

A woman with long dreadlocks, some of which are dyed blue, is smiling and holding two green cucumbers. She is wearing a light pink t-shirt. The background is a lush field of tall sunflowers with large green leaves. The overall tone is bright and positive.

Thank a FARMER

2026

Poplar Hill Farm

**Two Angels
Horse Farm**

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**Community Supported Agriculture
Succession Planning and More**

Healing heroes, one horse at a time

By Macee Swafford
Staff Writer

Five years ago, Kerstin Colliver and her husband, John, traded the fast pace of Lexington for the quiet hills of Whitley County. What began as a dream shared around a backyard bonfire has grown into something much larger than a horse farm.

Today, Two Angels Horse Farm in Williamsburg is home to riding lessons, rescued horses and Horses Healing Heroes — a nonprofit dedicated to serving veterans and first responders through the unique bond between humans and horses.

For Colliver, the mission is deeply personal.

Originally from Germany and raised in a military family, Colliver moved frequently as her father worked in cardiac administration — helping hospitals establish cardiac catheterization labs before moving on to the next assignment. Horses had always been part of her life, beginning around age 5 and continuing through everything to rodeo events and show jumping.

“I’ve been around them since I was about 5,” she said. “Every discipline is phenomenal in its own way. It gave me a very versatile perspective on what a horse can and cannot do.”

After moving to Kentucky in 2004 to study equine management at Midway University, she met her husband while the two worked at Walmart. Years later, the couple, along with their best friend and business partner, Stephanie, decided they wanted a different life.

“We kind of all sat in the backyard over a bonfire and a beer and said, ‘Let’s get out of Lexington. We need to get out of here,’” Colliver recalled.

Eventually, the move to Williamsburg began to

come to fruition. “[Williamsburg Mayor] Roddy [Harrison] is right — it feels like home,” she said. “Everybody has been welcoming.”

The idea behind Horses Healing Heroes was born long before the nonprofit officially became a 501(c)(3) in 2024. Colliver watched firsthand as her brother, a U.S. Army combat veteran who served nine tours, struggled after returning home.

“It was really hard to watch him,” she said. “He just kind of disintegrated before your eyes.”

Knowing both horses and her brother, Colliver decided to persuade him to join her for a trail ride. Watching him slowly relax in the saddle became a defining moment from what Colliver described as someone who was “ramrod stiff, looking around every tree and rock” to “laughing and slump-shouldered.”

That day planted the seed for what would eventually become Two Angels Horse Farm along with Horses Healing Heroes.

Rather than traditional therapy sessions, the nonprofit introduces veterans and first responders to natural horsemanship — allowing participants to brush horses, lead them through obstacles, ride if they choose or simply spend quiet time with the animals.

While the goal of Heroes Healing Heroes is simple — bringing veterans and first responders back on their feet, and introducing them back into a better reality — the same goes for Colliver when it comes to the goal of Two Angels Horse Farm.

The goal is to rescue horses, use natural horsemanship skills taught through various levels to our nation’s heroes, and create a bond that heals both hero and horse.

Colliver believes horses understand trauma in ways

few other animals can.

“A lot of their mannerisms are the same,” she said when talking about the comparison between the horses and first responders. “They jump at small noises. They jump at fast movements.”

Many of the rescued horses arriving at the farm carry emotional scars of their own. When asked what nearly every rehabilitation case has in common, Colliver answered with one word.

“Trust.”

Like some people, horses also have to warm up to someone in order to give them their full trust, with the number one thing common in horses is earning their trust. She explained that she sees similarities between abused horses and veterans dealing with the invisible wounds of military services.

“Horses don’t feel anger,” she explained. “Their reactions are fear. A veteran may react before somebody can take an action against them. Horses do the same thing.”

Among the many horses that have passed through the farm, one left an unforgettable mark.

Ernie, an 18-hand draft mule retired from a therapeutic riding program, arrived severely malnourished.

A healthy mule his size should have weighed nearly 2,000 pounds. Ernie stepped off the trailer weighing only 780 pounds.

“He was very food aggressive because he was starving,” Colliver said.

Months of patient rehabilitation restored Ernie to roughly 1,600 pounds before he eventually succumbed to lip cancer. Along the way, he became something of a local celebrity — regularly

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Kerstin Colliver operates Two Angels Horse Farm.

| Photo by Macee Swafford



One of Colliver’s many horses takes a big drink to cool off.

| Photo by Macee Swafford

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HORSE

Continued from page 2

wandering onto neighbors’ porches for unannounced visits.

“He was the neighborhood visitor,” Colliver laughed. “Apparently fences didn’t mean anything to him.”

The healing isn’t limited to the horses.

Colliver recalls VFW member Larry Freimuth becoming attached to one of the farm’s mares, Shawnee, after comforting her while she received veterinary treatment.

“Every time I see him now, it’s, ‘How’s my girl?’” Colliver said. “That

is his girl.”

Running the farm isn’t Colliver’s full-time job. She also works remotely for UK HealthCare as a quality technician while balancing horse care, lessons, nonprofit events and ongoing improvements around the property. Time is one of the biggest challenges she faces.

“I work until 3:30 p.m.,” she said, “so I have from then until dark to cram in as much as I can.”

Every horse riding lesson taught through Two Angels Horse Farm helps fund Horses Healing Heroes, ensuring veterans and first responders can participate free of charge.

Beyond horses, the farm



Colliver reaches out to pet one of her many horses.



Colliver notes that this specific part on her Williamsburg farm is where she often comes to sit, and hangout with her rehab and rescue horses.

| Photo by Macee Swafford

has become a gathering place supported by the Williamsburg community.

Local businesses, the local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter, churches and volunteers regularly lend a hand — whether clearing fields, helping with projects or providing meals while Colliver recovers from surgery.

She believes places like Two Angels Horse Farm strengthen rural communities by offering something many people need but rarely find.

“I think we strengthen communities because we’re offering a safe place,” she

said. “Some veterans can’t even cross the threshold of their front door. If you can get them out, they probably don’t want to be somewhere public.”

For Colliver, the greatest lesson the farm has taught her has been perseverance.

“There was a day I realized that even in the darkest days, the light will find a way through,” she said. “Even when I wanted to give up — my pure love for these horses and our soldiers pushes me every day.”

As for those who have never stepped foot on a farm, she hopes they un-

| Photo by Macee Swafford

derstand that behind every fence line is more than livestock.

“I really wish people understood the time and labor that it takes,” she said. “Farmers are losing their land every day, and that’s going to hurt.”

But despite the long days, hard work and heartache that sometimes comes with caring for animals, Colliver says the reward is unlike anything else.

To help out with Two Angel’s Horse Farm or to learn more, visit them on their Facebook page or call them at 859-913-6621.

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Poplar Hill Farm grows more than produce

By Macee Swafford
Staff Writer

For Candace Frazier, Poplar Hill Farm was never meant to become a large farming operation. Instead, the Laurel County farm has become something more personal — a place where faith, family, stewardship and community come together among gardens, livestock and a towering tulip poplar tree that inspired its name. Nestled on land that has been in her husband’s family for generations, Poplar Hill Farm began with a dream that Frazier and her husband shared long before they owned animals or planted gardens. “When we got married,

we were given use of a double-wide trailer here rent free,” Frazier said. “But it was always my dream to build a house and start our own little farm.” That dream centered around one particular piece of land overlooking the countryside. “My kids and I would come up here when the cows weren’t here and fly kites and have picnics. I just loved this piece of land,” she said. “There’s a huge tulip poplar tree that’s extremely old, and I loved it.” When the couple eventually surveyed the property and built a home for them and their two children, the farm finally began taking shape. Inspired by the towering tree and the gentle rise

of the land, the name came naturally. “I thought, ‘Poplar Hill.’ And that’s how the name came about,” Frazier said. Before farming full time, the Fraziers owned one of southeastern Kentucky’s largest inflatable rental businesses. The company thrived until the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the industry. “We sold the business after COVID,” she said. “It got crazy.” What followed after that initial business was the opportunity to fully invest in the dream — and lifestyle — that Frazier and her husband had always envisioned. Today, Poplar Hill Farm is home to a wide range of livestock and crops such as sheep, goats, rabbits, pigs, herbs and flowers — with each season bringing something new to harvest and share. Visitors stopping by the farm can find a white farm stand at the very end of the driveway leading up to the farm where squash, cucumbers, fresh and dried herbs, teas, and other seasonal goodies can be purchased. To keep updated on the many items Poplar Hill Farms offers, those interested can follow them at their



A flock of sheep keep the rolling hillside at Poplar Hill Farm trimmed. | Photo by Macee Swafford



A goat gets a quick bite to eat. | Photo by Macee Swafford

Facebook page under the same name. “As the season changes, so do the things we offer because I really enjoy working with what God provides throughout the year,” she said. “Our herbal products have become especially popular because people are looking for simple, natural ways to care for themselves and their families.” Frazier’s passion for herbs extends beyond simply growing them. As a certified Master Gardener through the Laurel County Cooperative Extension office, she completed extensive horticulture training and continues volunteering and pursuing continuing education each year. “I would be a lifelong student if I could be,” she said. “That just fills my bucket.” While the gardens and herbal products draw much attention, Frazier admits that the animals often steal the spotlight. “They all have personalities. People think farm animals are just livestock but they’re entertaining, they’re curious and they make every day a little different,” she said. More importantly, caring for them provides a daily reminder to appreciate life’s

simplest blessings — something that Frazier said reminds her to appreciate the simple things, and extends well beyond the farm itself. Frazier partners with Isaiah 58:10 Ministries and Outreach to operate a community garden that provides fresh produce for families facing food insecurity. “One of the things close to my heart is our community garden,” she said. “Because of our community’s support, we’re able to grow fresh produce to bless families who need it. That

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FARM

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reminds me that farming isn't just about growing plants — it's about growing community."

She believes modern farming has also become an opportunity to reconnect people with skills that previous generations considered everyday knowledge. Frazier explained that so many people in her generation want to learn how to garden, preserve food, use herbs or simply reconnect with nature — not because they have to, but because they see the value in it.

"If I can encourage someone to plant their first tomato, make their first cup of herbal tea or believe they really can grow something themselves, then I've done something worthwhile," she

said.

For Frazier, being a farmer in Laurel County means carrying forward traditions built on service, stewardship and neighbor helping neighbor. As proud as she is of everything the farm has become, Frazier says her proudest moments aren't measured by acreage or sales. Instead, they're found in everyday interactions.

Though she jokes that she'd love to become known as "the place where there's always goats in the road," her vision reaches much deeper than memorable products or playful animals.

"When people meet me or come to the farm, it isn't important if they remember every remedy, vegetable, flower or thing I sell," Frazier said. "I want them to feel welcome. I want them to feel like they're sitting on the front porch with a glass

of sweet tea or herbal lemonade, talking to a friend who genuinely wants to help them live a little closer to the land and a little closer to the Lord."

And as explained by Frazier, that's really what Poplar Hill Farm is all about.



Poplar Hill Farm's newest furry friend.

| Photo by Macee Swafford



The garden where Frazier grows most of her crops.

| Photo by Macee Swafford



While goats, sheep and rabbits take up a majority of the farm, these two pot-belly pigs make their presence known.

| Photo by Macee Swafford



Candace Frazier stands against the backdrop of her farm, while her sheep try their best to get her attention.

| Photo by Macee Swafford



The namesake for Frazier's farm — a poplar tree sits on top of the hill where their house was built.

| Photo by Macee Swafford

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Community Supported Agriculture

In the heart of sustainable agriculture lies a model that nourishes the land and fosters

a direct connection between farmers and the communities they serve — Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

As the demand for locally sourced, fresh produce rises, setting up and managing a CSA program can be a rewarding venture for farmers seeking to cultivate strong community ties while providing a bountiful harvest.

By fostering direct relationships between farmers and shareholders, CSA programs become a beacon of sustainable agriculture, nourishing both the land and the people it serves.

At the core of any successful CSA program is community engagement. Begin by gauging local interest and building a network of potential supporters. Hosting community events, participating in farmers’ markets, and leveraging social media are effective ways to create awareness and excitement around your CSA initiative.



Plan Your Harvest Calendar

CSA programs typically operate on a seasonal schedule, offering shareholders a variety of fresh produce throughout the growing season. Plan your harvest calendar meticulously, considering the local climate and the types of crops that thrive in each season. A diverse selection ensures a rich experience for CSA members and promotes a sustainable,

year-round operation.

Options and Communication

Tailor your CSA program to meet the diverse needs of your community. Offer different share sizes, delivery or pickup options, and even specialty packages like organic or themed baskets. Providing flexibility ensures that your program appeals to a broader audience, accommodating various preferences

and lifestyles.

Establishing transparent and consistent communication is key to a thriving CSA program. Regularly update shareholders on the progress of crops, upcoming harvests and any challenges faced on the farm. Consider implementing newsletters, social media updates or even on-farm events to keep the community engaged and informed about the food they are supporting.

Develop a user-friendly website where potential members can learn about your program, sign up for shares and access important information. Use social media platforms to share behind-the-scenes glimpses of farm life, recipes, and connect with your community on a personal level.

Implement Sustainable Practices

Embrace sustainable

farming practices. Highlight your commitment to eco-friendly agriculture, whether through organic methods, reduced chemical usage or water conservation. Shareholders increasingly value the connection between sustainable farming and the fresh, nutritious produce they receive.

Create memorable experiences by organizing on-farm events or workshops for CSA members. Invite them to participate in harvests, farm tours or cooking classes. These events strengthen the bond between farmers and shareholders and deepen the community’s appreciation for the origins of their food.

Encourage open communication and seek feedback from CSA members regularly. Use this valuable input to adapt and refine your program continually. Whether it’s adjusting crop varieties, altering pickup times or introducing new offerings, a responsive approach ensures that your CSA remains aligned with community expectations.

Succession Planning

As family-owned farms navigate the ebb and flow of generations, they have to cultivate the art of succession planning.

Ensuring a smooth transition to the next generation preserves the legacy of the farm and sets the stage for continued success.

Farm succession planning is not merely a legal formality; it is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires adaptability and foresight.

Preserving a Legacy

Family-owned farms are not just businesses; they are living legacies woven into the fabric of generations. Succession planning safeguards the hard work, traditions and values embedded in the farm, allowing them to flourish and evolve under the stewardship of the next generation.

Initiate conversations about succession early and maintain open lines of communication. Discussing the future of the farm, roles and responsibilities helps align expectations and prevents

misunderstandings. Encourage active participation and input from all family members involved.

Clearly define who will take on leadership roles in the next generation. Consider factors such as skills, passion and commitment. A comprehensive understanding of each successor’s strengths and aspirations aids in allocating responsi-

bilities effectively.

Creating a Plan

Seek guidance from professionals, including financial advisors, attorneys and agricultural experts. These individuals can provide valuable insights into legal, financial and operational aspects of succession planning, ensuring a comprehensive and legally

sound strategy.

Formalize the succession plan in writing. Clearly outline roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes. Having a documented plan not only provides clarity but also serves as a reference point for resolving any future disputes.

Address the issue of fairness when distributing assets and responsibilities among

heirs. Consider non-farming children and their interests, and aim for a solution that is perceived as fair by all family members.

Facilitate a structured training program for the successors. Ensure that they acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to successfully manage the farm. Mentorship programs and on-the-job training

can be instrumental in this process.

Financial Planning

Evaluate the farm’s financial health and develop a plan for financial continuity. Consider tax implications, estate planning and potential sources of funding for the transition. A well-thought-out financial strategy mitigates risks and ensures the farm’s economic sustainability.

Anticipate unforeseen circumstances by incorporating contingency plans into the succession strategy. Consider factors such as unexpected health issues, economic downturns or changes in the agricultural landscape to maintain resilience in the face of uncertainty.

Gradual transitions often yield the best results. Consider a phased handover that allows the next generation to gradually assume responsibilities while benefiting from the guidance and experience of the current generation. This approach promotes a smoother adjustment for all parties involved.





Farmer’s Market Skillet Bake

Yield: 8, 1 cup servings

Ingredients

- 1/2 small onion finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 4-5 small red potatoes sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese divided
- 1 medium summer squash sliced
- 1 medium zucchini sliced
- 4 medium sized tomatoes sliced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 5 fresh basil leaves finely chopped, divided

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Prepare onion, garlic and sliced potatoes (about 1/4 inch thick). Heat olive oil over medium heat in a 10 or 12-inch oven safe skillet. Add onion, garlic, and potatoes to pan and stir to coat with oil. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until golden brown and tender. Add 1 cup mozzarella cheese. In a bowl, toss together the squash, zucchini and tomatoes with salt, pepper, and half of the finely chopped basil. Layer squash and tomato slices over the potato and cheese layer. Top with remaining mozzarella cheese. Bake 35 minutes or until vegetables are tender and cheese is melted. Remove skillet from oven and top with remaining basil.

Red Potato Salad

Yield: 16, ½ cup servings

Ingredients

- 6 medium red potatoes cut into 1½ inch pieces
- 4 cups fresh green beans cut into 1½ inch pieces
- 1 small red onion chopped
- 1 red bell pepper chopped
- 1 yellow bell pepper chopped
- 1 cup chopped cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons fresh oregano
- Salt and pepper

Directions

- 1 Wash vegetables in warm water.
- 2 Boil potatoes until tender and drain.
- 3 Boil green beans until tender crisp and drain.
- 4 Place the potatoes and green beans in a bowl.
- 5 Add chopped red onions, peppers and tomatoes.
- 6 In a small bowl, mix mayonnaise, red wine vinegar and chopped oregano.
- 7 Add to potato mixture and mix lightly.
- 8 Season with salt and pepper. Mix well. Serve cold.



Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds fresh green beans
- 1 medium red bell pepper
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper
- 1 small yellow onion
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 teaspoon coarse black pepper
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar packed
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2-3 fresh garlic cloves diced

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Wash beans. Trim the ends off the green beans and cut into 1/2 inch pieces. Place green beans in a medium saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil and cook for 3 minutes or until beans are tender crisp. Drain and pour beans into a bowl of ice water to cool. Drain and pat dry. Core peppers and cut into thin strips. Peel onion and slice into thin strips. Spread the sliced almonds on a baking sheet, bake with the rack in the top position at 400 degrees F until lightly browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Mix the flour, black

pepper and brown sugar together in a small bowl; stir in soy sauce and lemon juice until smooth. A tablespoon of cold water can be added if sauce is too thick. In a large skillet or wok, add the canola oil and heat to medium high. Add onion and stir-fry for 1 minute. Add garlic and peppers and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add beans and stir-fry for an additional 2 minutes. Add sauce and toss/ cook until sauce evenly coats the beans. Remove to serving plate and sprinkle with the sliced almonds.

Summer Squash Pizza

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

- Topping*
- 2 yellow summer squash thinly sliced
 - 1 cup thinly sliced onion
 - 1 green pepper thinly sliced
 - 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - 3 tablespoons olive oil
 - 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

- Crust*
- 1/2 tablespoon rapid rise yeast
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 1/2 cup warm water
 - 1/2-1 cup whole wheat flour
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place sliced squash, onion and pepper in roasting pan. Sprinkle with rosemary, salt, pepper and 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Toss to coat. Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes, or until onions are lightly brown and squash and peppers are tender. Set aside. Increase oven temperature to 450 degrees F. In a medium mixing bowl, dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water. Let yeast proof, about 10 minutes. Stir in 1/2 cup flour, salt and oil. Mix until smooth then rest for 5 minutes. Add additional flour as needed to be able turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Roll into flat 1/4 inch thick crust. Place crust onto a baking sheet. Bake 5 minutes to set crust. Remove from oven and distribute vegetable mixture on crust. Bake an additional 10 minutes or until crust is firm, being careful not to burn. Remove from oven, sprinkle with cheese and remaining tablespoon olive oil. Cut into quarters and serve.



Peach Crisp

Yield: 9 servings

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup quick cook oats
- 1/2 cup honey-sweetened granola
- 3 tablespoons whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup butter softened
- 6 cups peaches peeled and sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Combine the oats, granola, flour and brown sugar in a medium mixing bowl. Cut small pieces of softened butter over the top. Cut butter into dry ingredients until well combined and crumbly. Lightly coat an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with cooking spray, add peaches. Sprinkle the dry ingredients and butter mixture over the peaches. Add spices and chopped nuts evenly over the top. Place on rack in the middle position in oven. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until topping is golden brown.





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