nickname long before she started competing on the track. The teenager, who lives now in Meherrin, was learning how to race by driving a car around in a field, when she took out a peach tree. From then on out, she got the nickname of Peach Picker Racing.

Since then, you could say she's gotten a lot better at the sport. Especially this year, the Randolph-Henry High student was impressively consistent, posting nine Top 5 finishes in 10 starts. That helped her earn a new name as well, as last month Jordaine was crowned the 2024 Virginia State Police HEAT Hornets Division champion. She also got her name added to the South Boston Speedway history books, becoming just the second woman driver to win a championship at the track. She's also the first to do it in 20 years. Before Jordaine, it was Terri Marks who won the track's Grand Stock Division championship back in 2024.

This was also a year of growth on the track for Penick's cousin, Max Sangillo. The Farmville teen enjoyed a successful season, having

compiled six Top-5 finishes, and finishing in the Top-10 in all 10 of his starts. He logged four fourth-place finishes in a row before posting finishes of fifth and seventh in two of his last three outings. Sangillo credits one change from last season in playing a key role in his development. He drove a Honda Civic in the division for his rookie year. This time around, he worked with an Acura RSX and says you could tell the difference. Max also played a role in helping his cousin get across the final finish line and win her title. As Penick's car needed some parts late in the race, Max gave up some from his own. That meant he didn't finish the race, but he cheered on Jordaine as she crossed the finish line and got her trophy.

### A FAMILY CONNECTION

This is a family business for both cousins. In fact, a family connection is what got Jordaine involved in the sport.

"It's really fun and means a lot. My granddad and aunt both raced back in the 1980's and 1990's," Jordaine said. "Daddy always told me stories about them. I wanted to do it a couple years ago and he said, 'Well, if you want to do

it, we can start you.'

Her dad's sister Cheryl raced back in the 80s and early 90s, driving at Southside, Natural Bridge and South Hampton. Before that, her grandfather, Bill Penick, raced at those same three tracks back in the 1960s, alternating with main driver Cliff Gariss.

Michael Penick also serves as crew chief and car builder for both Max and Jordaine. Other family members get involved as well. Cheryl serves as Max's crew chief. Max also credits his mother, Nicole Sangillo, and sister, Lucy Sangillo, for spotting him on the track. They videotape his races as well.

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

As for what's helped both racers develop at such a young age, Michael says practice makes perfect.

"I think practicing on the field and on the track," Michael said, explaining what's helped them succeed. "We rented a track in the off-season for them to practice at South Boston Speedway."

Above all, it's about what the kids want to do. As long as their joy and passion for racing



remains, Michael said he's glad to help both his daughter and nephew continue to grow and develop in the sport.

"We've had a lot of attention given to us from the track, other leagues and other drivers about how much Jordaine and Max have improved and what they've accomplished," Michael said in an earlier interview with The Herald. "If they want to make a career out of it or as long as they want to do it, I'll build them a racecar. But when it's not fun anymore, let me know and we can do something different."

While Max doesn't plan to make this a career, he's enjoying the experience. He is set to graduate in May of 2025 and plans to attend Liberty University to get a bachelor's degree in aviation, with the plan of becoming an airline pilot

Jordaine, meanwhile, is already focusing a bit on next season. When asked after the race what her next goals are, Jordaine mentioned winning a race at South Boston and continuing to work on her driving. She's also going to be returning to defend her title on the Hornets circuit. There had been some discussion about moving her up to Pure Stock, but for 2025 at least, Jordaine will be suiting up and racing alongside her cousin again.



Jordaine Penick reaches for her helmet as she prepares for the start of practice.




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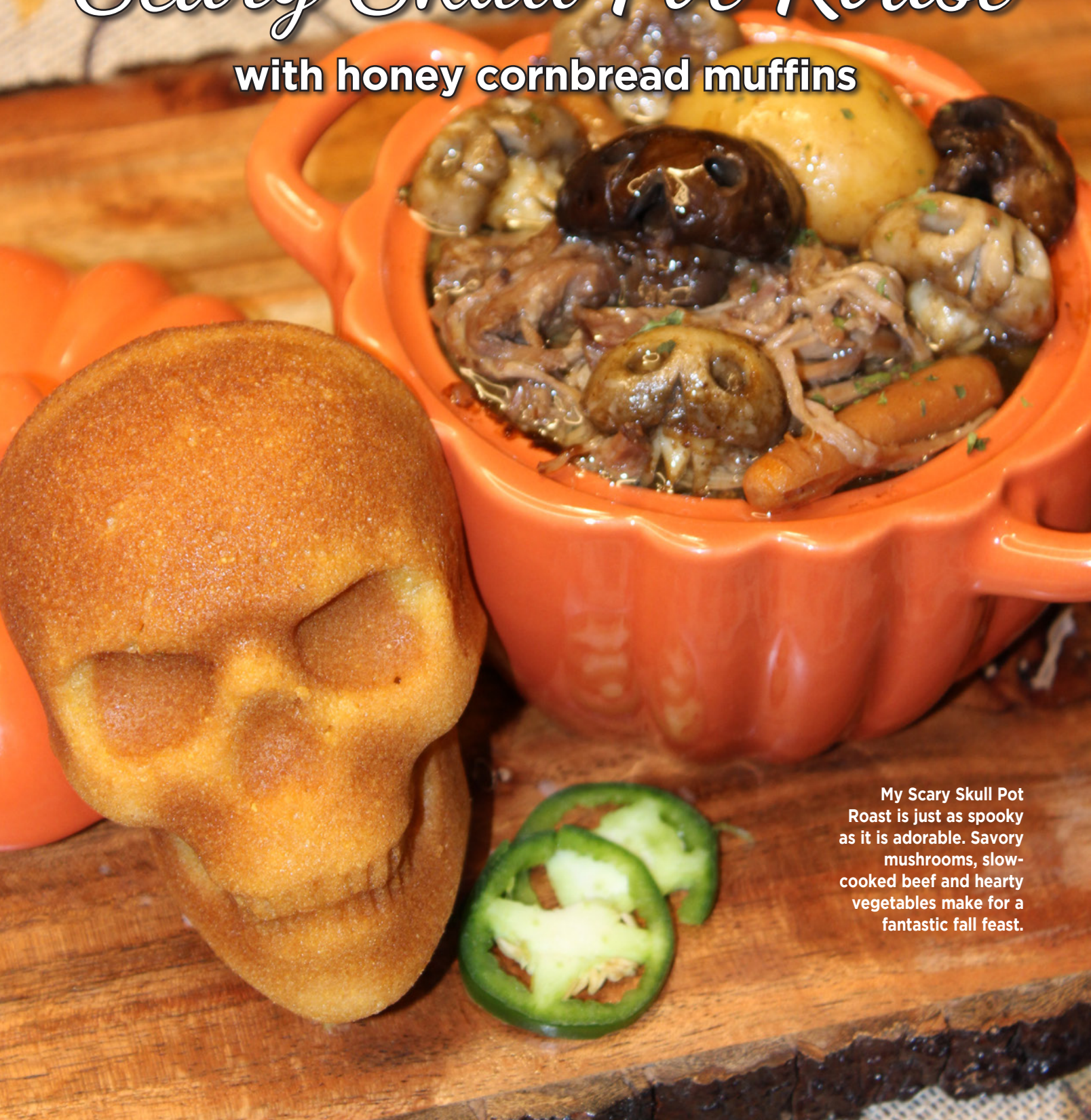



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Recipe

# Scary Skull Pot Roast

with honey cornbread muffins



My Scary Skull Pot Roast is just as spooky as it is adorable. Savory mushrooms, slow-cooked beef and hearty vegetables make for a fantastic fall feast.

**Recipe and photos by Alexa Massey**

It's finally fall, my favorite season of the year, and there's nothing stopping me now from covering the house in spooky decorations and spending the day slow-cooking something.

Fall also happens to be the peak season for harvesting mushrooms. While I'm a little ill-informed on how to identify wild mushrooms and whether they are tasty or deadly, I do love grabbing some mushrooms from the grocery store and throwing them into any good soup, stew or pasta for a bit of extra umami.

In honor of fun fungi everywhere, this month's recipe celebrates Spooky Season and mushrooms with a little number I like to call the Scary Skull Pot Roast. I'm sharing with you my killer pot roast recipe as well as a really fun technique of turning white button mushrooms into spooky skull shapes for Halloween. I'm also throwing in a nice homemade honey cornbread muffin recipe that can be dressed up with jalapenos if you're a fan of spicy food.

And yes, before you ask, you can leave the mushrooms out of this recipe if you're not a fungus fan. But then you're just making a regular ol' pot roast, and what's the fun in that?

**HERE'S THE RECIPE:**

- Prep time: 25 minutes
- Cook time: 8 hours
- Yields: Approx. 6 servings

**INGREDIENTS:**

**Pot Roast**

- 3 lb. chuck roast
- 1 packet au jus gravy mix
- 1 packet ranch dressing mix
- 1 lb. baby potato medley (mixed yellow, red and purple potatoes)
- 1 small onion, roughly diced
- 1 lb. baby carrots
- 1 lb. white button mushrooms
- 4 tbs. butter
- 1 tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- ¼ cup water
- (optional) 2 tbs. juice from a jar of pickled jalapenos

**Cornbread Muffins**

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup yellow cornmeal
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 1 stick melted butter
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 1 tbs. Baking powder
- 1 tsp. Salt
- Optional: two medium jalapeno peppers, diced



**Did you know that button mushrooms, cremini mushrooms and portobello mushrooms are all the same type of mushroom just harvested at different stages of maturity? Button mushrooms are the youngest of the trio.**



**Spooky mushroom skulls await their turn in the slow cooker.**



**Be sure to add your mushrooms into the slow cooker during the last two hours in order to prevent them from going too mushy.**

We'll start with the pot roast recipe, since it takes all day! Don't worry, the only hard thing about slow cooking is waiting eight hours to eat the food that's been stewing away in the crock-pot.

Begin by simply adding all of the pot roast ingredients except for the mushrooms and butter into your slow cooker. You will want to put the chuck roast in first, followed by the vegetables and topped with the powdered mixes, butter, salt, water and optional pepper juice. Placing the roast at the bottom ensures that it will simmer in its own juices and become extremely tender as it cooks.

Once you've added everything except the butter and mushrooms, place the lid on your slow cooker and set it to cook on the low setting for 8 hours.

Through trial and error, I have determined that mushrooms should not be added to the pot roast until the last 2 hours of cooking to avoid turning them into sad, little mushy blobs. When your pot roast has around two and a half hours on the clock, it is time to wash and cut your mushrooms.

You can wash mushrooms in a few different ways. Since these are being thrown in a slow cooker, I recommend rinsing the button mushrooms in a colander under lukewarm water for just a few seconds each, using your fingers or a cloth to wipe away any dirt or debris. Dry your mushrooms with a paper towel before slicing each one in half vertically.

To make your spooky mushroom skulls, lay each mushroom half down on its flat side. Using a straw, poke two eye holes into the cap of the mushroom. I find you are less likely to split open your mushroom by twisting your straw as you press down and stopping half-way through the mushroom rather than poking all the way through. Being careful with your cuts, use a paring knife to slice a triangular nose shape in between the eye holes. To finalize the skull, make some more triangular cuts at the stem to create the shape of scary-sharp teeth. Toss the mushrooms into the slow cooker and top with butter for the last two hours of cooking.

Once the eight hours are up, use tongs to fish out your cooked chuck roast which will likely come out in loose pieces as it will be so tremendously tender from simmering all day. Take two forks and spend a minute or so pulling apart the roast. Add the pulled beef back into the crock pot and mix well before serving! You can also add salt to taste, but the au jus gravy packet contains enough sodium in my opinion.

You can use the last 30 minutes of cooking for your pot roast to whip up some delicious homemade honey cornbread muffins. I like to add some extra spookiness by cooking mine in skull-shaped cupcake molds.

To start your cornbread, preheat the oven to 350°F. Melt your stick of butter in the microwave or on the stovetop, making sure the butter has time to cool. Combine all of your dry ingredients in a bowl and mix well. In a separate bowl, add your eggs and whisk away until they are well-beaten. Add in your milk and honey and whisk until all of the liquids are well-incorporated. Finally, combine your wet ingredients, dry ingredients and the cooled, melted butter and give the batter one final whisk. This is also the time that you can add in your chopped jalapenos if you so desire. Be careful not to over-mix your batter, allowing for a few small lumps of cornmeal here and there.

Pour your cornbread batter into a greased muffin tin and bake for 18-23 minutes, depending on the size of the muffins. Once the cornbread muffins are done baking, allow them to cool for five minutes before removing them from the tin and topping with some additional butter and drizzled honey.

Everything is finally ready! This recipe does not take a tremendous amount of effort, but the results are amazing! The pot roast is so tender, fatty and melt-in-your-mouth delicious, while the cornbread is so sweet, buttery and wholesome! The skull-shaped mushrooms add a bit of whimsy and a touch of welcomed spookiness to any Halloween party, but this dish is also a great one to have cooking on Game Day or just as a special treat when the kids come home from school. Like any perfect fall food, it sticks to your ribs and is just scary-good!



**Beaten eggs add structure and moisture to baked goods, including cornbread!**



**Adding sliced or diced jalapenos into your cornbread batter is an easy way to spice things up and is a great addition to the sweet honey cornbread muffins.**



**You can find some wicked-cool cake pan molds on the internet. I like these skull-shaped molds which make for excellent cornbread muffins. They will take a few minutes longer to cook than a standard muffin size.**



**It's always important to mix your dry ingredients and wet ingredients in a separate bowl before adding them together to create your batter.**



Slow-cooking the chuck roast makes the meat juicy and tender, meaning it practically falls apart as you remove it from the crock pot. Believe it or not, this is the roast before being shredded at left.

At right, shredded chuck roast has been slow cooked to perfection!



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# ‘A little help goes a long way’

By Brian Carlton

The goal is to offer help, providing for the needs of students in Prince Edward County. That’s exactly what PE’s Kids has done over the last four years. Since the Spring of 2020, the group has found ways to keep kids in Prince Edward County warm, give them supplies as needed and help with other things like soccer cleats, camp fees and music lessons.

The program was designed by its founder, George Bagby, as a smaller version of an operation out of Mount Vernon called Alice’s Kids. The brother and sister who formed Alice’s Kids, Ron Fitzsimmons and Laura Fitzsimmons Peters, grew up in a one-parent household without much money. They knew about the struggles when a house has no heat and there’s no food, because there’s not enough money coming in. The siblings also say on the Alice’s Kids website

they understood what it meant to be ashamed of wearing the same worn-out clothes to school for a full week, just because they didn’t have anything else in the closet. They also understood that some students skip school not because they don’t want to go, but because they don’t have money for basic hygiene supplies like deodorant.

Bagby, a retired Hampden-Sydney professor, set up PE’s Kids to mirror that mission. He organized and recruited a seven-member board of directors, brought in volunteers and got to work. Now, four years later, the group is still providing support for students around Farmville and the larger community.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

In an interview with *The Farmville Herald*, Bagby explained how the operation works.

“We have a group of people, two at each of the three public schools, who are called spotters, and

when a teacher sees a kid who needs something, when they know of somebody who needs help with something that is small and a one-time need, then they can get in touch with one of those spotters who will get in touch with us,” he said.

These small, one-time needs could include payment for soccer cleats, camp fees, music lessons, field trips, prom tickets, clothes and other items. Children raising money for something — such as a band trip — can get a donation, but only after raising a portion of the money first, according to PE’s Kids guidelines. The organization will not pay for items such as food, medical care or group supplies.

The other key part of the rules is that board members do not meet or know the identity of the children being helped. The way this works is that parents of the child being helped each time don’t receive a check. Instead, a check will be



A look at some of the coats and other supplies collected by PE’s Kids for Prince Edward students.

written to the appropriate store or a gift card will be sent to the spotter. But the parent will be allowed to do the shopping for the item.

“So the parent has the pleasure of taking the kid to the store to buy something,” Bagby said in the interview with *The Farmville Herald*.

And they have made a difference in the lives of students. In the 2023-24 school year, the group helped 80 students pay for clothes, hygiene items, shoes, class fees and field trip funds. That totaled up to \$3,064.10 provided by PE’s Kids to the community.

**STEP BY STEP**

While the donations started in the Spring of 2020, the group itself is about seven years old.

“It took us several years to really come up with the funds to feel like we were able to help, to say yes, we can meet the needs,” said Debbie Sayer. She serves as Chairman for the group’s board of directors. “And the community has certainly supported us well.”

Sayer also wants to make it clear that this isn’t just a project that runs during the regular school year. They’re active in the summer and winter months as well, during summer school and the various breaks.

“We are a 12-month organization,” Sayer said. “We want to meet the needs as they come up.”

Right now, for example, with colder weather on the way, the group is holding a hoodie drive. That includes hoodies of all sizes for students from elementary all the way to high school, so they can keep warm in the coming months. Residents can drop off any donations at the Farmville United Methodist Church, at Passion Community Church-Farmville, at Benchmark Community Bank and Citizens Bank & Trust.

You may also have seen group members at Prince Edward High on Friday nights this fall, at the tailgate before football games. Group members have given away items to students and talked with parents and other community members about what PE’s Kids is.

**HOW TO HELP**

Now if you want to get in touch with PE’s Kids, to either volunteer time, organize a fundraiser or provide some physical donations, you can do that a couple ways. First, you can shoot off an email to PrinceEdwardKids@gmail.com. Second, you can send material through the mail, to P.O. Box 524, Farmville, Virginia 23901.

As for the mission itself, PE’S Kids officials say they’re going to be here for the long haul. The best way to sum it up is to go back to that earlier interview with Bagby.

“All we’re trying to do is help and we’ll be here as long as there is a need,” Bagby said.



**PE’s Kids board members gather after a fundraiser, held earlier this year at Macados.**



**This is a look at a PE’s Kids fundraiser held earlier this year at the Farmville Bojangles. Pictured are, from left, PE’s Kids board members Barbara Arieti, Lonnie Calhoun, Jamie Ruff and Judy Call.**

From the Ground Up |

# *Pansies* for Fall Color

Pansies with blue flowers are popular choices for underplanting tulips.



### Story and photos by Dr. Cynthia Wood

Plant pansies in the fall? Definitely. They're cool weather plants capable of withstanding a bit of frost. They grow low to the ground and have blooms that look like cheerful faces.

There are pansies with large flowers, as well as varieties with smaller blooms. They are available with multicolored blooms in a myriad of color combinations and also with single-colored flowers. Those with smaller blooms and those with yellow, blue, and white blooms tend to be more cold hardy than other cultivars.

Summer heat tends to linger into early fall here in our area, so it's best to wait to plant pansies until daytime temperatures have cooled a bit, usually late September on through October when the soil temperature is 45 to 65 F. Plant pansies in areas with full to partial sun, preferably with morning sun and some afternoon shade. To prevent rot, they need well-drained soil. Space plants about 6 inches apart to allow room for spreading and the circulation of air between plants. Be sure to plant them at the same depth that they were in their nursery pots.

Water well after planting and as needed once the plants are established. The lack of adequate moisture is one of the main reasons pansies fail to thrive. To encourage the ongoing production of blooms, sure to deadhead spent blooms.

Pansies grow well in containers and at the front of mixed borders. Try using combinations of ornamental kale or rainbow Swiss chard with pansies in pots for late fall color. They are perfect for planting at the front of mixed perennial borders and for planting over spring-flowering bulbs, such as tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils. Simply plant the bulbs as usual and then plant pansies, which are shallow rooted, over them. In spring the bulbs will sprout through the pansies and bloom 12 to 18 inches above them, providing color and textural interest on two levels.

Although pansies are tough, they can be subject to a few problems. As they grow, they can become leggy, especially if they're not receiving enough sun. Just pinch the plants back a bit. They can also develop brown, crispy leaves, which usually means they're getting too much direct sunlight. Yellowing of leaves at the bottom of the plant indicates that the plant is getting too much water. As temperatures drop, the leaves on pansies often turn deep purplish green because the plants can't absorb enough phosphorus during cold weather. The purplish color will disappear when the temperatures rise.

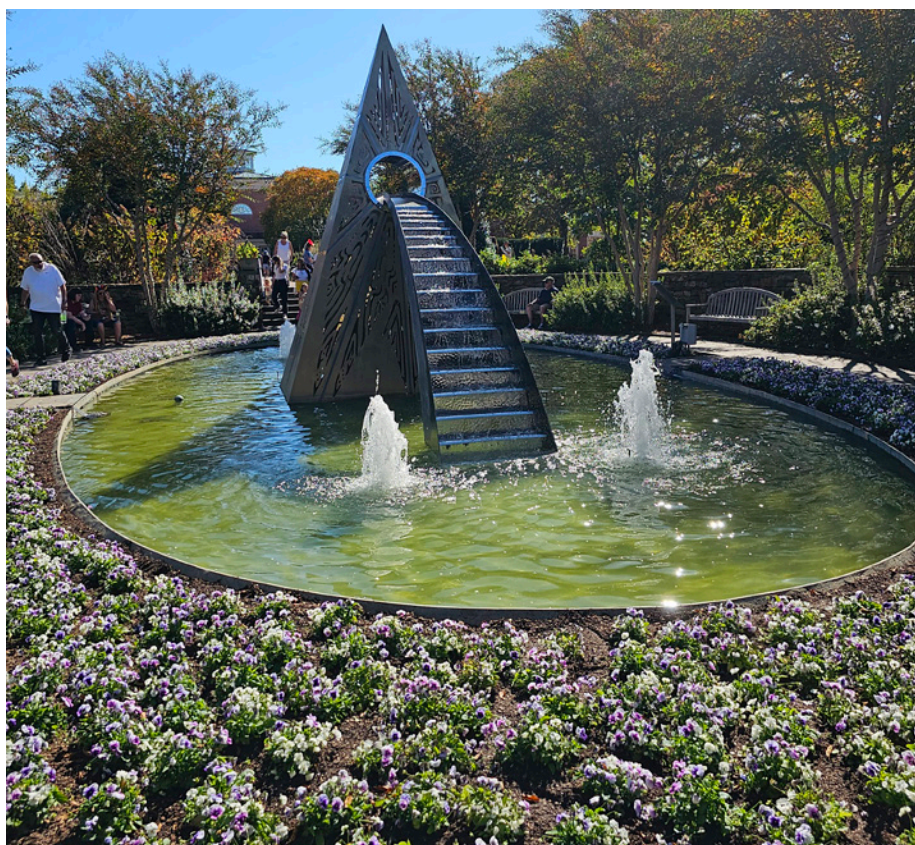
Pansies are an easy way to add bold pops of color to the fall garden. If the winter is mild, they will last into spring and provide much needed early season color. Pansies. The Victorians loved them, and they are still one of our most popular annuals.



**Pansies and violas, their smaller cousins, are always popular choices for planters in downtown Farmville.**



There are many vibrant, new color combinations for pansy flowers.



Mass plantings of pansies make a very dramatic show in early spring.



Paintings of pansies were popular subjects for greeting cards because they meant "Thinking of you."

# *A new beginning for Madeline's House*

**By Brian Carlton**

The doors have opened once again. For the first time since November 2022, Madeline's House is a place where domestic violence survivors can find shelter. That longtime goal became a reality this past month for the new owners and operators of the facility, as the nonprofit STEPS has taken over, handled some major renovations for the facility and expanded upon its mission, to better help the community.

And when we say community, we mean a wide area, as the shelter welcomes in people from Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward counties. STEPS President/CEO Sharon Harrup says while the physical building is important, it's one part of a much larger program.

That's part of why it's taken so long to reopen. In addition to physical renovations and finding the funds to operate, STEPS is building a long-term program, one focused on both intervention and prevention.

"It's not just (about) operating a domestic violence shelter," Harrup said. "That's one piece of running a sexual assault, domestic violence program. The other pieces are going to court, the case management of helping the victims through that legal process. It is therapy sessions, it is setting up trauma informed care for the victims and their children."

## **BUILDING A FOUNDATION**

But all of that starts with a building. Before a program can be assembled, it needs a place to operate. And while STEPS took over from the previous operation, they didn't get anything for free. A donation of more than half a million dollars from Ellery and Robin Sedgwick helped STEPS buy the building, but in the beginning, it was very much a shell.

"When we bought the building, I thought the shelter would still have furniture in it," Harrup said. "But it had not a stick of furniture. All the appliances had been removed, the house generator had been







removed, even the privacy fence around the property had been cut down. When I say there was nothing there, it was empty.”

That’s where Farmville and the greater community, came out in support. And that support took many forms. Some of it involved offers to volunteer, while others were willing to provide services free of charge. There were financial gifts as well. One of the biggest came from the Sedgwick family, which helped STEPS purchase the shelter. Because it had been a shelter previously, things could move a lot quicker. The permits had already been obtained, the rooms had already been divided off. But they needed renovations and repairs.

“We didn’t have to build rooms, (but) we had to do a lot of repairs,” Harrup said. “The entire building’s electrical system got reworked, and the entire heating and cooling system was replaced or repaired.”

Plumbers, carpenters, electricians and others in the area volunteered their time, to get the ‘bones’ of the structure back up and running. STEPS also installed an “adopt a room” program. Civic clubs, churches, businesses or individuals could sign up and either furnish and decorate a room themselves or give STEPS the money necessary to do the job. As of this past week, every room in the facility has been adopted and finished. That includes eight bedrooms, five bathrooms, a living room, family room, kitchen, den area, a play area for teens and a library.

#### THE FINAL PIECES FALL INTO PLACE

So the building had been purchased, the rooms had been renovated. But the shelter still wasn’t open. That was because there wasn’t enough money on hand to hire a staff or cover the cost of operations.

“We had applied for a Congressional directed spending package, thinking that would give us the funding we needed to get the doors open,” Harrup said. But things with the federal government take time and so that delayed the opening.

Then one day this summer, Harrup got a call asking why Madeline’s House was still closed. It was from Dr. Mark French, the longtime Farmville veterinarian. French, along with his family agreed to give a joint \$250,000 donation

“Between the Sedgwicks and the French family, that’s over three quarters of a million dollars,” Harrup said. “We couldn’t thank them enough.”

That, combined with financial support from the governments of Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward counties, helped get them over the finish line.

With that, the group hired Linda Ellis-Williams, who had been Director of Victims Services for the YWCA, a domestic violence and sexual assault shelter in Lynchburg.

Those federal dollars have also come through. This year’s federal budget includes more than \$111 million for community projects throughout Virginia, of which Madeline’s House will receive \$949,000. That money comes with a bit

of a clock, as the group has four years to spend it.

“It really does give us time to develop the program, to hire the staff that Linda needs and by the end of that three to four year period, we will be going back to local donors, building up a capital campaign on an annual basis and doing some of that donor development work,” Harrup said.

#### HOW CAN MADELINE’S HOUSE HELP?

The biggest question now, with the doors open, is how can Madeline’s House help? The first step is through a 24/7 domestic violence/sexual assault hotline, which can be found by calling 1-866-297-1564. If the callers need a place to go, the trained staffers will help them be able to arrive at the shelter.

And Ellis-Williams said this is just the first part of the program. The next step involves helping women and families after they leave Madeline’s House, as well as speaking with teens and college students, so they understand what positive relationships are.

“Right now our goal is to provide intervention services, but within the next year, we’ll ramp up our prevention services,” Ellis-Williams said.

And for anyone who wants to donate supplies, clothes or other items for Madeline’s House, there’s a way to do that too. You can call the non-emergency number at the House, which is 434-394-0171, and speak to staff. If you have some donations they need, the group can schedule a time for you to drop that off.

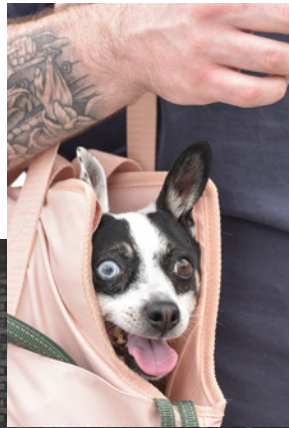
# PARTY *Pix*

## HEART OF VIRGINIA FESTIVAL

Perfect fall weather welcomed thousands of visitors to this year's Heart of Virginia Festival on Saturday, Sept. 14. Smiles were everywhere as visitors, young and old, enjoyed the festivities.

PHOTOS BY BETTY J. RAMSEY AND JOHN KARRATTI





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