

'Gifts From Angels' Game Drive Helps Spread Love and Spirit

All children are precious gifts. Watching a child run and play, smile and laugh or even quietly sleep are among life's simple pleasures. This is even more special, even truer when your child is sick with a life threatening illness. Life is precious, and the threat of losing a life, I believe, makes you so much more aware of each minute of each passing day. You learn in the most difficult of times to be thankful for every breath, every new beginning, every millisecond of time you have. And, you hope and pray for healing, for miracles, for a long and happy life for your child, free from disease and sickness.

When your child grows up and begins venturing out on their own, you often worry about their safety. I believe that when a child receives a driver's license it brings growing up into a new perspective. You send your children out on their own journeys every day, while they drive their automobiles and become more and more independent. When they are venturing from home you pray for their safekeeping. No matter the age you never stop praying for a child's safety and wellbeing.

On April 6, 2012, 23-year-old Jami Pless was killed in an automobile accident here in Wadesboro. Jami worked locally at Salon 52 with owner Kim Pugh. Before she died, Jami's boyfriend Jake Thomas, who teaches and coaches at our local high school, began introducing her to Anson County. Jami made many friends and loved it here.

A friend of Jami and her family has a young child whose name is Angel. Sadly nine-year-old Angel has been battling pediatric brain cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy. But, as you very often hear, patients are the ones who see what hospitals truly look like, what the effects hospital stays have on children who are admitted.

Angel noticed many children who had no visitors and nothing fun to do. So it became her mission to begin a children's game drive and to reach out to area communities in hopes of collecting games to give to sick children. "Gifts From Angels" is a program founded by Angel and her parents. Last year Angel worked very hard, as well as her family and friends to collect and distribute the games. Some were even distributed to Anson Community Hospital's emergency room, since there is no local children's ward.

With the drive underway and the untimely death of Angel's family friend Jamie, the game drive became even more meaningful. "Angel has had a very rough year and has not been able to be as active as she wished," said Paula Fox, Jami's mother. "So we would like to honor Jami's memory by helping Angel do what she started out to do. The game drive will continue through September and October and end on November 2, which would have been Jami's 25th birthday. This is something Jami would want us to do, and we are working hard to help Angel accomplish what she started."

Drop off sites for the drive are plentiful, so if you would like to donate a children's game or two, you can do so at Salon 52 located on Highway 74 in Wadesboro, all fire stations in Albemarle, Cabarrus County EMS and Stanly County EMS-Red Cross.

This drive is not only about Angel and Jamie, but so many others as well. Illness and tragic accidents can happen to anyone at anytime. "The loss of Jami has been unimaginable," said Jami's mom. "One way we have dealt with that loss is to try and make a difference in the lives of others. Sometimes we do not understand how fragile the gift of life is until it is taken away in a split second. Losing my child has taken a part of me that I will never recover. But, it also makes me responsible for carrying on her loving spirit for as long as I live." And so Gifts From Angels is important for many, many reasons.

In speaking with Kim Pugh she shared, "Jamie loved people, loved life and loved her family. Through her work at my salon, her work with Becky Tyson and her relationship with Jake, she made many friends in Anson County. She often went out of her way to help others. She shared her smile every day. She was fun loving and was especially close to her sister Alex. I know she would be proud of the efforts going on in her memory."

Gifts From Angels can help to spread the love of a very sick child, which is where this all began two years ago. Gifts From Angels can also share the spirit of a young lady whose life was cut short in the wake of a car accident. These two lives can help reach many others through their caring, giving natures. Both who would love it, appreciate it and be excited by the gifts received in their honor by YOU.

Share in the love and give generously to this game drive. There are so many children who need you. There are Angels in Heaven steering you in the direction of this path. There is an Angel here on earth who would love nothing more than to help other children have some fun. Let's do this for all the Angels, earthly and heavenly.

By Melanie Lyon



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Getting to the CORE of English Instruction

This summer a team of English teachers from Anson County Early College was selected to present a session on the new Common Core State Standards at the New Schools Summer Institute. The session provided a brief overview of the new standards and investigated the connections between good instructional practices, the new curriculum, and the classroom.

The presenting teachers were Bonnie McMurray, Jane Elkin and Sarah White. Each shared classroom activities including centers, multimedia projects, creative ways to research, textual analysis and other methods to address the new Common Core State Standards.

Overall, the feedback received was very positive. One participant said, "I really appreciated the resources we were able to take back to the classroom." Mrs. McMurray, one of the presenters, said, "The goal of our session was to share activities we have created in an effort to meet the new rigorous standards so that other teachers and students can benefit from our hard work. We also want teachers to know that addressing the new standards can lead to exciting new activities, materials, and projects."

Spotlight on Anson Cooperative Extension Agents



Each week The Express will share some of the many accomplishments of our local Agricultural Extension agents. Their dedication to and work for Anson citizens benefits all of us either directly or indirectly. This week's spotlight is on Community Rural Development - Janine Rywak, County Extension Director.

From Janine Rywak: Anson County Cooperative Extension serves as administrator for the county's Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts Program. Overseeing the county's ordinance, Cooperative Extension works with the 12-member appointed Anson Agricultural Advisory Board to enroll land, educate the public about farmland preservation, and advocate the importance of maintaining the county's agricultural areas.

In its third year, the program has enrolled over 10,000 acres, representing 127 tracts on 46 farms. This year the board recommended and the County Commissioners approved amending the county ordinance, bringing it in line with new state statutes, to remove the requirement that land be enrolled in present-use value to qualify. This, in addition to Memorandums of Understanding with all seven municipalities in the county, allows the board greater flexibility in enrolling agricultural lands in the program.

For more information contact the Anson County Center at 704-694-2415 or send mail to PO Box 633, Wadesboro NC 28170. They are located at 501 McLaurin Street.

Grandson of Ansonians Graduates from Law School



On May 10 Quendale Simmons from Ypsilanti, Michigan graduated from the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law in Columbus, Ohio with a Juris Doctor degree.

Quendale began his law school journey after graduating with high distinction from the University of Michigan in May 2010 with a Bachelor's Degree in political science.

Quendale is the son of Bernard and Evelyn Michelle (Kersey) Simmons. He is also the grandson of Mary Lee Kersey and the late Thomas Willie (Bill) Kersey of Wadesboro. His paternal grandparents are George and Terra Mae Simmons of Ypsilanti.

Quendale is employed by the Washtenaw County Court House in Ann Arbor, Michigan in the Civil Litigations Department. He is currently studying for the Michigan Bar Exam, and upon passage he would like to practice civil litigation.

Quendale attributes his accomplishment to hard work, dedication and God's grace. Growing up in the small town of Ypsilanti, Quendale's success epitomizes the old saying that anything in life is possible if you set your mind to it. Quendale encourages all young people to chase their dreams and to keep in mind that anyone can make a difference in this world. Granted, not many things in life are easy, but no matter how tough the task may seem, if you dig down deep and remain steadfast, hard work will eventually pay off.

Veterans Day Parade is Scheduled for Monday, November 11

Anson County Veterans Services Director Ted Ward has announced that the 2013 Veterans Day Parade in uptown Wadesboro will be held at 10 a.m. on Monday, November 11, which is Veterans Day. The parade will follow the same route as last year.

Ward said, "We expect this year's celebration and parade to have the largest participation ever!"

Parade entry forms can be picked up at the Chamber of Commerce, H.W. Little & Company and the Veteran Services office now. For more information contact Ted Ward at ward@co.anson.nc.us or (704) 694-4418.



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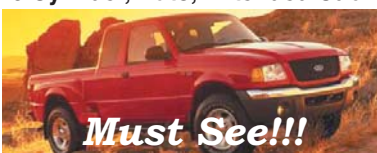
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