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MARCH 2024

THE GREGORY FAMILY

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DEAR RESIDENTS

To me, March is the month that has always felt like the beginning of the year. Fewer cold days, more of Mr. Sun and the days are already getting longer. That's why I am so fired up for this month and this edition of the magazine. We've got some great items in here including the debut of our Student of the Month, which you can nominate a deserving young student by getting in touch via email.

I'd also like to welcome in a huge member of our community to the magazine: Athens-Limestone Hospital. They are so influential around town with their philanthropic efforts. They are also highly respected with their care within the hospital and their related clinics. I'm very proud that they saw the value of being in our community's magazine.

One last note before you go off to read the rest of this magazine: I'd be remiss if I didn't send my sincerest love and thoughts to the Wolfe family. Stacy Wolfe left us far too early last month and she was a beam of light and hope in the community and as some of you may remember, she and her family were our very first cover family. I hope the Wolfes can find any solace and peace knowing how beloved she was in Athens and beyond.

Please enjoy the March issue of East Athens Living and as always, if you've got a story, we want to tell it. Hit us up via email.



ARKY SHEA

Publisher

abartlett@bestversionmedia.com



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FEEDBACK/IDEAS/ SUBMISSIONS

Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 10th of each month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas and photos to: markwhite@bestversionmedia.com.

HOA SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Are you on the association board for your subdivision? Contact us for information on how you can submit articles, updates, reminders, events and more to the residents. We create customized homeowners association sections at no cost to the HOA or the residents.

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CONTENT SUBMISSION DEADLINES

CONTENT DUE:

- December 10
- January 10
- February 10
- March 10
- April 10
- May 10
- June 10
- July 10
- August 10
- September 10
- October 10
- November 10

EDITION DATE:

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

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march

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SATURDAY, MARCH 9

HOSPICE OF LIMESTONE COUNTY CHILI CHALLENGE

The Chili Challenge and Silent Auction raise funds for our community non profit Hospice of Limestone County. You can try all the Chili and vote for your favorite. You can also shop around in our silent auction.

COST: \$10 - kids under 11 FREE

TIME: 10:00am - 2:00pm

LOCATION: Alabama Veterans Museum, 100 Pryor St.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

ST. PATRICK'S DAY AT ATHENS ALEHOUSE & CELLAR

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with live music, food truck tastes, games and beer.

COST: FREE

TIME: 4:00pm

LOCATION: 111 W. Washington St.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

INAUGURAL PUB CRAWL

Take in the scene with Athens' first ever Pub Crawl across six different participating locations. From Ro's Grille at 5:00pm to Limestone Legends Billiards at 10:00pm. Park and Walk, join anytime.

COST: FREE

TIME: 5:00pm - ???

LOCATION: Starts at Ro's Grille, 126 N. Jefferson St

FRIDAY, MARCH 15 - SUNDAY, MARCH 17

ATHENS-LIMESTONE COUNTY HOME & GARDEN SHOW

Join vendors from around the area that will showcase the very latest in home and garden adventures.

COST: \$5 (cash only)

TIME: F (5:00pm - 8:00pm)

Sa (8:00am - 4:00pm) Su (12:00pm - 4:00pm)

LOCATION: Athens State University Carter Gymnasium

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

ATHENS MAIN STREET BOUTIQUE WALK

Downtown Athens clothing and gift boutique owners will open their doors to welcome patrons into their shops for major specials and sweet surprises.

COST: FREE to shop

TIME: 9:00am - 6:00pm

LOCATION: Downtown Athens

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

ATHENS-LIMESTONE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION DIFFERENCE DASH 5K

The Difference Dash 5K is organized by the ALH Ambassadors, a group of high school Juniors and Seniors from Athens City, Limestone County, and area private schools. Proceeds provide scholarships to multiple Senior Ambassadors who plan to pursue a career in healthcare.

COST: FREE

TIME: 7:00am

LOCATION: Athens Middle School, 100 U.S. Highway 31, North

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NIGHT AT THE DERBY RETURNS FOR SECOND LEG

by Kristina L. Hendrix

In April, Night at the Derby returns for the second consecutive year, all in an effort to raise money for the Athens Boys and Girls Club.

The charity dinner will be held at the Alabama Veterans Museum in April 19th and attendees will have the chance to dress as if they were attending the Kentucky Derby, meaning lavish hats and lots of suits and dresses in very Spring-like colors. The dinner will also feature a silent and live auction as well as an evening of entertainment.

"Night at the Derby is one of our signature fundraisers for the Athens Boys and Girls Club. Last year's was very successful and we have added more to the evening. This is a chance for people to get dressed up and participate in a great cause for our community. I am extremely proud of the work that our staff and volunteers do to support the youth. They are preparing them for a greater future," said Griff Redmill, chairman of the Board of Directors.

The Boys and Girls Club has been a staple of the Athens community for nearly three decades. The proceeds from this event will help with the future needs for the Athens club.

There are sponsorships still available as well as tables. For more details, contact Shannon Elliott at 256-777-3311 or sme203@charter.net.



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THE GREGORY FAMILY

by Mark White | photos by Fly Leaf Photography

This month marks twelve years of marriage for Sam and Taylor Gregory. The Gregorys began dating in high school and by 19 years old decided that they were ready for marriage.

“We had dated for three years and we were very grown for our age and used to taking care of ourselves. At 19, I had already come back from UNA and I was in the dental assisting program at Calhoun. I was working at Goody’s while I was going to school and we knew we wanted to get married. We sat down with Lynn Persell and he started building us a house. We looked at when the house would be finished and we got married on Sam’s 20th birthday which falls on St. Patrick’s Day. We came back from our honeymoon, closed on the house, and moved in,” said Taylor.

Being married at 20, Taylor and Sam decided that they wanted to wait to have children.

“When we were doing our premarital counseling, Kasey Harbin asked us why we wanted to get married so young. We wanted to get married young and be married a few years before having kids, but still be relatively young when we had kids. We wanted to be active and involved and be able to play with them. Now, we coach. I coach softball and Sam coaches basketball and we’re right there in the middle of it. We wanted to be young enough where we could do that,” said Taylor.

The Gregorys now have two children, Cara Blake who is seven and Weston who turns five this month.

“We both coached Cara Blake in rec ball. When she began attending Athens Bible School, we started coaching softball. She played basketball last year, but Sam didn’t start coaching basketball until this year. I love coaching. It’s so hard for me to sit in the stands or watch from the sideline. I want to be involved. I want to have a hand in it,” said Taylor.

Although Taylor initially was in dentistry, she found a passion for real

estate and became an agent. Sam is clearly her biggest supporter.

“Through Newton Realty, Taylor really goes above and beyond for her clients and her clients don’t really know some of the things she does. There are things that come up on inspection reports and Taylor will take her own money to make it right. Her clients don’t have to deal with that stress,” said Sam.

Sam took the path of a home builder and works to build an affordable house for customers.

“Dealing with the public can sometimes be a stressful thing, but I love what I do. I try to help people and give them a good value house at a reasonable price. We’re a flat fee company. We just charge a flat fee to build a house. It works out great for the



customer,” said Sam.

The Gregorys love Athens and are amazed at the growth of the community.

It’s just experienced huge growth. We’re both in good markets for our businesses. The people in Athens are real supportive. I believe it’s one of the best towns to live in. It really is,” said Sam.

When you’re growing up and going to high school, people talk about how they can’t wait to get out of their town. I never felt that way. I always wanted to live in Athens. I felt fortunate to grow up in Athens and I feel fortunate to be able to raise a family here. I feel fortunate that we can send our kids to Athens Bible School and we can feel good about it,” said Taylor.



NICK DUNLAP MAKES HISTORY IN PGA TOUR VICTORY

by Arky Shea

Nick Dunlap, a Canebrake-trained golfer who was scheduled to enter his second season with the University of Alabama, made an enormous amount of history recently by winning The American Express tournament in January.

Dunlap, 20, became the first amateur golfer to win a PGA Tour event since 1991 when Phil Mickelson was victorious. That win gave him full-time PGA Tour membership through the 2026 season and gave him an exemption to play the Masters and PGA Championship and can play the U.S. Open as the reigning U.S. Amateur champion.

Dunlap was scheduled to enter his second season at the University of Alabama but decided to forego that opportunity to chase the riches and the dream of being a professional golfer.

"It was the easiest, hardest decision that I've ever had to make," Dunlap said Thursday. "I was very fortunate that everyone had the same opinion about it, and my teammates were awesome and very supportive. It goes back to the family that Alabama has. They were very supportive and wanted me to chase my dreams."

Dunlap will compete in The Masters Tournament, April 8th - 14th, with fellow Canebrake-trained PGA Pro Lee Hodges who earned his spot by winning the 3M Open in July.



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GROWING YOUR HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY

by Molly Kate Goar

As we step into the vibrant month of March, let's take a moment to celebrate the beauty of growth, particularly in the dynamic landscape of family life. For many of us, the journey of growth often coincides with significant changes in our family dynamics, whether it's welcoming a new addition, accommodating aging parents, or simply outgrowing our current living space. Here are some insights from our perspective as builders to help you embrace growth within your family and consider building a new home:

EMBRACE CHANGE

As families evolve, so do our needs and priorities. Perhaps you're expecting a new bundle of joy, or your teenagers are rapidly outgrowing their shared bedroom. Embrace these changes as opportunities for growth and consider how a new home can better accommodate your family's needs and lifestyle. Maybe a private upstairs teen suite?

CREATE SPACE FOR CONNECTION

Home is where the family bonds are nurtured and memories are made. When designing your new home, prioritize spaces that foster connection and togetherness, whether it's a cozy family room for movie nights, a spacious kitchen for culinary adventures, or a backyard porch oasis that will have all the neighborhood dads in envy. Building a home that facilitates quality time and meaningful interactions strengthens your family unit.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

As your family grows and evolves, it's essential to plan for the future. Consider factors such as accessibility, aging in place, and multi-generational living when designing your new home. By incorporating thoughtful features and flexible layouts, you can future-proof your home and ensure that it remains a comfortable and inviting haven for years to come.

SEEK GUIDANCE

Building a new home is a significant investment and undertaking, and it's essential to have the right support and guidance along the way. Consult with experienced builders, architects, and designers who understand your family's needs and aspirations. Together, you can collaborate to bring your vision to life and create a home that perfectly suits your family's dynamic.

As you embark on this exciting journey of building a new home, remember that growth is not just about physical expansion; it's about nurturing bonds that unite us as families and creating a space where love, laughter, and cherished memories are made.

Wishing you a month filled with joy, anticipation, and the promise of new beginnings.



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13823 Zehner Rd · Athens: Beautifully updated brick home on secluded 6.77 acres. Kitchen w/ quartz counters, ample cabinets. Updated lighting throughout. 24x50 heated/cooled workshop. **\$650,000**

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12100 Two Rivers Dr L-1 · Athens: Luxury waterfront condo in gated Two Rivers, The Pointe. Stunning Elk/TN River views, 3BR, 3BA, gym, elevator. 1st-floor unit, 2 patios, furnished, boat slip, & more **\$589,800**

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202 Wellington Road · Athens: Spacious 2-Story 4BR/4BA in Treed Lot: Primary Suite, Hardwood Floors, Granite Kitchen, Butler's Pantry, Updated Amenities, Large Backyard, Outdoor Fireplace, Privacy Fence. **\$440,000**

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12261 Quinn Road · Athens: Private 2BR, 2.5 Bath Retreat on 5 Acres near Athens. Includes 30x40 insulated shop/garage, 20x20 barn, mini farm setup. Hardwood floors, s/s appliances, master jetted tub. **\$342,400**

Kyle Massengale · +1256-469-8199
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103 Clubhouse Ln · Madison: ORRB location. Charming 4BR/3 BA brick home w/ spacious sun room. Living room boasts hardwood floors, tray ceiling w/ crown molding, & gas-log fireplace. **\$339,900**

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21217 Saratoga Dr · Athens: Must-see 4BR/ 2BA home in east-side neighborhood. Features eat-in kitchen, dining, living area w/ gas fireplace. Covered back porch; partial basement workshop. **\$338,900**

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619 Norton Dr · Athens: Wood lot, 3BR/2BA in coveted subdivision. Brick home with spacious living: living, dining, eat-in kitchen, den on main. Owner's suite on main. New flooring, & more. **\$334,900**

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21704 Daveen Dr · Elkmont: Remarkable ranch home, custom features, exceptional craftsmanship. Open floor plan, perfect kitchen w/ tiled backsplash, adjoining dining, large gathering room w/ wood fireplace. **\$288,000**

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16266 Evans Road · Athens: 4BR, 3BA home, spacious kitchen & living room. Master suite w/ sitting area, luxurious bath & walk-in closet w/ built-ins. Dual rain heads & handheld sprayer in master shower. **\$275,000**

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21261 Red Clover Ln · Elkmont: 3BR, 2BA home w/ new LVP flooring in living & master. Updated fixtures, trim, moldings. Upgraded French doors to fenced backyard w/ finished accessory building (AC). **\$249,400**

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STUDENT OF THE MONTH:

WILL ANDERSON

by Larry Pierce

Will is a 17-year old junior at Athens High School. He has always loved his community and wanted to do whatever he could to help make it be the best community possible. He determined that participation in numerous community events would help him achieve that goal. One of the organizations he supported was Hearts for Homeless. Will collected Gatorade, food, goody baskets, cards, and he also donated some of his own money to help with special projects for the homeless.

From a very early age he loved to read. That love for reading inspired him to help create a fundraiser that would benefit Athens Elementary, the school he attended. Because of the support of the community he was able to donate over 100 new books to the school library. In the 8th grade he won the Vicky Crawford Love for Reading Award, and he wants to do what he can to encourage others to develop this same passion for reading by helping tutor students who are behind academically. Additionally, he has won the Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay contest twice and



placed second once. He also placed second in the Athens Ladies Civitan Club Essay contest.

Will currently serves on the Athens Mayors Youth Commission, and is a member of HOSA, the National Beta Club, Rho Kappa, Scholars Bowl, National Honor Society, Marching Band, Jazz Band, and Concert Band. He volunteers for the Athens Family Resource Center and Learn to Read. Will also participated in an Internship at the Athens Mayor's Office.

He maintains a 4.15 GPA and is ranked 23rd in his class of 245 students. Will also participated in the Gifted Program. After graduation he plans to pursue a career in the medical field.

One of the areas Will wishes he could make a huge impact on is bullying. As a young man who suffers from ADHD, Will understands the impact of bullying. In elementary school he served as a peer mediator and realized that he could be the difference if he stood up for what is right. He encourages everyone to realize while we are all different, everyone just wants to be loved and accepted for who they are.

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CHOOSING A BANK WHO CHOOSES TO BE IN THE COMMUNITY

by Russ Mitchell, First National Bank

When choosing a banking partner, it is important to consider how the institution invests in the community. Being a good corporate citizen is very important to First National Bank. We not only support local schools and non-profits, but we have two programs to help educate the youth in our community about financial topics—the Student Advisory Board Program and School Bank Program.

The Student Advisory Board Program was started in 1990 to provide financial education to a group of high school seniors who were selected by their respective schools. It has grown to include approximately ninety-six students from seventeen high schools each year. Not only do they learn about different topics at each month's meeting, but they also participate in a monthly service project. In Limestone County, our board has served 124 hours in the community so far this school year.

The School Bank Program was started in 2018 and was designed to help elementary school children learn the functions of a bank and develop healthy savings habits. Bank employees set up a teller window at the school every three weeks to collect savings deposits. Students receive a prize for making a deposit and are rewarded at the end of the year if they miss less than two deposit days. In Limestone County, we currently have School Banks in Cedar Hill Elementary, Johnson Elementary, Blue Springs Elementary, Brookhill Elementary, Athens Bible School, and Lindsay Lane Christian Academy.

First National Bank is a true community bank with a commitment to help our neighbors and give back to those who make us successful. We would love the opportunity to build a relationship with you!



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TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR WINDOWS AND DOORS TO SAVE MONEY

by Aubrey Nash, Earthsmart Windows and Doors

Spring is right around the corner and there is no better time to consider replacing your home windows for energy efficiency! Did you get those extra high utility bills last month? You might be surprised how much is due to the inefficiencies in your windows and doors. This is a fantastic way to save money on your energy bills and make your home more comfortable. But you still may be wondering why. Why should you replace your windows and/or doors?

Old windows can be a major source of energy loss. They may have gaps, cracks, or single-pane glass that allows heat to escape during the winter and enter during the summer. By replacing them with energy-efficient windows, you can significantly reduce heat transfer and keep your home cozy year-round.

ALSO, YOU NOW HAVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENERGY-EFFICIENT WINDOWS TO CHOOSE FROM, FOR EXAMPLE:

DOUBLE-PANE WINDOWS: These windows have two layers of glass with a layer of insulating gas in between, which helps to minimize heat transfer.

LOW-E WINDOWS: Low-emissivity (Low-E) coatings are thin, virtually invisible layers applied to the glass. They reflect heat back into the room during the winter and block UV rays during the summer.

ARGON GAS-FILLED WINDOWS: These windows have insulating gas between the glass panes, further reducing heat transfer.

It's also time to consider the energy savings. Energy-efficient windows can lead to significant savings on your energy bills. They help maintain a consistent indoor temperature, reducing the need for heating and cooling. The exact savings depend on factors like your climate, the size of your home, and your previous windows' condition.

Let's not forget the benefits of improving your quality of life. Energy-efficient windows not only keep your home energy-efficient but also improve comfort. They help eliminate drafts and reduce condensation, making your living spaces more comfortable. Additionally, they can help reduce outside noise, creating a quieter and more peaceful environment indoors.

All of this is great including the fact that more efficient windows even help the planet. But this is something you need to make sure is professionally done so you don't miss a step and defeat all the new benefits you'll receive. With over 40,000 windows installed throughout our career, here at EarthSmart Windows and Doors we have you covered! Our energy saving installation method means we only remove one window at a time and promptly install a new window. This helps keep your home temperature more regulated throughout your installation process!

Happy Spring Time and I hope 2024 will bring your family many blessings! Look for us at the Huntsville, Athens, and Decatur Home and Garden Shows!



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ACCOUNTING SOLUTIONS: GIVING BUSINESS OWNERS MORE OF THEIR MONEY AND TIME

by Sarah Simpson, Accounting Solutions

Growing up, I did not know what I wanted to do, but I knew I wanted to have my own business. My mom loves to remind me that she bought the first item I ever sold—a paracord bracelet. To this day, she still has that poorly made bracelet I made when I was 13. I eventually got better at making those bracelets.

While working at accounting firm after college and helping small business owners navigate the world of taxes and accounting, I quickly realized how stressful it was for each and every one of them. It didn't take long before I vowed to one day start a firm that could help make the lives of these small business owners easier. Where we could come in and relieve stress, give them valuable time back to grow the business they love and in turn, spend more time with their families.

The name of my business is Accounting Solutions. We provide tax preparation and planning services to businesses and individuals, along

with monthly accounting. We want to help them keep more of their hard earned money in their pockets.

We can handle the complexities of staying compliant with taxes. We can give business owners up-to-date financials to make tough business decisions, and work alongside them through those decisions and as they grow their businesses. We do not only look into the past to report information that has already happened like a traditional CPA does, we look into the future and plan with our business owners for what is to come.

I speak from experience. Not only do I own my own firm, but I also have a six-month-old boy, Forrest. I know how difficult it can be to balance being a successful business owner and a caring, attentive mother and wife. Becoming a parent gave me a new reason to succeed. It also has helped me to understand my clients who are juggling running a business and being a parent. I know from that experience that it can be done and I can help you do it.

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QUICK CORE WORKOUT

By Emily Snider

We all love the feeling of working the muscles in our body but it usually takes up so much time. It's easy to get to the end of a day and realize that you haven't moved your body or challenged yourself physically yet. You can do this short workout right away in the morning, before bed, or in the middle of the day as a brain break.

TO START, DO CRUNCHES FOR 90 SECONDS TO TWO MINUTES, making sure to push yourself hard enough that you feel your abdominal muscles working.

NEXT, DO 100 PENGUIN CRUNCHES. Lie on your back with your arms by your sides and your feet flat on the floor so your knees are bent. Reach down to touch your heels one side at a time so you feel your obliques, or

side abs. To make them more difficult, you can move your feet away from your body so you have to reach farther to touch your heels.

THE LAST QUICK EXERCISE IS THE CLASSIC PLANK. You can be down on your elbows or up higher on your hands, but make sure to keep your hips level. Your body should be in a straight line parallel to the ground. You can start out by just doing a 30-second plank, then increase it as your core gets strong. By the end of the workout, you will have worked both the upper and lower abdominal muscles as well as the obliques. Work hard and have fun!



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THE MOM WALK COLLECTIVE COMES TO ATHENS

by Emma Daigle Lynn, The Mom Walk Collective Athens Host

The Mom Walk Collective is a nationwide organization with a mission to assist mothers in finding their community and raising the next generation. It was established in June 2022 by Jamie Easton, a first-time mom experiencing postpartum struggles. Jamie posted a video on social media, inviting local mothers to join her for coffee and a walk. To her surprise, three mothers showed up, and that was the beginning of The Mom Walk Collective.

TMWC has been established in over 300 cities across the United States and Canada. When I discovered the collective in November 2022, there weren't any walks in the state of Alabama. I knew that I wanted to be a part of it, so I applied to be the host




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for Athens and the rest of the Tennessee Valley. As a first-time mom struggling with postpartum anxiety, joining the mom walk collective and finding this community of other moms helped me remember that I am the best mom for my son and restored my confidence in motherhood. Our first walk was held in January 2023, and we recently celebrated the first anniversary of The Mom Walk Collective Athens. Through the collective, we have worked with several national sponsors. We have also been able to incorporate the Tennessee Valley into our walks by having several small businesses sponsor them and spoil our moms.

"I must say that TMWC has brought so much to the Athens community. It provides mothers with the opportunity to make new mom friends, get outside with their kids, seek parenting advice in a safe space, and even get in a little exercise. I have personally witnessed many moms coming up to me at walks and expressing their gratitude for finding such a wonderful community in our area. They shared how they were struggling with postpartum depression or finding it difficult to venture out with their kids alone. They were desperately seeking a place for their children to socialize with other kids and the Mom Walk Collective has made an incredibly positive impact on their lives!"

We get together twice a month at various locations across the Tennessee Valley, and we're always happy to welcome new moms into our community! Our walks typically involve meeting up at a park, going for a stroll, and then allowing our little ones to play while we mothers socialize and get to know each other better. Our walks are free from judgment and filled with love! I feel so grateful to have found my network of moms here in the Tennessee Valley, and I'm excited to meet more mothers and invite them to join our group! If you're interested in learning more about The Mom Walk Collective Athens, you can find us on Instagram @themomwalkco.athens or go to www.themomwalkcollective.com to find a walk near you!




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