

Community News

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TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS
Franklin City Manager Amanda C. Jarratt hits the target with her throw, dropping Franklin Police Chief Steve Patterson into the dunk tank July 17 during the 2021 Family Wellness Funday at Armory Park.



From left, Anthony Nealy, Joshua McCallister and Gregory Mann try out the interactive basketball inflatable during the 2021 Family Wellness Funday on July 17 in Franklin.

Funday magnifies the 'well' in wellness

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Franklin community relished the return of the Family Wellness Funday on July 17 at Armory Park after a year in which the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the annual event from taking place.

"A huge welcome on behalf of the City of Franklin to everybody who's here," Franklin Mayor Frank M. Rabil said near the beginning of the event. "Thank you to the Franklin-Southampton Wellness Coalition for putting this on again. I'm not sure how many years this has been going on, but it has become an institution within this city, and it is appreciated."

He also thanked all the volunteers and their orga-

nizations that were represented at the event. Many booths were set up, including those representing organizations that are part of the wellness coalition.

Franklin City Manager Amanda C. Jarratt echoed the comments of welcome and thanks from Rabil and Celebration Church Franklin Pastor Anthony Rawlings Sr.

"I'm so happy we can be here," she said. "It's an amazing feeling to be able to go to events like this. I personally want to say 'thank you' to the members of the wellness coalition board. You guys have been a mainstay for the city throughout the whole last year and all that we've had to navigate with the pandemic. All of your agencies have allowed us to keep everyone as safe as

possible, whether from a health perspective or financial safety net or all of the services that your agencies provide."

Rabil concluded his remarks with encouragement to people regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

"For those of you who've had your first COVID vaccination, I would ask you to consider very seriously getting your second, if you haven't," he said. "For those of you who haven't had a COVID vaccination or the series of vaccinations, I would ask you to consider those available shots and get those. It's not only good for the community at large, but it's also good for the kids and for the people we're coming in contact with."

Those present at the 2021 Family Wellness Fun-

day were presented with a variety of offerings, including a free swim in the pool, a petting zoo, the landing and presentation of the Sentara Nightingale helicopter, Zumba, line dancing, inflatables, face painting, raffles, vendors and food.

In addition to the overall event raffle, the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore also held its own raffle. Cliff Hedgespeth, Western Tidewater Branch manager of the Foodbank, announced the organization would be giving out \$25 Food Lion gift cards all day long.

Betty Jeffries, top, and Savannah Britt take a tour of the 2021 Family Wellness Funday on July 17 in Franklin.



With his throw, Kayden Drayton aims to hit the button that will drop Franklin Chief of Police Steve Patterson into a dunk tank July 17 at the 2021 Family Wellness Funday in Franklin.

Waylon Vick flies down a slide that was part of one of the bounce houses present at the 2021 Family Wellness Funday in Armory Park on July 17.

Ashley Johnson and Jaylen Scott pause for a photo in the shade at Armory Park during the 2021 Family Wellness Funday.



Jackie Walton and Logan Mann are about to explore the inflatables and bounce houses available at the 2021 Family Wellness Funday on July 17 at Armory Park.



People attending the 2021 Family Wellness Funday in Franklin check out the Sentara Nightingale helicopter, which landed on Armory Field for the purpose of giving everyone a chance to look at it up close and learn more about it.

Community News

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

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Five-year-old Hank Spring tries his hand at a simulation of milking a cow at Heritage Day.

TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Heritage Day made an impressive return Sept. 11, as the 27th edition of the event that offers an interactive experience of a previous time drew a significant crowd to the Southampton Heritage Village and Agriculture & Forestry Museum in Courtland.

Last year, the event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but this year, the village was buzzing with life, the sights of tractor-pulled hay rides, soap-making and the sounds of the sawmill, the blacksmith at work and bluegrass music.

Lynda Updike, who helped organize the event sponsored by the historical society, the village and the museum, was working at the petting zoo and was already pleased with the turnout in the early afternoon.

"I've never seen so many children in all my life," she said.

Children interacted with the animals, including a donkey, and some were given a glimpse of baby chicks that were on hand for the day.

Victoria Edwards was giving a demonstration on how to make lye soap, and the activity represented a special heritage for her personally.

"I've been doing this for 10 years exactly, and I actually got interested in it by Mr. (Bobby) Carr making it here," she said. "So I saw him do it, and then he

passed away, and I was honored to keep up the tradition. I still use his recipe."

Not far from there, 22-year-old Chayton Patrick, of Chesapeake, was demonstrating the skills of a blacksmith.

"I do a lot of the old, primitive skills, so like the flint-knapping, the leatherworking, woodworking, crocheting — I'm a generalist," he said.

As for how he got his start developing all of those skills, he said, "I really just started watching YouTube."

His personal education began when he was around the age of 13, and he has stuck with it now for nearly a decade.

Quite a few people attending Heritage Day were not local, with some coming from elsewhere in the commonwealth or even from North Carolina.

Todd Shewbridge was there with Barrett and Tatatum Shewbridge, and he noted that they were all from Virginia Beach and came specifically for Heritage Day.

"This is like the seventh year in a row," he said, acknowledging 2020 as an exception. "We love it."

Elsewhere in the village, John Quarstein was showcasing to visitors the Rebecca Vaughan House, which is where the last five slave owners were killed during Nat Turner's rebellion.

Quarstein noted he has been working to restore the house for 14 years. He highlighted some of the work that has been done, sharing



Thirteen-year-old David Cuthbertson smiles for the camera while embracing a donkey that was on hand for Heritage Day in Courtland.

that the foundation was rebuilt and he has furniture that is going to be added, including, but not limited to, several Vaughan family items, a tea table, two chairs, a sofa and a drop-leaf table.

"We need about roughly \$80,000 more dollars to finish this part of the project, and yet we already have paid for an interactive map," he said. "We've restored all this furniture, so our issues are finishing the faux finishing, buying some exhibit cases, finishing these floors."

He said the restoration

project benefited from three grants that came from the Virginia Department of Transportation as part of a federal program, but he indicated that VDOT took away \$60,000 during the pandemic.

"The bottom line is that we have to make that money up," he said. "Otherwise, we could have had this thing open by Christmas or so."

"Now the signs that are going to go through Courtland, the smartphone app, the interactive map are all being completed right now," he continued. "The website

is being worked on right now. It should be up in two or so months. Those are going to be all cosmic things, I've got to tell you, because that's how we're going to reach out."

Laying on the floor of the nearby Museum of Southampton History are canvas floor coverings that Helen Hill made for placement in the Rebecca Vaughan House parlor and hall.

"I don't know how many hours I spent, and I didn't spend every day, but it took me over a month," Hill said, referencing the time it took to make the coverings.

She explained that the floor coverings' material is 12-grade canvas, basically the same that would be used for a sailing ship's sails.

"This has got about six coats of varnish on it, and that protects it," she said referring to one of the coverings she made. "And you can wax them, but I was afraid to. I didn't want anybody to slip and fall."

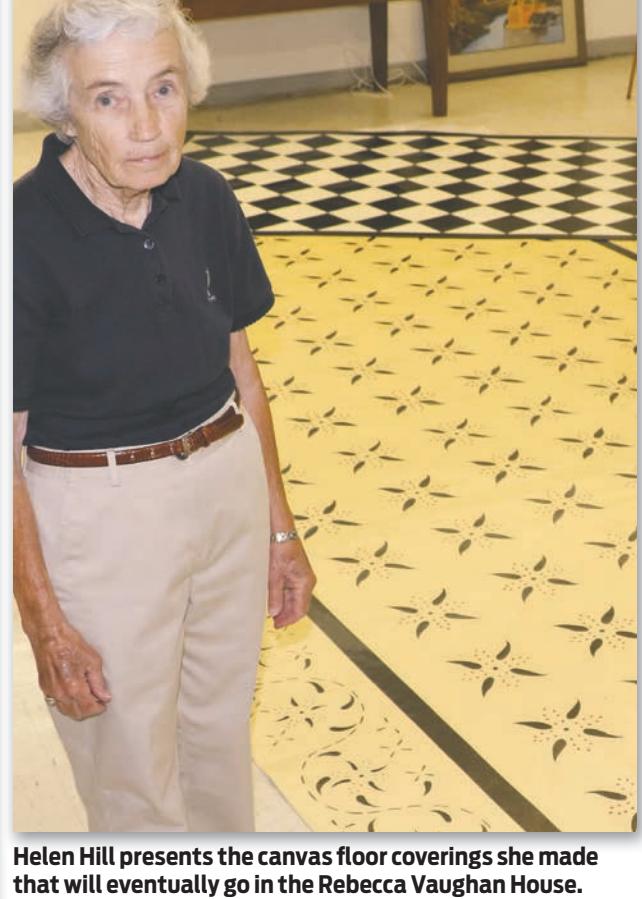
She noted that originally, the house was going to be ready for the floor coverings in July, so that is why she purchased the material to paint them and started on them this summer.



Victoria Edwards is demonstrating how to make lye soap for those passing by at Heritage Day in Courtland.



Chayton Patrick, 22, showcases some of his skills as a blacksmith at Heritage Day on Sept. 11 in Courtland.



Helen Hill presents the canvas floor coverings she made that will eventually go in the Rebecca Vaughan House. They are currently laid out inside the Museum of Southampton History. The one in the foreground will go in the house's parlor, and the checkered one will go in its hall.

