



# LEGACY LEDGER

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER OF LEGACY NAFC



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*A Message from the NAFC Education Foundation  
Alumni Coordinator, Sherri McKeen*

As we gear up for Fall Break next week—yes, it's almost here!—it's hard to believe how fast this school year is flying by. But with the whirlwind comes some truly exciting news worth celebrating!

In this first quarter of the school year, the NAFC Education Foundation has awarded nearly \$75,000 in Great Classroom Grants, providing vital support to our incredible educators and students across all 16 schools.

Speaking of exciting events, homecoming season has already kicked off at both New Albany and Floyd Central High Schools, and now we're counting down to one of the Floyd County's favorite traditions—Harvest Homecoming. In honor of the upcoming festivities, we're shining the spotlight on two standout alumni whose dedication has helped shape this beloved celebration.

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# **ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT**

***Amanda Beam, Guest Contributor***

This month, we are proud to highlight two remarkable alumni who have made significant contributions to New Albany's beloved Harvest Homecoming Festival. Since 1967, this annual event has drawn hundreds of thousands of visitors, bringing southern Indiana residents together to celebrate our rich heritage, culture, and scenic beauty, while also showcasing our tourism appeal. Courtney Lewis (NAHS '03) and Miranda Zimmerman (FC '10) have played key roles in making this festival a cherished tradition. Through their dedication and leadership, they continue to strengthen the ties that bind our community together.

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## **Courtney Lewis (NAHS '03): A Commitment to Service and Community**

The homecoming part of New Albany's Harvest Homecoming isn't lost on Courtney Lewis. The festival beckons southern Hoosiers back home, and allows those who still reside here a chance at an impromptu reunion on sweet-smelling streets.

"It's the best way to have a homecoming, right?" Lewis, a 2003 New Albany High School graduate, said. "It's everything in one place for a few days. It's the best way to celebrate fall around here, for sure."

Lewis would know. Besides making the annual pilgrimage to Harvest throughout her life, the 39-year-old volunteered with the organization for 13 of those years. At the beginning, two friends, recruited her to help out with the opening and closing ceremonies. She eventually led the committee, while also assisting with the business luncheon. Through time, she also became its director.

"I don't think that people ever understand the workload that the volunteers of the festival do. It's a thing to behold," Lewis said. "None of the people are paid. Everybody is down there because they care about it, and they want to do it."



In 2019, Lewis was elected chairman of the Harvest Homecoming board, making her not only one of the youngest ever in that leadership role, but the first and only African-American chairperson, as well.

In 2020, with vaccines still months away, Covid raged throughout America. That June, due to safety concerns, Harvest Homecoming organizers made the tough decision to cancel the October celebration for the first time in its 51-year history.



“It was incredibly heartbreaking,” the New Albany native said.

But out of a time of heartache came hope. Courtney gave birth to her first child, a little girl, that same year.

Lewis started helping her community long before her involvement with Harvest. At New Albany High School, she volunteered in the athletic department and was active in their theater program. After studying sociology and history at Indiana University Southeast, she entered the workforce, first at the News and Tribune, and then with the City of New Albany.

Those public service opportunities paved the way for her current position as Director of Community Engagement for the New Albany Housing Authority (NAHA). Here she builds community partnerships that provide greater opportunities for the residents of the NAHA.

“We’ve got a responsibility to do the best job that we can for the people we serve,” Lewis said. “Doing everything we can is the right thing to do.”

Do the right thing, Lewis said, was also the motto of New Albany High School during her time there. Decades later, she still remembers former NAHS principal Steve Sipes constant reminders.

“That’s what I learned, to do the right thing, so that’s what I’m trying to do in life,” she said.

In addition to her day job, Lewis volunteers with numerous other community organizations. She currently serves on boards for the SoIN Tourism, Develop New Albany, the Homeless Coalition of Southern Indiana and the Carnegie Center for Arts and History, Inc. Likewise, Lewis competed in the inaugural Legacy NAFC Royal Court, and helped raise more than \$42,000 for students and staff of NAFC public schools.

“I was raised in a way that I was taught it’s our responsibility to give,” she said. “If we’ve got time or money or whatever to give, then you do it.”

And while she’s taking a break from volunteering with Harvest Homecoming, Lewis and her daughter still delight in the fall festivities.

“If you live here, that’s the thing that you look forward to every year,” she said. “I’m excited to see her version of it.”

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# Miranda Zimmerman (FCHS '10): Bringing Fun for Kids at Harvest Events

When Miranda Zimmerman started planning the Harvest Homecoming Kids Day in the Park January of last year, she never thought she'd be absent from the festivities. The baby she carried would not be due until near November, plenty of time for her to see the fruition of all her hard work.

But before the bands marched and the candy tossed at the annual Harvest Homecoming Parade, Zimmerman's son entered the world earlier that morning. A friend joked the parade celebrated his birth.

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"Thank goodness for my amazing committee," Zimmerman said. "They took over, and the event went off without a hitch without me."

For five years, the 2010 Floyd Central graduate has volunteered with New Albany's most famous festival. She started with the business luncheon, but shifted to leading Kids Day in the Park after Covid protocols cancelled Harvest in 2020. Zimmerman now sits as a director on their board.

"I don't know that the community understands how much time goes into creating this event, being there during the event and after the event, and the work we do throughout the year," the 33-year-old said. "Everything that goes into the festival, down to the very tiniest little detail, everybody that is involved is a volunteer. It's amazing."

Helping others comes naturally to Zimmerman. During her time at Floyd Central, she served on Student Council, where she remembers manning a Harvest chocolate banana booth. Her hours after school included volunteering at Baptist Health in Louisville and the American Red Cross.

Those latter opportunities allowed her to explore the health care profession. After graduating Floyd Central, she attended Ivy Tech Community College, ultimately receiving a degree in respiratory therapy. Baptist Health Floyd then hired her as a licensed respiratory therapist.

Her career has come full circle. Once the volunteer, Zimmerman now manages volunteer services at Baptist Health Floyd. This includes not only junior and adult volunteers, but overseeing Safe Sitter classes as well as a youth internship program. All ten of the high school students currently enrolled in the initiative attend NAFCS schools and study healthcare at Prosser.

“They are exploring the hospital in all of the different roles,” she said. “It’s a new program, and it has kicked off fantastically.”

Zimmerman credits staff at Floyd Central for cultivating determination, hard work and kindness. If things didn’t go a student’s way, teachers would encourage them to adjust and improve for future projects. Also, those at FC often reminded teens that you just don’t know what folks are fighting, so try to be sympathetic and courteous, and support each other.

“I tell my students and my volunteers, if you see someone in the hallway, acknowledge them. I feel like that goes back to my Floyd Central days,” Zimmerman said. “You don’t know what it means to someone just to be acknowledged. And so, just smile or say hi.”

In her own household, Zimmerman is acknowledging her baby’s transition to toddler. While her soon-to-be one-year-old wants to stand, he’ll hopefully stay on all fours as he races in Harvest’s baby crawling contest this year.

“He’s not really a straight line. Sometimes he sees something that he gets interested in and he veers off. So, we’ll see how he goes,” the New Albany resident said.

Children of all ages have something to look forward to at Harvest Homecoming. Thanks to Zimmerman’s continued guidance, Kids Day in the Park will be held at Bicentennial Park on Saturday, Oct. 12, and will feature fun crafts and games such as pumpkin painting and a petting zoo.

“I feel like (Harvest) is truly an event that everyone goes to, because there are events and activities for everyone,” she said. “It’s really cool.”

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## WELCOME NEW NAFC EDUCATION FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS



**BRAD BENSON (NA , 2010)**  
General Counsel,  
ASB Custom Homes



**TAMI HATFIELD**  
Executive Director,  
Human Resource Supply Chain,  
General Electric



**CARLY LAUNIUS**  
Global Community  
Relations Manager,  
Brown-Forman

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## EXCITING NEWS FOR GREAT CLASSROOM GRANTS

We are thrilled to announce that the first round of Great Classroom Grants for this school year has been approved, awarding a total of \$74,000 to support innovative learning across our district. Grants were awarded to all 16 New Albany Floyd County Schools, bringing our total funding to over \$1.1 million since the program's inception in 2011!

Here are just a few examples of the impactful projects your generous contributions have made possible this school year:

- **Preschool communication therapy tools** at Grant Line Elementary
- **Pocket translators for ESL students** at Fairmont Elementary School
- **Speech therapy resources** at Mount Tabor Elementary
- **Classroom tower garden supplies** at Slate Run Elementary
- **Shakespeare texts** at Hazelwood Middle School
- **Digital microscopes** at Highland Hills Middle School
- **Snare drum practice pads for the band** at New Albany High School
- **Scientific calculators** at Floyd Central High School

And that's just the beginning! Thank you to all our donors for investing in the future of NAFC students. Your support is driving meaningful change in our classrooms!



## JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

Stay updated on your Floyd County classmates, discover thrilling events in your NAFC school community, and learn firsthand about the NAFC Education Foundation by connecting with us at [facebook.com/LegacyNAFCAlumni](https://facebook.com/LegacyNAFCAlumni).

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The New Albany Floyd County Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that works in conjunction with NAFC Schools to provide privately funded supplemental resources and programs to students, teachers, and schools. Legacy NAFC is the official alumni support group of the NAFC Education Foundation and New Albany Floyd County Schools.

When alumni donate to the New Albany Floyd County Education Foundation, you are investing in the success of all NAFCs students and educators. Alumni donors become Legacy NAFC members through an annual donation.

**Make your impact today and become a Legacy NAFC Alumni Member!**

For more information, contact Sherri McKeen at [smckeen@nafcs.org](mailto:smckeen@nafcs.org) or 812-542-2242 at the NAFC Education Foundation.

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[www.NAFCEdFoundation.org/alumni](https://www.NAFCEdFoundation.org/alumni)



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