

**Increasing the Ranks of Women in Public Safety**

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# South HUNTSVILLE NEIGHBORS



Pictured L-R: Sgt. Rosalind White - Public Information Officer Huntsville Police Department; Lt. Tesla Hughes - Director of Training Huntsville Police Department; Officer Alexicia Pennington - South Precinct

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**Feb. 17-20, 2022**  
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**@Lee High School Main Stage Theater**  
IMP Huntsville is performing Jonathan Larson's RENT, recommended for mature audiences. For more information please see Independent Musical Productions article in this month's issue. To purchase tickets please visit: [www.imphuntsville.org/2021season.shtml](http://www.imphuntsville.org/2021season.shtml)

**Feb. 18-20, 2022**  
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Content Due: .....	Edition Date:
January 8 .....	February
February 8 .....	March
March 8 .....	April
April 8 .....	May
May 6 .....	June
June 8 .....	July
July 8 .....	August
August 6 .....	September
September 8 .....	October
October 8 .....	November
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# HAPPY *February*,

We hope that everyone is well. This month's issue revolves around the Huntsville Police Department's Women Who Serve and Protect. We want to thank Mayor Battle, Kelly Schrimsher, Huntsville's Director of Communications, Chief Mark McMurray, City Council Representatives Dr. Jennie Robinson, Frances Akridge and Sgt Rosalind White Huntsville's Police Information Officer (she is also featured) for their help in putting this feature together.



PHOTO BY MANDI COOK PHOTOGRAPHY

We have received many calls and emails about the January issue. The gist of them is "Who Did The Makeup" We neglected to credit Karen Heller from Ars Nova for the amazing work that she did with the performers. This project took hours to complete and as you can see Karen is an incredible makeup artist. You can reach her at [info@arsnovahsv.com](mailto:info@arsnovahsv.com).

We want to welcome DogWatch of North Alabama. They are locally owned and operated and they have a myriad of products to help you keep your pet safe. Please check their article out in this issue.

We would also like to welcome Physicians Hearing Center. They will be contributing their first article in our March issue.

RockBox joined *South Huntsville Neighbors* last month, and their article is in this month's issue tells you how their program will help you to Crush Your Fitness Goals!

As always, we ask that you please visit and call our sponsors. They are small businesses that depend on you.

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*See you next month,  
Suzanne and Bob*



FEBRUARY 21, 2022



## Increasing the Ranks of Women in Public Safety By Mayor Tommy Battle

The City of Huntsville has been proactively working to expand opportunities for women in public safety. Historically, women have comprised a majority of the civilian support staff positions for police and fire, but few were sworn in as officers or certified firefighters. That is changing for the better.

A more equitable public safety team should include the presence of more women in the field. In the Huntsville Police and Fire Departments, our leadership teams have worked to recruit more women into their ranks. We recognize the benefits are numerous. Women



are consistently rated as trusted by their communities and have high levels of interpersonal communication skills. Studies show female officers are adept at diffusing tense situations and bring a sense of stability to their male counterparts.

While physical strength and technical skills to confront fires are essential to Fire & Rescue jobs, two-thirds of their calls request medical assistance. The high proportion of medical calls that modern firefighters receive requires an additional set of skills including the ability to display warmth, patience and empathy for victims. These are skills women traditionally bring to the job.

By recognizing the value women bring to police and fire, more women are stepping up to serve and protect. In the most recent police academy, the top graduate is a woman. In Fire & Rescue, where women rarely applied to serve as a firefighter, we now have six highly capable women serving in the field.

Women continue to make up the majority of dispatchers and staffers for Huntsville Police and Fire and Rescue. They are also a positive influence on job performance and their capable work enables officers and firefighters to do their jobs. We look forward to seeing more and more women join our public safety teams.

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# Women Warders

By Frances Akridge, City Council Representative District 2

Protector, Guardian, Warder. When I watch a movie like "The Black Panther" or "Wonder Woman," I'm inspired by the women who protect others. I think of my job as a Council representative as also being these things for my neighbors in my own way, wielding no weapon, wearing no badge, but sworn nonetheless to uphold the Constitution and look out for my neighbors as a legislative representative and a voice vis a vis the Administration. I come by this protective spirit honestly; in the last decade, when my sister was terminally ill, I was her personal samurai, sleeping on the floor or curled up in a chair next to her. To be sure nothing happened to her while in a rehabilitation center and doing my part to ensure her comfort. Also, at an even younger age, as I recall, and we all have selective memories, anybody who dared to pick on my brothers when we were walking home from school had to go through me; I could double-dog dare anyone to try. (I learned later that my helping hurt).

As a Council representative, I accept the responsibility to stand guard over use of our money for wise investments and do my best to anticipate future threats to our security, be it financial, physical, and spiritual well being as a community. Fortunately, there are professional women who stand guard at the financial and constructed "gates" of the city, namely Penny Smith, our CFO and Kathy Martin, our City Engineer. There are also professional women serving as first responders who are trained to anticipate threats to our spiritual and physical well being. They are the women who are made of the right stuff, heroines wearing a badge, sworn to uphold the Constitution and protect and serve the common good. Sergeant Yuliya Zaremba is a remarkable woman who comes to mind; she serves in the Special Investigation Division with the responsibility of leading a team to find the perpetrators of domestic violence which includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and destruction of property and/or pets.

I met Sergeant Zaremba during a community event hosted by Crises Services of North Alabama (256-716-1000). The gathering was designed to encourage everyone to stand up to domestic violence by learning about the signs and finding the courage to call for help. Sergeant Zaremba was proudly described by Deputy Chief Charles Brooks as "one of our best." She approached the microphone with the quiet assurance of a woman who knows the depth of her gentle but firm words and the critical nature of her work. She spoke to women in the audience with assurance that together, they would recover and then thrive. I invite you to get to know more of the women of HPD within the pages of South Huntsville Neighbors and through the meetings of the Huntsville Citizens Advisory Council. For more information about women as guardians, simply call me 256-427-5017 please.



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**Breaking the Brass Ceiling** By Jennie Robinson, City Council President and Representative District 3

Female police officers have come a long way since the mid-19th century when women in law enforcement were limited to caring for female inmates and did not have the authority to make arrests. The honor of becoming the first policewoman goes to Alice Stebbins Wells of Los Angeles who was given the authority to arrest suspects and was responsible for the supervision of dance halls, skating rinks, penny arcades and theaters. In 1915, the National Association of Policewomen was organized with Wells as the first president.

The 1970s marked the era when women were increasingly accepted as police **officers**, not just police **women**. Eventually, female officers achieved greater equality winning notable discrimination lawsuits and the right to patrol their own beats. They called it “breaking the brass ceiling.”

While women have made significant strides in law enforcement, they are still dramatically underrepresented in American law enforcement. Women make up more than half of the U.S. population, yet fewer than 10-12% of law enforcement officers are female. In Huntsville, almost 10% of Huntsville Police Department (HPD) officers are female and 6% of supervisory officers are women. According to HPD Chief Mark McMurray, “Our #1 demographic recruiting challenge is minority females. Our #2 challenge is recruiting females of any race.”



We need female police officers. According to *Police Chief* magazine, “female officers are less likely to use excessive force or be named in a lawsuit than male officers... even though studies show that subjects use the same amount of force against female officers as against male officers, and in some cases, more force, female officers are more successful in defusing violent or aggressive behavior.”

The article goes on to say, “Women are consistently rated as trusted by their communities and, importantly, are motivated to serve communities in an era of decreased police legitimacy. Women have high levels of interpersonal communication skills, which translate into more effective practices in the field. Female police officers have a positive influence on the perceived job performance, trustworthiness, and fairness of a police agency, perhaps increasing the public’s willingness to cooperate in the production of positive public safety outcomes.” [www.policechiefmagazine.org/women-in-policing](http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/women-in-policing)

Higher levels of female representation are associated with the kind of community policing that is a priority for HPD. Huntsville actively recruits women to join the ranks of its officers and is working hard to promote them to leadership positions. This issue of *South Huntsville Neighbors* highlights a few of the exceptional women who serve and protect our citizens. We are grateful for their service and hope other women will see their example and follow them to serve as officers.

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## Women Play an Integral Role at Huntsville Police Department

By Mark McMurray, Huntsville Chief of Police

For more than a century, women have played an integral role in police departments. Whether on the street fighting crime or gathering vital information as call-takers and dispatchers, records or inventory, ITS and information management, crime analysts, crime scene technicians, women are assets to the law enforcement community.

Though often thought of as “men’s work,” many might not realize female officers represent nearly 13% of sworn police officers nationally. And while that number might seem low to some, it does represent a modest growth. From 1987 to 2007, the percentage of female officers in local police departments rose from 7.6% in 1987 to nearly 12% in 2007.

In case you didn’t know, the first female officer is believed to have been Marie Owens, who joined the Chicago Police Department in 1891. Other early pioneers include Lola Baldwin, sworn in by Portland, Oregon, in 1908; Fanny Bixby, sworn into office in 1908 by Long Beach, California; and Alice Stebbins Wells, who became an officer for the Los Angeles Police Department in 1910.

The Huntsville Police Department believes a diverse department is one that is also effective, creative and resilient. According to a recent report by USA Today, women are less likely to use force, are named in fewer complaints and get better outcomes for some victims.

Huntsville Police has 43 women who serve as officers, and 6% serve as supervisors. Because they have high levels of interpersonal skills, they are valuable community partners.

HPD recruits from diverse backgrounds and fields, and because needs vary, recruits don’t always come from criminal justice programs. The department’s recent academy class includes a female officer who has a doctorate in microbiology. Public Information Officer Sgt. Rosalind White is a licensed attorney.

Director of Training Lt. Tesla Hughes ensures recruits have the knowledge and skills to become competent and professional police officers. She also oversees continual training of all officers. Sgt. Yuliya Zaremba supervises the Special Victims Unit.

Make no mistake – women are just as critical to a police department as men, and they prove it day in and day out with their dedication and resilience.

Winston Churchill once said, “Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.” This quote embodies female police officers because they are courageous in their actions as well as observant and measured.

These attributes not only make women exceptional police officers, but invaluable members of any force. We are fortunate to have them among our ranks.



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- D SLAUGHTER

# Independent Musical Productions to Perform **RENT** By Amy Warren, Publicist IMPHuntsville

Amy.Warren@IMPHuntsville.org

Independent Musical Production is thrilled to provide North Alabama with another season of spectacular shows! *RENT* will be our first production later this month, with *Pippin* following in July and *Nunsense!* in September. The Cabaret series is scheduled to resume in March.

Loosely based on Puccini's opera *La Boheme*, Jonathan Larson's *RENT* takes place in the trendy Alphabet City neighborhood located in Lower Manhattan's East Village. The story follows a group of young bohemian artists over the period of one year, as they discover how to measure the value of a life, as depicted in the popular song 'Seasons of Love' *RENT* follows the cast through relationships, political activism and living life to the fullest as they struggle to survive and create in the shadow of HIV/AIDS. The physical and emotional complications of the disease pervade the lives of Roger (Sean Krueer), Mimi (Catherine Najjar), Tom (Granville Oldham) and Angel (McKinley Harris). Maureen (Claire Johnson) deals with her chronic infidelity through performance art; her partner, Joanne (Erica Hanson), wonders if their relationship is worth the trouble. Benny (DeCorian Cobb) has sold out his Bohemian ideals in exchange for a

hefty income and is on the outs with his former friends. Mark (Ryan Rorick), an aspiring filmmaker, feels like an outsider to life in general. The narrative thread to this groundbreaking musical incorporates several themes, such as fear of dying, solitude, sexual orientation and gender identity. With its unapologetic portrayals of issues such as poverty, drug addiction and alternative sexualities, *RENT* has played a crucial role in opening doors for inclusion and diversity in pop culture. Though technology has evolved tremendously since the musical's inception in 1996, the social and political themes are still important and relevant today.

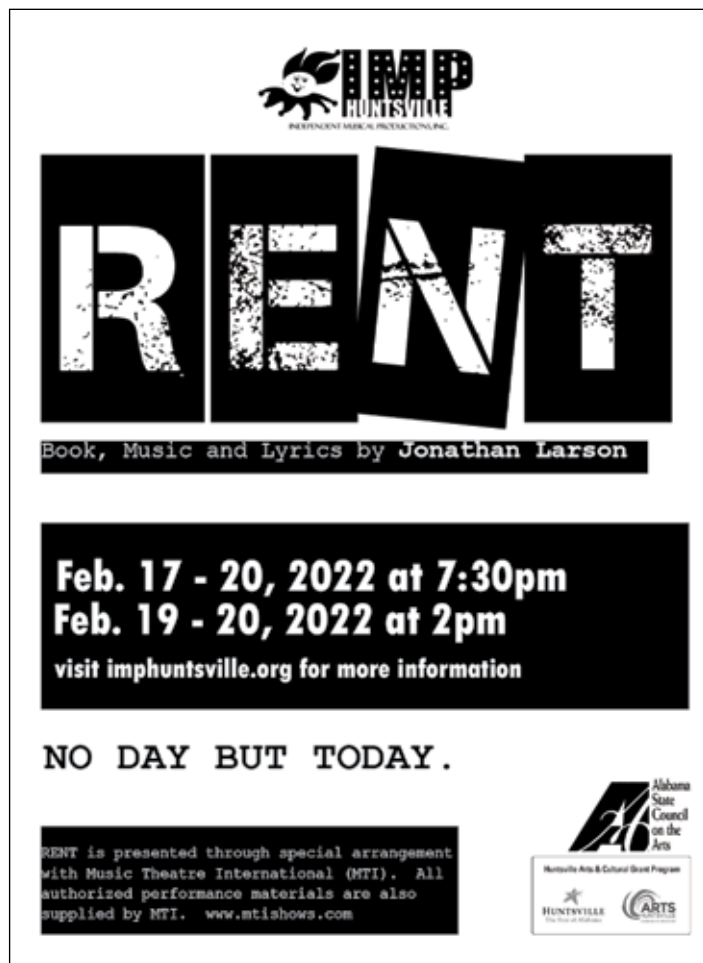
In 1996, *RENT* was nominated for numerous Tony awards, and Jonathan Larson won Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical and Best Musical Score. *RENT* also won several Drama Desk awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Jonathan Larson was unable to celebrate his achievements, however, due to his untimely death on January 25, 1996. He suffered an aneurysm on the day *RENT* was scheduled for its first Off-Broadway preview. Larson was 36 years old.

The production team for Independent Musical Productions' performance of *RENT* includes Director Vivienne Atkins, Assistant Director P.J. Slighting and Music Director Newt Johnson. Music, lyrics and book by Jonathan Larson.

Performances will be held at the Lee High School Main Stage Theater at 2500 Meridian St North:

- Thursday, February 17 @ 7:30pm
- Friday, February 18 @ 7:30pm
- Saturday, February 19 @ 2:00pm and 7:30pm
- Sunday, February 20 @ 2:00pm and 7:30pm

To purchase tickets or for further information please visit [www.imphuntsville.org](http://www.imphuntsville.org) or call 256-415-SHOW.



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## Seeing the Magic Through Their Eyes at FPCTA

By Kailey Burkhardt, Fantasy Playhouse and Children's Theater Academy

The excited buzz of hundreds of third and fourth grade voices echoes across the cafeteria. Students sit anxiously awaiting the first actor to emerge from behind the black curtain on stage. They know they are here to see a play, but have no idea what to expect. *Poarch Creek Courage*, their teacher said it was called. Right now, that name doesn't mean much. In an hour, it will take on an entirely new meaning.

These students are about to embark on a 40 minute journey that teaches the history of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' fight to become a federally recognized tribe. They will watch five actors work together to bring dozens of different characters to life while learning about the long term impact that unresolved social injustices can have on an entire Nation, Alabama's own Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Through the power of performance, history will be brought to life in front of their very eyes.

Fantasy Playhouse Children's Theater & Academy (FPCTA) is dedicated to providing access to theatre arts performances and learning opportunities to children across our region. Studies show that students who have access to theatre arts education are likely to be more confident, independent, goal oriented, and succeed academically. Whether it's participating as an audience member, student technician, or actor, involvement in the arts provides students the chance to learn "Life Skills Through Stage Skills." These include: self confidence, public speaking, collaboration, active listening, teamwork, and empathy.

After being sidelined for two years due to the pandemic, FPCTA is relaunching its In School Touring Show program in Spring 2022. In addition to *Poarch Creek Courage*, FPCTA also offers *Freedom Riders*, teaching the history around the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, and *Nick Nutrition and His Wonder Dog Fiber*, teaching the importance of healthy eating and living. Each show encourages young audiences to be open minded to the world in which we live while we continue to grow, change, and learn from our mistakes.

In addition to bringing live theatre directly to the schools, FPCTA will offer public and student matinee performances of *Alice in Wonderland* at the VBC Playhouse, Feb. 18-20. One goal of this production is to be accessible to deaf and hearing impaired audiences by ensuring that each character in the play will be shadowed by an American Sign Language interpreter. Director Jacinda Swinehart states, "This is an exciting opportunity for us to share Fantasy's magic with audiences that may be excluded from live theatre that doesn't accommodate for hearing loss. Theatre is a love language and making it inclusive for all audiences and all abilities is an honor."

For more information, please visit our website at [www.fantasyplayhouse.org](http://www.fantasyplayhouse.org).



Elizabeth Swaine  
Photo Credit: Alexandria Swaine



Pictured L-R: Diana Rosario and Kendra Kizer Photo Credit: Christopher Baker



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## Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville: Meet Lamont Wright, Sales Consultant

By Bob Druckman, Publisher South Huntsville Neighbors

Lamont Wright is one of the newest members of Mercedes-Benz of Huntsville. He is a graduate of J.O. Johnson High School and UAH. He has always been in the customer service world. "I started at 14 working in a barber shop and working with people just comes natural to me," Lamont said. He came to Mercedes through Eddie Williams. As Lamont tells the story, "Mr. Williams and I got to talking and he encouraged me to come in and fill out an application. I did that and went through the interview process and as they say the rest is history." Lamont's familiarity with Mercedes goes back to his grandmother. "She owned one and I remember how great she felt driving it. I want my clients to feel the same way when they drive their Mercedes."

### What does the Mercedes star mean to you?

Elegance, Safety, Luxury and Comfort. The fact that Mercedes is a pioneer in all that I just mentioned has always been important to me and it has always impressed me. Mercedes has always pushed the envelope and the fact that they have come up with so many amazing features over the years really stands out.

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**Tell us about your interaction with a client**

First, I consider myself a resource for what the client is looking for. We always try to pair up the customer regarding their needs and wants. I use what they tell me in a positive and productive way. On the test drive I love to discuss the luxury, safety and practicality of the vehicle.

**What would you like the readers of South Huntsville Neighbors to know about you?**

I love the direction of Mercedes-Benz and I am passionate about what the star represents. I am dedicated to my craft and my goal is to give them the best experience possible when they are looking for their Mercedes-Benz.

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# RV SHOW SEASON:

*Your Best Time to Buy a Camper*



Photo Credit: Mandi Cook Photography

By Kelsi Nuss, Web Director Johnston RV

It's no secret that Covid-19 changed many aspects of life, and one of those for us is the annual RV shows we usually participate in at our local civic centers. Last year, after much deliberation, we held our own shows at our stores and welcomed our communities on-site for two weekends of fantastic show deals on travel trailers, fifth wheels, toy haulers, and motorhomes from the best brands in the industry including Cherokee, Freedom Express, Rockwood, Alta and others. There were giveaways, factory reps and days of enjoying RV shopping in the sunshine.

Now, we've decided to do it again!

If you're looking to purchase a camper this year, you're probably already planning on attending the shows. Here are some tips on how to make the most of the RV show season no matter which show you attend (and why you should come see us).

### 1. Ask the experts.

Like the civic center shows, our brand reps will be on-site to answer your questions. They will share their expertise and help you take the guesswork out of your RV buying experience.

### 2. Shop the full inventory.

Unlike the civic center shows where dealers can only bring a small selection of campers, you can explore hundreds of RVs at our on-site shows, ensuring you find the *one*.

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Friday, February 18th: 9am-6pm  
Saturday, February 19th: 9am-5pm  
Sunday, February 20th: 1-5pm

Johnston RV Center Decatur  
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Decatur, AL 35603  
I-65 Exit 334 Behind Pilot

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#### CULLMAN RV SHOW

Friday, February 25th: 9am-6pm  
Saturday, February 26th: 9am-5pm  
Sunday, February 27th: 1-5pm

Johnston RV Center Cullman  
273 Schwaiger Rd.  
Cullman, AL 35055  
I-65 Exit 304 Good Hope

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## Renew in 2022!

By Marianne Cook Windham, Owner and Travel Advisor,  
Windham Travel & Leisure

There's nothing new about resolutions at the beginning of the year; so let's take a look at what this means where travel is concerned. One of the best ways to commit ourselves to travel is to plan our trips in advance – sometimes far in advance – whether a weekend getaway or a multi-week vacation. Let's all give ourselves an exciting new adventure to look forward to!

Vacation. The root word of vacation is “vacate”. At some point during the course of a year, a quarter, a month, a week . . . we need to vacate, to escape, to remove ourselves, to give ourselves a break. And personally, I don't count the holidays; because December can be the most stressful, jam-packed, craziest time of the year for many. We ALL need time to rejuvenate and renew. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to our loved ones, and to anyone else we are around at work and at home. Get up. Get out. Get away.

You know what? Planning trips with family and friends CAN be exciting and contagious and invigorating! Contact your favorite Travel Advisor (wink wink). Set your destinations and your dates. Start a group. Start a private Facebook page for your group to keep everyone engaged and informed. Research and immerse yourself in the destination(s). Learn about the history, the culture, favorite attractions, sites and highlights. Whether domestic or international, take note of popular dining experiences and the local cuisine you'd like to try. Get inspired by Pinterest pages; then start your own with pics, ideas, travel dreams and inspiration.

Where did Travel take me last year? Well, not as far as I had planned; however I did manage to get away every month of 2021. Adventures included trips to Las Vegas, New York City, Branson, three trips to Georgia, four trips to New Orleans and two weeks in Aruba. I also planned a European Christmas Markets river cruise in December from Vilshofen, Germany to Budapest, Hungary. We had to postpone due to Covid, lockdowns and cancellations; but we have already planned a “do over” for the end of 2022.

My recipe as a traveler: Planning the major logistical components – transportation, accommodations, and a few key “must sees and dos.” After that – and if traveling with others – I'm typically open to all suggestions. I like to leave some wiggle room for unexpected and amazing surprises that may await me. So I guess my personal travel style could be described as: “A foundation of intent, but leaving opportunity for destiny and fate.”

If the past two years have taught us anything, it's that we should expect the unexpected. Throughout, we've reminded ourselves to have fun, to be safe, to be flexible and to be prepared to bend and adapt. This has changed us somewhat. However, it should not detour us from dreaming and creating and planning a wonderful and colorful “bucket list” of exciting adventures we resolve to experience in 2022, 2023, 2024 and beyond. Travel is wonderful, incredible, amazing, exciting, fun and fulfilling. I hope you are already looking forward to future adventures. Travel is my passion; and I'm here to assist when you're ready to go. I want to give a special thanks to my dear friend Brad for suggesting the topic “Renew in 2022.” Spot on!



Photo Credit: Ashley Vaughn, Scout Guide®

Happy New Year!

*“The most beautiful things in life are not things. They're people and places, memories, and pictures. They're feelings and moments, and smiles and laughter.”* — Tiny Buddha

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# Women Who *Serve and Protect*

By Lt Tesla Hughes, Sgt Rosalind White and  
Officer Alexicia Pennington as told to Bob Druckman,  
Publisher *South Huntsville Neighbors*

Photos by Mandi Cook Photography



Officer Alexicia Pennington - South Precinct

Webster's Dictionary defines *Trailblazer* as "a pioneer, an innovator." If you look closely at the cover of this issue of *South Huntsville Neighbors*, you will see a photo of a woman in police garb and a mannequin with a uniform. The officer in that photo is Mary Gail Tumlin and the uniform was her first uniform out of the Academy. By the way she was the first female recruit of the Huntsville Police Department circa 1962. She went on to spend 26 years with the Huntsville Police Department in many supervisory roles, retiring as a Detective Sgt. and you can also see Mayor Battle's proclamation.

Fast forward to 2022, the Huntsville Police Department is comprised of about 463 sworn officers of whom 9.3% are female and 70 officers in supervisory roles of whom 6.3% are women. This issue features three of the female officers who protect and serve our community in a way that would make trailblazer Mary Gail Tumlin proud.

## **Officer Alexicia Pennington - South Precinct**

**Tell us about yourself, Where are you from originally? What is your background? Tell us about your schooling.**

I was born in Amory, Mississippi. Due to my dad being in the military, I went to many schools over the years. I graduated from Huntsville High. Originally I was going to South Alabama for my criminal justice degree; however around that time I had my little boy, who has been such a blessing in my life. In the near future, I plan on going back to school to get my Masters in Law.

## **Why did you join HPD?**

I joined HPD first and foremost to make a positive impact on my community. I have a son that is growing up in this city and I feel it is my duty to keep Huntsville safe for my son to have an environment that is conducive to his growth and development. Secondly, as a minority, I felt it was important to bring diversity to a male dominated career field. Diversity brings value to any organization and by taking the oath to serve and protect my community brings that added value. Women bring a different skill set to law enforce-

ment work that men don't have. We are by nature compassionate and can connect with individuals on high stress calls.

## **How long have you been with HPD? What is your role in HPD and what does that entail?**

My current assignment is third shift south patrol, that entails answering multiple calls for service that range from medical calls to active felony calls in progress. My job/role right now is to ensure a high quality response service is rendered to the citizens of Huntsville. If I can't solve their immediate needs while on the call, I find the resources that are necessary to meet the demand.

## **To get to where you are today, tell us about the training you've received.**

It took a lot of hard work and dedication. I had to endure an 18 week academy that challenged me physically but more mentally to perform and successfully pass a gamut of scenarios and classroom work. I had to learn Alabama state law, specifically arrest powers, amendments, and local municipal laws exclusive to Huntsville. After completing the academy, I had a grueling 14 week Field Training which helped me implement all the classroom knowledge I gained in practical street police work. Here I am as a solo police officer, a status that many don't get to. I am very proud of this achievement.

## **What Makes HPD special?**

We are now the third best city to live in, but more importantly we are committed to diversifying the ranks. This opportunity gives me the ability to specialize in assignments and units, but most importantly, I have the chance to climb the chain of command and have a seat at the table of the decision makers who affect policies that will allow Huntsville to thrive and ensure we have a safe city to live in.

## **What does Protect and Serve mean to you?**

Protect and Serve means that I have a duty to protect life and property. Everyone, regardless of economic status deserves to enjoy safety in their daily life endeavors. I am here to establish safety in our com-



munity. Part of protecting and serving means that I can have a positive impact on the youth in my community and positively inspire that young girl to show that she too can do anything she puts her mind to.

**Police work is stressful, how do you relax?**

Police work can be stressful. It's important that I take care of my mental and physical health by working out, having family time, being around positive people that bring joy to my life, maintaining a healthy diet and most importantly getting enough rest.

**Tell us about your favorite food and favorite restaurant**

My favorite food is pizza and my favorite restaurant is Cheddars. There are so many different varieties of food that you can pick from the menu.

**Lt. Tesla Hughes - Director of Training  
Huntsville Police Department**

**Tell us about yourself**

I am currently a Lieutenant with the Huntsville Police Department and serving as the Director of Training at our Police Academy. I have worked in several different patrol roles and served as a narcotics agent. Currently I am also supervisor of the Peer Support Program and the Crisis Negotiations Team.

**Where are you from originally?**

I am originally from Taft, TN.

**What is your background?**

Prior to being in law enforcement I was a competitive swimmer and got to travel the U.S. competing at various levels. I have a background in Emergency Preparedness and spent several years as a swim coach.

**Tell us about your schooling.**

I graduated from Michigan State University with a BA in Criminal Justice with a focus in Homeland Security. After joining HPD, I earned my Master's Degree from Auburn at Montgomery in Public Administration.

**Why did you join HPD?**

Frankly, I never had any intentions of becoming a city cop. My dream was to go federal and work in Homeland Security. However, once I graduated I thought it would be a good move to gain some experience. Little did I know that I would fall in love with the camaraderie and continual challenges policing provides. It was vastly different than I imagined policing was since I never knew any cops prior to becoming one.

**How long have you been with HPD?**

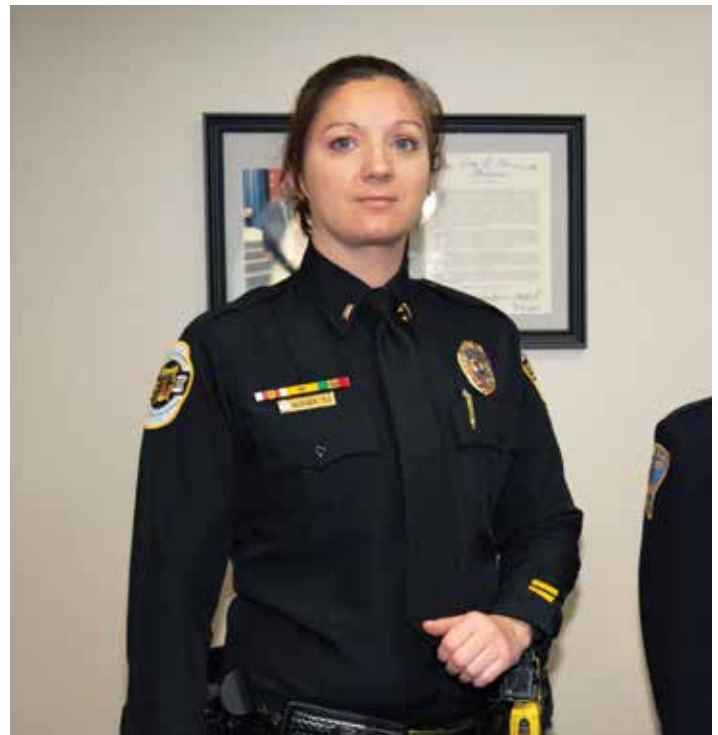
I have been with HPD going on 15 years now.

**What is your role in HPD and what does that entail?**

I am currently a Lieutenant and the Director of Training. I verify our officers are getting the best training while maintaining the state standards. I have a staff of Training Advisors that are specifically trained in instructing various Law Enforcement topics/tactics in order to uphold the high standards our department adheres to.

**To get to where you are today, tell us about the training you've received.**

I could go into the vast amount of training that is not only required by the state but also the additional required by our department, but that would be a taxing read as all HPD has vast amounts of required training without including our specializations. To summarize, ev-



Lt. Tesla Hughes - Director of Training Huntsville Police Department

erything that we do from the paperwork we complete, the computer systems we access, the court system we report to, the various tools we carry, and the defensive tactics we use, and the operating procedures for our department each have a required amount of hours to certify and re-certify. It totals a titanic amount of training over the course of the years served.

**What Makes HPD special?**

The officers that it employs. I know a typical answer might be the citizens we serve and that answer would also be correct, as I do adore serving this city. However, if it were not for the excellent officers that serve beside me I would have left this career a long time ago. It is a rewarding but difficult career and if you do not have the right people serving alongside you, the job can be too difficult to endure at times. I am happy in the career I have chosen but know that I would not still be a police officer if it were not for those wearing this same badge standing right beside me when we face some of the most demanding situations that aren't for the faint of heart.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

MANDI COOK | PHOTOGRAPHY  
E-mail mandi.cook@gmail.com 256.656.0207



Sgt. Rosalind White – Public Information Officer Huntsville Police Department

**What does Protect and Serve mean to you?**

We will show up if you need us. Often there is this misconception that police have some influence over laws. Yes, there is some discretion with minor violations, but overall if someone doesn't like that something is or isn't illegal, we have no stance as it comes to our work life. We simply enforce the law our state/city upholds as necessary and promise that if you need help, no matter the odds, we will show up.

**Police work is stressful, how do you relax?**

I enjoy competitive swimming if I have the time to put in the training. I also love having mini adventures with my daughter because no matter how stressed I am, seeing her sheer enjoyment playing or having an adventure is the best way to refocus on the boundless amusements our world offers.

**Tell us about your favorite food and favorite restaurant.**

I rarely go out to eat – which often irritates my friends when they ask – but I do drink a lot of coffee. So on that topic I would say my favorite coffee place would be Old Towne Coffee. Their employees are amazing and the atmosphere is welcoming. Accompany that with some inventive latte ideas and some just good coffee, it is a must try.

**Sgt. Rosalind White - Public Information Officer  
Huntsville Police Department**

**Tell us about yourself, Where are you from originally? What is your background? Tell us about your schooling.**

I am the first black female Sergeant with the Huntsville Police Department. I worked patrol for three years at both west and north precincts then selected to serve as an Internal Affairs Investigator for over five years before being promoted to my current role. I am currently the Public Information Officer, which is the liaison between Huntsville Police, media, and community organizations.

I was born and raised in Huntsville, Alabama. I received an athletic scholarship in Volleyball to Morris Brown College in Atlanta, GA. I played volleyball and tennis there on scholarship. We lost our accreditation my junior year so I came back home to complete my Bachelor's Degree at Athens State University.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice with a Minor in Political Science from Athens State University. I have a Master's of Science degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati and I have a Juris Doctor degree from Birmingham School of Law and also am a licensed Alabama attorney.

**Why did you join HPD?**

Initially, I had never considered being in law enforcement. My whole goal during undergraduate school was to go to law school and become a lawyer. However, while working a security job, where an HPD Sergeant was working off-duty, he asked me to consider joining the force. I thought about it and said why not. I figured it could make me well-versed in law enforcement and the criminal justice system as a whole because I still wanted to go to law school and achieve the goal of becoming an attorney I have had since I was a kid.

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**How long have you been with HPD? What is your role in HPD and what does that entail?**

I have been with the department now for nine years.

As the Public Information Officer, I am the spokesperson for the police department. I respond to media inquiries and coordinate and work with community organizations, relay information regarding public safety issues and activities and promote special events.

**To get to where you are today, tell us about the training you've received.**

Every officer must complete and graduate the Academy set by APOSTC (Alabama Peace Officers Standards & Training Commission) which is 18 weeks long. Then we must recertify our training yearly according to APOSTC guidelines to remain current. These required training are in addition to any individualized training for any specialized unit involved (IA investigations training, media training). So, over the years I have attended a plethora of training for each role that I have held whether required or for personal growth for job knowledge.

**What Makes HPD special?**

HPD is special because it has leadership that appreciates and supports the officers. It recognizes that this department must reflect the communities we serve and diversify. It is a brotherhood that we all wear this badge and must uphold it with integrity, professionalism, and accountability.

**What does Protect and Serve mean to you?**

It means that we will be there if you need help and/or any assistance that we can provide outside of just the enforcement side of policing. It means giving back to the community I was raised in. It means being a public servant to anyone that we can assist.

**Police work is stressful, how do you relax?**

I love reading, working out, and I enjoy just being with my family. Law enforcement is one of those careers where we don't typically get holidays off and you could work third shift for years. So, it's crucial when we can get some off time we spend it with family or friends and relax.

**Tell us about your favorite food and favorite restaurant.**

My favorite food is Mexican and I love going to Rosie's with friends and family to eat and unwind.



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By Lisa Philippart LPC, BCPCC, BC-TMH

## Boost Your Self-Esteem

Welcome to February, International Boost Your Self-Esteem Month. Let's look at seven specific things you can do to start cultivating high self-esteem.

1. Spend more time with the right people. The type of people we are surrounded by day in and day out, profoundly affects us. It's not hard to see how low self-esteem gets perpetuated if most of the people around you are cruel, sarcastic, condescending, judgmental, or manipulative. Simply making tough decisions to change the people you let into your life is key to generating high self-esteem.
2. Learn to be assertive. Assertiveness means speaking in a way that's both honest and respectful by asking directly for what you want and saying no firmly to what you don't want. It often comes down to the relationship between our actions and our values.
3. Make time to clarify your values. Ultimately high self-esteem comes from living your life in a way that aligns with your values. The more clear, specific, and compelling our values, the more we are drawn to them. And when our values exert more pull on us, it becomes easier to act in a way that lines up with them and therefore generates high self-esteem.



4. Shift your focus from outcomes to growth. People with high esteem are usually process oriented. Clarify your goals initially, then spend the rest of your time and energy on the routines and actions that move you forward.
5. Eliminate negative self-talk. How we habitually talk to ourselves has a profound effect on how we think and feel. The first step is to become aware of your own self-talk. There is actually a strong belief that high self-esteem is really our default, but that we simply override it with years of negative self-talk.
6. Cultivate a habit of gratitude. There is a strong correlation between compassion and self-esteem. When we are consistently compassionate with ourselves and others, we can't help but hold ourselves in high regard. But consistency is the key, which means it is the habit of gratitude that is necessary to build higher self-esteem.
7. Manage your expectations effectively. Unrealistic expectations are a setup for excessive emotional reactions, followed by unhelpful decisions or behaviors, and then lower self-esteem as a result. When we have fewer and more realistic expectations, we can simply avoid a lot of painful emotional experiences in the first place.

**Lisa Philippart LPC LLC** NCC, BCPCC, BC-TMH

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By Brian and Brittney Mecomber

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While they may come for the workout, our members stay for the inclusive community and family atmosphere. Rock Box Fitness Huntsville is locally owned by Brian and Brittney Mecomber of South Huntsville. Come take a complimentary class on us, you won't regret it!

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## The Final Walkthrough Don't Be Nervous!

By Darin Windham, Realtor, Key Finders Group RE/Max Alliance

Does the final walkthrough before closing on your new home make you feel nervous or anxious? Read on to ensure a smooth process.

### What Is A Final Walk-through?

The final walk-through before closing on a house is one of the last steps to buying a home. The final walk-through is typically completed after the seller has moved out and allows the buyer to confirm that agreed upon repairs have been made, and that there are no new issues.

Essentially, the final walk-through allows home buyers to do one last check. This is to make sure that the home they're purchasing is in the same condition it was when they agreed to buy it, plus any additional repairs stipulated in the purchase agreement, and that nothing has been removed – like light fixtures or faucets – that shouldn't have been.

### When Does A Final Walk-through Take Place?

Final walk-throughs typically takes place as close to closing day as possible. During the walk-through, a buyer and their real estate



agent will go through the property. They'll check that there's no new damage, that all the home's systems and appliances included in the sale are still working and that the home is in clean condition.

If the seller has been moved out for a while, they'll also be on the lookout for things that could've gone wrong in the time since the property was vacated.

Participating in a final walk-through as a buyer is vital. Not only are you about to make a huge purchase, but you're also about to be legally and financially responsible for this property. Forgoing a final walk-through could mean unwittingly taking on a big financial burden, having to pay for a repair you'd already negotiated with the seller to cover, or worse.

### Final Walk-through Checklist

In the excitement of closing on your new house, it can be easy to overlook certain issues. That's why it can be helpful to know ahead of time what types of things you should be looking for.

Here is a checklist to ensure that your soon-to-be-new home is in good shape, inside and out.

1. Check every room, closet, basement, and garage space.
2. Verify that your requested repairs have been made.
3. Make sure there haven't been any major changes to the property since purchase.
4. That all of the items agreed to in the contract are there (curtains, appliances, etc.)
5. All appliances are operating (dishwasher, washer/dryer, oven, etc.)
6. Hot water heater and HVAC unit are working.
7. Nothing permanent has been removed from the yard.
8. Instruction books and warranties on appliances are available.
9. All debris and personal items of the seller have been removed.
10. The sellers are gone and it's ready for your movers to come!

And now that your successful final walk-through is complete, you are ready to close, pick up the keys, and move into your new home. Congratulations!

*Darin can be contacted at 256-652-9032 or [darin@keyfindersgroup.com](mailto:darin@keyfindersgroup.com)*


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**INTRODUCING - New Staff Member, Charles Page!**  
Originally from Huntsville, Charles Page holds a master's degree from New York University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama. He has been on the faculties of New York University, University of Alabama community music school, and Alabama A&M University. Page has been a prizewinner in numerous competitions including the concerto competitions at New York University and the University of Alabama.

*"Music is enough for a lifetime, but a lifetime is not enough for music." - SERGEI RACHMANINOFF*





# The Impact Loneliness and Isolation Has on Our Brains

By Gleria and Tommy Anderson Home Care Assistance

With the world being piqued with COVID over the past two years family and friends are having to distance with little physical contact, I felt this would be the perfect article to raise awareness of loneliness and its effect on our brains. I visited a friend over the New Year's weekend, who lives here in Huntsville, and she mentioned that her son came by to visit, who is not vaccinated and lives in Madison. During the visit he said to her "I wish I could hug you."

Dr. Bullock's study shows that many American seniors spend most of their lives lonely and isolated from the outside world. While everyone enjoys a little alone time, remaining isolated does more than diminish *joie de vivre*. It can increase the risk of disease and may even precipitate an early death.

## The Science Behind Excess Alone Time on Senior Brains

A 2010 survey sponsored by AARP, referenced in the Harvard Health blog, revealed that 35% of American adults aged 45 and up felt lonely. What's more, their sense of isolation increased over time — 56% of the lonely respondents "had fewer friends at the time of the survey than five years earlier."

The evidence is mounting that loneliness and social isolation affect the way our brain's function. In the same article, Christopher Bullock, MD writes that when it comes to loneliness, "we now know it is not just a feeling, but a condition that has a very real effect on the body."

"Humans are social creatures," Bullock goes on. "Among ourselves we form all kinds of complex alliances, affiliations, attachments, loves, and hates. If those connections break down, an individual risks health impacts throughout the body."

Studies began documenting the correlation between loneliness and illness some thirty years ago. Bullock reports that "social isolation was a major risk factor for mortality, illness, and injury, and in fact was as significant a risk factor as smoking, obesity, or high blood pressure."

Other studies link loneliness with inflammation and neurological changes. For instance, lonely people experience dementia more frequently and risk premature death. And in a paper shared at the American Psychological Association meeting, Brigham Young University professor Julianne Holt-Lunstead suggested that "loneliness is a bigger health risk than obesity."

## Conquering the Isolation Curse

While loneliness is very common, treating it is often challenging; but seeing as how a recent University of Chicago study concludes that "loneliness can make you sick," researchers are increasingly drawn to figuring out this "invisible epidemic."

For more information on this subject see: [www.health.harvard.edu/blog/im-so-lonesome-i-could-cry-2018032113512](http://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/im-so-lonesome-i-could-cry-2018032113512) Dr. Christopher Bullock, MD article.



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## Celebrating Exceptional Lifestyles at HarborChase of Huntsville

By Sheree Jordan, Harbor Chase Huntsville

Combining a seamless blend of modern amenities with classic sophistication and southern hospitality, HarborChase of Huntsville, a local Assisted Living and Memory Care community, offers engaging activities, customized culinary programs, and innovative health services. From its inspiring views of North Alabama to its luxurious



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apartments and unique restaurants, HarborChase offers a welcoming home for those wishing to celebrate their best years.

HarborChase of Huntsville is owned and operated by Harbor Retirement Associates (HRA), a regional senior living development and management company based in Vero Beach, Florida. Now celebrating its 20th anniversary, HRA has 37 communities in 13 states with more in development this year.

All HRA communities share similar standards of hospitality excellence including a full-time concierge, five culinary experiences that span casual and fine dining restaurants, in-house salon and spa, HarborFit, and the exclusive Chef's Fare Dining Program. Each community also features HRA's signature Life Enrichment Program, offering a wide variety of cultural events, learning opportunities, entertainment options, religious programs, and group excursions. The program is designed to provide social, devotional, fitness and recreational opportunities that make a positive impact on residents.

In addition to a wealth of amenities and emphases on enriching lifestyles, residents at all HarborChase communities enjoy a complete combination of convenience and care with associates available around the clock, seven days a week. Residents receive the appropriate level of care and support needed for their personal lifestyle to nurture and maintain independence.

With an unwavering commitment to HRA's core values of respect, attentiveness, integrity, stewardship, and excellence, residents, guests, and associates feel the strong dedication and passion synonymous with HarborChase communities.

To schedule a personalized experience at HarborChase of Huntsville, please call **(256) 285-4384**.

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# Spring-Green Lawn Care of North Alabama

By Patrick Rentz, Owner and Ken Healy, Operations Manager

Spring-Green Lawn Care of North Alabama is a locally owned and operated company that is part of a national network, specializing in Weed Control and Fertilization services, Lawn pest control, Disease control, and aeration and overseeding. Patrick Rentz, Owner, has over 30 years of experience in the green industry here in Huntsville and has been Landscaping and maintaining commercial properties since 1993.

Ken Healy, Operations Manager, has been a Golf Course Superintendent for over 25 years. Together there is extensive knowledge and experience that goes into the turf program that Spring-Green customizes for your particular needs. Here at Spring-Green we not only focus on delivering our customers a weed free lawn, but mostly on soil health and a nice steady supply of nutrients to help your lawn reach its full potential. No matter the species of turf, we can diagnose any disease, pest problem or nutrient deficiency keeping your lawn not looking its best. *We want our customers to have the best lawn on their street.* We want to make it easy to enjoy a beautiful lawn without the hassle.

Spring-Green goes the extra mile by using only the most efficient weed control and fertilization products, not the cheapest thing we can get our hands on. By doing so, we reduce the amount of herbicides needed to maintain a weed free lawn over time. At the same time, we feed the lawn and the soil to promote steady growth that will produce a thick, lush, healthy lawn.

We offer the Preferred Plus program which consist of 7 treatments as well as additional services including tree and shrub feeding and care, aeration, lawn pest control, fire ant control and turf disease control. We determine pricing by taking an accurate measurement of the area of lawn to be treated.

Please take time to go to our website and request a quote at: [www.Spring-Green.com](http://www.Spring-Green.com) or call our office at **256-658-0052** we will be glad to come out and evaluate your lawn.

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# DogWatch of North Alabama

By Jonathan Cantrell, Owner

DogWatch of North Alabama is a locally owned and operated business that pays attention to every detail of your pets' safety. Since we are Huntsville based we know your neighborhood.

Being life-long animal lovers, owners Jonathan and Britta Cantrell along with their DogWatch team have one common goal... To Keep Pets Safe At Home. We take great pride in offering the best in customer service as well as the best in pet containment and training products. DogWatch of North Alabama and the Tennessee Valley is truly your one-stop-shop for all your pet containment and training needs!

## Why should I use DogWatch of North Alabama? Freedom & Safety for your Pet

DogWatch® Hidden Fences keep your pets safe. The Hidden Fence creates a secure boundary to keep your pets safely in your yard and away from places you don't want them, such as gardens, swimming pools and driveways. With a Hidden Fence, your pets can run, play and exercise so they stay happy and healthy. Hidden Fences are also commonly known as wireless fences, underground fences, invisible fences\*, and electric fences for dogs. Our product is customized with your pet in mind.

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Sends an alert if the boundary wire is disconnected or broken. A notification will appear on the Web App and will disappear when the boundary wire is repaired.

### Power Loss Alerts

Sends an alert if the power goes out and the Transmitter starts running on PowerPak™ battery back-up. A notification will appear on the WebApp and will disappear when the Transmitter is reconnected to power.

### Collar Connectivity Alerts

Sends an alert if your SmartCollar does not connect with the Communication Portal – for example, if your collar's battery is dead, if your collar is damaged from a dog chew or if the collar is out of range of the Portal. A notification will appear on the Web App and will disappear when the SmartCollar reconnects to the Portal.

### Transmitter Connectivity Alerts

Sends an alert if the Portal loses its connection with the Transmitter for more than one hour. This could be triggered by a loss of power, lightning or surge damage. A notification will appear on the Web App and will disappear when the Transmitter signal reconnects to the Portal.

### Customizable Notifications

Set which Alerts you want turned ON or OFF. You can also choose between email notifications, text message notifications or both.

### Add Additional Contacts

You can add multiple contacts – such as family members, pet sitters or dog walkers – and choose which text message/email alerts you want them to receive.

### Activity Tracking

Monitor your pet's daily, weekly, and monthly activity levels. Find out if your dog has been Active, Moderately Active, Lightly Active, or Resting.

### Monitor System Settings

Review your system settings anytime, anywhere. The SmartFence WebApp displays your SmartCollar's training level and the Transmitter's training mode, rate, frequency and range.

### Multiple Pet Profiles

Add and track multiple pets within your SmartFence WebApp. Create individualized pet profiles for each pet.

### Satisfaction Guarantee

We offer a 30-day Equipment Buy Back if you are not satisfied with your Hidden Fence.

*We have a 4 yr old beagle that I thought no fence would keep him in, he was digging under a chain link. We had DogWatch installed for about 1 month and he has not got out, not even when another dog is walking up the street or chasing a cat out of the garage. I would highly recommend this system for any pet you want to keep in. Stan Spray Huntsville.*



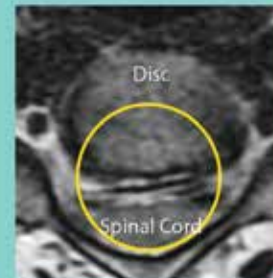
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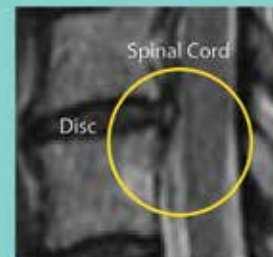
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## Disabilities Resource Network

By Davina Patterson, Executive Director

Disability Resource Network is a newly established Center for Independent Living located in Huntsville, AL but services 13 counties in North Alabama. Our mission is to promote independence in people with disabilities through advocacy, public education, and other consumer controlled independent living services. Our staff consists of the Executive Director, Davina Patterson, and Peer Advocates Deshon Washington and Katie Toro. DRN is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities. A part of the independent living philosophy states that: 51% of staff and 51% of the Board of Directors are persons with significant disabilities.

We provide five core services, they are:

1. Advocacy
2. Peer support
3. Independent living skills training
4. Information & Referrals
5. Transition services



Centers for Independent Living use the Peer to Peer Model instead of the medical model when providing services. A person with life experience with a disability can be a valuable resource and offer encouragement and practical solutions to a person who is adapting to a new disability, or who wishes to increase their independence.

People with disabilities are at the greatest risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Because of this fact, Disability Resource Network has partnered with the Disability Vaccine Access Opportunities Center (DVAO Center), a national center that provides resources, training, and technical assistance to address vaccine hesitancy and barriers for people with disabilities. The DVAO Center will assist us in furthering our efforts to assist people with disabilities who may have specific disability-related questions and barriers with getting the COVID-19 vaccination. Disability Resource Network will connect with health departments and other local agencies responsible for vaccine distribution and training and technical assistance provided through the DVAO Center. Our goal is to bring vaccination opportunities to everyone, and to remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from equitable vaccine access. Disability Resource Network is also partnering with the Alabama Department of Public Health by providing COVID-19 trainings in North Alabama.

Outside of the five core services, we are also working with the Southeast ADA Center to provide training to the community as well as being a resource for callers that need assistance in filing an ADA complaint.

DRN has been featured as a business spotlight for WAFF48, business spotlight for The Huntsville Herald, a guest on Exposing Good Podcast, participant in the UAH Non Profit Fair, participant in the Alabama A&M Community Service and Civic Engagement Fair, and many upcoming opportunities in 2022.

Disability Resource Network is here in the North Alabama community to empower people with disabilities to live independently.

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# Fun FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS

By Mandi Blake

## FEB 4: National Homemade Soup Day

There's nothing quite like a hot bowl of soup on a cold February day! Make your favorite to share with friends and family or to enjoy on your own. My personal favorite is chicken dumpling!

## FEB 5: National Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day

Yes, you read that right: ice cream for breakfast. Just make sure you don't get a brain freeze! My favorite is cookies and cream, what's yours? (Maybe have some of your homemade soup after to warm back up!)

## FEB 11: National Inventors Day

So many of the wonderful tools and gadgets we use in our everyday lives are thanks to inventors who worked tirelessly to create something that would help make the world better. From the lightbulb to electric cars, our world wouldn't be what it is today without our amazing inventors of the past!

## FEB 17: Random Act of Kindness Day

We should be kind to one another every day, but February 17 is a great day to spread some extra kindness to those around you! Your neighbors, friends, family, colleagues, and classmates. A simple smile can change someone's day for the better!

## FEB 20: National Love Your Pet Day

We all love our pets dearly, but this day is one where you should give them some extra loving! Whether it's their favorite treat, a new toy, or some cuddle time, give your pet a little something special.

Source: [nationaltoday.com](http://nationaltoday.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Kochkin, Sergei et al. (January 2000). Quantifying the Obvious: The Impact of Hearing Instruments on Quality of Life. The Hearing Review. [https://hearingreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/KochkinRogin\\_QuantifyingObvious\\_0100HR.pdf](https://hearingreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/KochkinRogin_QuantifyingObvious_0100HR.pdf)

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