

NAFC
alumni



LEGACY LEDGER

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER OF LEGACY NAFC ALUMNI



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

We're lucky to be part of a community filled with alumni who are making a real difference, especially for the next generation. This month, we're sharing two stories that reflect the heart of that impact.

We're grateful to each of you who reads, shares, and supports the work of the NAFC Education Foundation. Because of you, we're able to continue investing in our teachers, our students, and the future of our schools. We're proud to be part of this community with you.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Amanda Beam, Guest Contributor

In the words of Whitney Houston, children are our future. Our two NAFCS alumni this month not only believe that, but they work every day to ensure the kids they help have the best futures possible.

Laura Fleming-Balmer (FCHS '87) has served as executive director of the Clark County Youth Shelter & Family Services, Inc. since 1999. Her mission is to provide a home for 10- to 19-year-olds with nowhere else to go. In her 27 years there, she has helped more than 5,000 youth, offering them support, stability and a sense of family.

Eddie Bobbitt (NAHS '04) has come full circle. After graduating from the University of Louisville, he came back to the college as an academic advisor and professor. Since 2000, he returned to New Albany High School, this time as a post-secondary counselor, striving to give students the same encouragement his teachers once gave him.

Through empathy and enthusiasm, both Laura and Eddie make Southern Indiana, and the young people who live here, safer and stronger.

Creating a safe space for all: **Laura Fleming-Balmer (FCHS '87)**



At least once a week at the Clark County Youth Shelter, a former resident calls or stops by to update Laura Fleming-Balmer on how life is going. Some arrive with babies in their arms. Others phone seeking advice. All of them are welcomed.

In nearly 27 years as Executive Director of the nonprofit, Laura has touched the lives of more than 5,000 Southern Indiana youth. For many young people with nowhere else to turn, she has been an anchor during uncertain times. Both then and now, the residents find safety, guidance and a sense of belonging at the shelter.

“To them, we’re still part of their family,” said the 1987 Floyd Central graduate.

Family has always been central to Laura’s life. So has helping others. As a child, she accompanied her grandfather to a Louisville nursing home where he called bingo, helping residents place their chips and chatting with them between rounds. Her mother also volunteered often, serving as a room mom and Girl Scout leader.

Following in their footsteps felt natural to the Greenville native.

“Volunteering is what they did,” she said. “I grew up seeing that it was just the norm. That’s just what you do.”

In high school, Laura was active in orchestra and theater at Floyd Central. After graduating, she enrolled at Hanover College, majoring in sociology and business administration.

College life soon transitioned into professional life. Laura put her dual degrees to use at two Kentucky higher education institutions- first for a year at Lindsey Wilson College, then at Union College- where she worked with students on housing and campus activities. While at Union, she also earned a master’s degree in education with an emphasis in psychology.

Those degrees proved useful when Laura returned to Southern Indiana to help revamp a local youth leadership program. In addition to leading seminars, she connected participants with professional mentors and volunteer opportunities.

The role also introduced her to Clark County Youth Shelter & Family Services Inc., where she volunteered as an adult member of the organization’s Youth as Resources Committee. About a year later, at age 29, she noticed a job posting for assistant director of the shelter. Familiar with the staff and committed to the nonprofit’s mission, Laura applied and was quickly hired.

She didn’t hold the position for long. Six months into her tenure, the shelter’s CEO resigned. A few months after that, Laura stepped into the role herself, a position she has held since 1999.

“The shelter’s mission is serving youth and families in a safe, caring environment,” Laura said, noting the residential program serves roughly 200 children ages 10 to 19 each year. “If they could be in a foster home or with a relative, they would be. So, if they’re here, there’s literally nowhere else for them to go.”

But the nonprofit does more than provide a place to stay for vulnerable youth. Staff members also teach classes in the community on topics such as anger management, shoplifting prevention, and parenting and family skills. Likewise, the organization administers the Safe Place program in both Clark and Floyd counties.

Community support plays a crucial role in that work. From Valentine’s Day pizzas to bicycles and books, in-kind donations to Clark County Youth Shelter & Family Services Inc. average about one and a half contributions a day throughout the year.

“If we post something on Facebook that we need, we sometimes have it within an hour,” Laura said. “We exist because of our community and how our community takes care of these kids.”

Laura and her husband, fellow 1987 Floyd Central graduate Tony Balmer, are also passing that spirit of volunteerism to their 10-year-old son, Mason.

“His favorite is the soup kitchen,” she said. “Mason goes with me to St. Luke’s, and he loves doing that.”

And then, of course, are Laura’s other kids, the adults who return year after year with updates about their lives. Those visits offer a reminder that the shelter gives more than a temporary home. For many of the young people that pass through its doors, it becomes a family, one that Laura helped create.

Coming full-circle with compassion and care: Eddie Bobbitt (NAHS '04)



It's not unusual for Eddie Bobbitt to hold his University of Louisville nonprofit classes at different venues across Kentuckiana. He wants students to see the work firsthand and understand how the sector operates beyond the books.

But the trip to the old building on Corydon Pike that now houses Open Door Youth Services carried a different weight.

“Where you're standing is where I learned the ABCs,” Eddie told their host as he stepped into the converted boardroom that once served as a kindergarten classroom at Pine View Elementary.

The educator and nonprofit leader hadn't set foot in his childhood school in more than three decades.

“It was really a full-circle moment to be teaching a graduate class for U of L in my kindergarten classroom,” he said.

The 2004 New Albany High School alum has made a habit of returning to his roots. In addition to teaching at the university, Eddie serves as the post-secondary counselor at his high school alma mater, helping students prepare for life after graduation.

His own counselor at NAHS, Laura McGuirk, once did the same for him.

Attending college wasn't always a given for Eddie. Unable to afford post-secondary education, he once believed enlisting in the military might be his best option. Looking back, he said he could have “slipped through the cracks,” but his teachers refused to let that happen.

McGuirk's guidance especially shaped the path he followed—one that eventually led him back to occupy her office after she retired.

“She walked me through the FAFSA. She showed me how to apply for scholarships. She showed me how to apply for colleges,” he said. “She explained all this stuff that was incredibly foreign to me.”

With a strong academic record and McGuirk's help, Eddie was accepted to the University of Louisville. He graduated in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in sports administration and initially hoped to build a career in marketing.

But a summer job as a peer advisor caused him to reconsider. Eddie found he enjoyed working with students, and he soon accepted a position as an academic advisor at U of L. During his decade at the university, he also earned master's degrees in higher education administration and counseling.

“From that moment, I would tell people that I wanted to be the Laura McGuirk of U of L because of how much she did for me,” he said.

McGuirk, though, had other plans.

During a dinner with Eddie, she suggested he begin a master’s program in counseling so he could eventually replace her at NAHS. The next semester, he did just that. After working for a few years at Prosser Career Center, Eddie stepped into McGuirk’s position—and her office—when she retired in 2020.

“I really do feel like I’m just trying to pay it forward,” he said. “Now I feel this excitement every day that I can maybe have some type of small impact on a student and help them get to where it is that they want to go.”



Besides counseling at NAHS and teaching at U of L, Eddie continues to lift others up through his volunteer work. He spent a decade as Executive Director of Camp Quality Kentuckiana, a nonprofit dedicated to letting kids with cancer simply be kids again. Beyond its weeklong summer camp, the organization provides year-round support for families navigating the illness.

Whether advising students, teaching graduate classes or leading a nonprofit, Eddie encourages others to imagine possibilities beyond their current circumstances, much like his teachers and counselors once did for him.

“When I see the student that reminds me of a younger me, that lights an even bigger fire,” he said. “I’m like, ‘Oh, you have no idea what you’re capable of, and we’re going to get you there.’”



Who Should Be on Our Next Royal Court?

We're starting to build our 2026 Legacy NAFC Alumni Royal Court, and we need your help.

Each November, eight standout alumni (four from New Albany and four from Floyd Central) step forward to represent their schools, rally support, and raise funds that directly benefit NAFC students and teachers.

Since 2022, this campaign has generated more than \$270,000 for classroom grants, mental health initiatives, and opportunities that go beyond the school budget.

We're looking for alumni who:

- Care about this community
- Enjoy connecting with people
- Want to make a real, local impact

You can nominate someone you admire or put your own name forward.

To share a nomination, reach out to Sherri McKeen, Alumni Coordinator, at smckeen@nafcs.org.

It's a fun and meaningful experience, and one of the most powerful ways alumni can give back.



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.

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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.

For more information, contact Sherri McKeen at smckeen@nafcs.org or 812-542-2242 at the NAFC Education Foundation.

www.NAFCEdFoundation.org/alumni



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