

103.5 WRBO
Cumulus Memphis

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October 1

Kayla Rodriguez Graff, CEO and Co-Founder, and **Dr. Isaac Rodriguez**, Chief Science Officer and Co-Founder of Sweet Bio, highlight their Memphis, Tennessee-based medical device company that leverages the power of Manuka honey to simplify the healing journey to closure with a new easy-to-apply wound dressing. Kayla and Isaac discuss the technology and “natural” benefits, how the pandemic shifted care to the home, and how the company has innovated to create Wound CareKits for use at home. They talk about the essential steps they have taken over the last two years to increase access through partnerships and insurance reimbursements and how that ties into their purpose of providing advanced wound care for all. They also discuss the different wounds treated, the results with Dermatology and Podiatry, and how people can get their products and kits.

Coach Bill Courtney, the subject of the Oscar-winning documentary, *“Undefeated,”* Founder of Classic American Hardwoods, Inc., Author of *“Against the Grain,”* and host of the new podcast, *“An Army of Normal Folks,”* shares what led him to join the nonprofit, **Iron Light Labs**, to launch the podcast. The podcast aims to inspire listeners and present fascinating models that can be replicated in their communities. All individuals are invited to join An Army of Normal Folks. A grassroots movement led by Coach Bill Courtney, former volunteer football coach at Manassas High School and the subject of the 2012 Academy Award-winning documentary, *“Undefeated,”* An Army of Normal Folks brings together Americans of all stripes committed to “doing what we can.” Bill and his fellow change makers believe that by taking action in ordinary but meaningful ways, such as volunteering, donating, and changing even only one other person’s life, An Army of Normal Folks can make all the difference. Bill shares his perspective on the importance of the podcast, talks about the intersection of discipline and passion and why that matters for creating change, and discusses how listeners can take action to help create a movement locally and nationally.

Kelley Marshburn, Development Director for the **Alzheimer’s Association Tennessee Chapter**, highlights the nonprofit organization’s mission to “lead the way to end Alzheimer’s and all other dementia – by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.” Kelley discusses how the Alzheimer’s Association is the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer’s disease research, and the latest drug that received full FDA approval on July 6, 2023, Lecanemab, is the

first one ever to target the cause of the disease, not just the symptoms. Kelley talks about their advocacy and support programs and the importance of the Walk to End Alzheimer's, the organization's largest fundraising campaign with over 600 walks nationwide. She highlights the event in Memphis on Saturday, October 21, 2023, and in Nashville on Saturday, November 4, 2023, and how the community can support their efforts and the events.

October 8

Jena Jauchius, a Landscape Architect and Nature Play Expert with **N is for Nature Play**. Jena shared her insights into the importance of sensory-rich nature play in the growth and development of children. From the seven sensory systems in children to how nature play and nature connection can positively impact their overall health and well-being, Jena enlightened us about the innate wisdom of children and how we can tap into it. The discussion ranges from how children today are 'wired differently' to the multi-sensory magic of nature play spaces like fairy gardens and mud kitchens. We also explored the significant role of social and nature connections in children's lives, and Jena gave us an inside look into her sensory garden at home.

Jim Morris, CEO of IMPACT Events, shares what led him to start bringing entrepreneurs together through the pandemic and to launch his company in 2020. Jim talks about how IMPACT Events has grown from hosting smaller networking events to producing larger events with some of the most highly respected leaders in the community with a focus on education. He discusses their upcoming IMPACT Effect 23 conference in downtown Nashville, Tennessee, on October 27, 2023. The event will feature ten national speakers and local partners in the central business district, focusing on changing the lives and future trajectory of 500 attendees. Jim spotlights some of the speakers and topics for the conference and talks about how you can sign up to attend. He also talks about ways to get involved with IMPACT Events throughout the year with their other hosted events and efforts.

Evan Drumwright, CEO and Co-Founder of Dextrous Robotics, highlights the Memphis-based company and how their unique bimanual manipulation technology allows package logistics, 3PLs, warehousing, and retail customers to autonomously and precisely move packages and objects of nearly any size, shape, or material with superhuman strength and speed. With its first product, DX-1, the company is automating bulk container unloading. DX-1 has two chopstick-like arms that can pick packages from a floor-loaded shipping container and place them on a conveyor. Evan discusses the technology, how they're working with The Armstrong Company, and how the robots add value to the workforce and companies utilizing them. Additional skilled jobs are also created, including robot designers, manufacturers, deployment engineers, programmers, etc., to build and maintain the robotic system. Evan also talks about the importance of being headquartered in Memphis, their scope to work with companies worldwide, advice for other entrepreneurs, and how the community can support their efforts.

October 15

Gabriella Milgrom, a home renovation, interior design, and building expert with over 12 years of experience, shares invaluable insights about the intersection of design vision and execution, the misconceptions about vision boards, and how she empowers women to create their dream homes without the everyday stressors of time, money, and sanity. This interview contains practical tips on avoiding costly renovation mistakes, identifying contractor red flags, and effectively managing construction costs. We also explored the significant role of a project

manager in ensuring the success of a renovation project. Whether contemplating a home remodel or simply curious about interior design and home construction, Gabriella's expertise will undoubtedly leave you better informed and inspired to transform your living space.

TD Smyers, who heads up the Regional Development Partnership for **BoardBuild**, shares how the organization is leveraging technology to strengthen and diversify nonprofit boards nationwide. BoardBuild connects nonprofit boards of directors with emerging and established leaders to create inspiring opportunities and build strong communities.

TD shares some of his background in nonprofit leadership and board development and how that led to the creation of BoardBuild. He discusses why and how BoardBuild can help nonprofits be intentional with their efforts to strengthen and diversify their boards. He also talks about their online training program and how they are working with individuals, companies, and nonprofits to train, equip, and prepare current and potential board members for their role on a nonprofit board by completing their self-paced, online training in the essentials of nonprofit board governance.

Bluff City Toffee and **Madonna Learning Center**, revealing how they're transforming the lives of individuals with special needs through the power of vocational opportunities. More than a sweets shop, Bluff City Toffee is owned and operated by Madonna Learning Center, a school and training center for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The business provides adults with special needs real-life job experiences, empowering them to excel in today's world while making delicious, handmade sweets in small batches. Through the lens of Bluff City Toffee, listeners will gain insights into the innovative methods Madonna Learning Center is implementing to help its students and trainees gain skills and realize the dreams that were once thought to be beyond their reach. They produce, package, sell, and track products, and socialize with customers, equipping them with practical skills that boost their confidence and readiness for the world. Sales have risen significantly (over 400% to be exact) since Madonna Learning Center purchased Bluff City Toffee, reflecting the hard work, dedication, and passion that the trainees put into their work. The business's success is not just measured in sales but in the fulfillment and purpose it brings to the adults working at the shop. In this episode, you'll hear from the people on the ground, making a difference in the lives of these special needs adults and get an inside look at the business operations. Tune in to learn how your purchase from Bluff City Toffee can help accomplish goals that were once dreams.

October 22

Heather DeSantis Holmes, is the CEO and founder of **Publicity For Good**, the country's top PR agency for Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) brands with social good at the core of their ethos. With over a decade of experience in the public relations industry and a profound passion for conscientious capitalism, Heather provides fascinating insights into PR's transformative power when combined with a mission to make a positive impact. We delve into Heather's intriguing journey, from her studies at Georgetown University to her pioneering approach in running a PR firm from an Airstream while traveling the US for over three years. Heather shares how she and her team have cultivated a unique culture at Publicity For Good, built on passion, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to the pursuit of doing good. She opens up about her accolades, what they mean to her, and how they have galvanized her drive to serve passionate, purpose-driven brands.

Sridhar Sunkara, CEO of **eBiz Solutions**, discusses generative AI and offers several helpful tips for using chatGPT in an enterprise setting to help an organization improve efficiencies and maximize productivity. During the interview, Sridhar provides some context around generative AI and chatGPT, explains how

companies can integrate GPT into a digital transformation roadmap, discusses the leadership and structure necessary for success, and highlights several examples of the types of wins companies can have when they adopt and leverage AI. Sridhar also talks about the importance of using chatGPT as a conversational partner to deliver the best results and how eBiz Solutions has launched a consulting division specifically focused on helping business leaders better understand and leverage AI.

Baylee Less, is the Director of Development for **Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR)**. Baylee, a passionate native Memphian, is dedicated to building a vibrant and equitable community in her hometown. As a young professional in the senior care sector, she brings valuable insights into the importance of being philanthropic and its impact on personal and professional growth. We delve into the world of nonprofit leadership as Baylee shares her experiences and lessons learned while working in the senior care sector. Discover the innovative approaches that MJHR has implemented in nonprofit communications to support its mission and engage the community. The conversation takes a deeper dive into the significance of the aging population and senior care's essential role in our society. Baylee sheds light on MJHR's commitment to providing exceptional care and shares touching stories highlighting philanthropic support's positive outcomes. We also explore Baylee's involvement as the Board Chair for **Music Export Memphis** and the connection between music and philanthropy. Learn how her creative pursuits, including an MFA in Creative Writing, intersect with her work in the nonprofit sector and inspire her leadership.

October 29

Natalie Young Williams, Executive Director of **Tarrant To & Through Partnership (T3)**, highlights the organization's mission and efforts to ensure more Tarrant County students have the training and skills they need to thrive in today's workforce. T3 is a local partnership of school districts, colleges, universities, employers, and organizations anchored by a dedicated backbone staff focused on serving students and families in Tarrant County, Texas. Natalie provides background on the organization, their model, and their programs designed to inform and engage students and families about college and career pathways. She talks about the challenges and barriers students currently face, the importance of family engagement, and how creating clear pathways helps lead to bright futures in the community. She also touches on lessons learned, words of encouragement for other communities, and their interest in collaborating with stakeholders in other communities to share and help power the GOOD.

Graham Gibbs, Founder and President of **Five Talents Faithful**, shares his background and what led him to launch the nonprofit with the purpose of "helping other nonprofit organizations as they strive towards good financial stewardship by making the most out of their resources." Graham shares how Five Talents Faithful has worked with other nonprofits and churches on projects ranging from purchasing and product sourcing to transportation and overseas logistics. He provides an update on their goal to impact 1 million lives in 5 years, with more than 716,000 lives already impacted through 60 organizations served, with cost savings nearing \$500,000.

Brittany Plumeri, is a bestselling children's book author, elementary school teacher, and mother, who has dedicated her life to teaching empathy in fun and engaging ways. Brittany shares the inspiration behind her beloved stories and how she infuses each tale with lessons on self-esteem, confidence, kindness, and manners. She gives us an inside look into her upcoming book in the popular **Monster Manners Lab** series and explains what makes her books interactive and engaging for young readers. We explore Brittany's unique balancing act – juggling her roles as a teacher, mother, and author, and how these experiences shape her writing. Brittany also opens up about the challenges and rewards of self-

publishing and how she supports other authors through her publishing company, Once Upon a Page Press.

November 5

Scott Mitchell, CEO of **Tennis Memphis**, and **Melinda Hoehn**, Director of Business Operations, highlight the nonprofit organization dedicated to building a better community and enhancing lives through tennis and education. Tennis Memphis provides youth programs after school and during the summer, including comprehensive year-round Junior Development, Tennis and Tutoring (TnT), free tennis clinics and outreach programs and USTA programming. Scott and Melinda talk about the different public tennis centers they manage, their youth and adult programs, the benefits of learning and playing tennis as a lifelong sport, and how you can get started. They also spotlight the Grand Opening of the Leftwich Tennis Center on Saturday, November 11, 2023, to celebrate with a free community-wide “Play Day” between 10 AM and 1 PM. Scott and Melinda discuss how the Leftwich Tennis Center will impact the Mid-South and bring exciting new opportunities for tennis in Memphis with Tennis Memphis!

Scott Hamilton, Olympic Gold Medalist, Cancer Survivor, and Founder and Chief Volunteer with the **Scott Hamilton CARES Foundation**, shares his personal story and what led him to launch the nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the future of cancer by funding advanced, innovative research that treats the cancer while sparing the patient. Established in 2014, CARES stands for Cancer Alliance for Research Education and Survivorship. The organization serves as a neutral convener between organizations, researchers, academic scientists, drug developers and others to accelerate the advancement of less toxic treatments for isolated cancers and tumors. Scott talks about the impact of his mother and losing her to cancer, how that propelled him to success and Olympic Gold, and how his battles with cancer transformed him from a fundraiser to an activist. He shares the mission and talks about the programs and focus areas for CARES, along with how the community can get involved to support their efforts and fight cancer, including their 7th Annual Scott Hamilton & Friends event on Sunday, November 19, 2023, and their 1984 fund, where a monthly donation of \$19.84 can transform the lives of cancer patients all year long.

Angela and Richard Schelp, Co-Founders of **Executive Speakers Bureau**, highlight the company’s 30th anniversary and growth to become one of the nation’s premiere and largest speakers bureaus. Angela and Richard discuss what a speakers bureau does and how they can match those hosting events with the right guest speaker to create success. They talk about their exclusive speakers and their ability to source thousands of speakers to find the right fit, current hot topics and trends, how technology is leveraged, shaping event expectations, and helpful tips for event organizers. They also share valuable advice for those looking to become professional speakers and how you can start setting yourself up for success.

November 12

Wesley Belden, a visionary fin-tech entrepreneur on a mission to use capitalism as a tool to remedy the challenges caused by capitalism itself, is drawing upon his unique background in finance, entrepreneurship, and diverse fields of study. Wesley offers a rare and rounded perspective on the current state of our financial system and the pivotal role that fin-tech can play in forging a more equitable future with his organization, **Raise Financial**. This episode navigates Wesley’s journey from his humble beginnings to managing a portfolio worth over \$1 billion, highlighting the drive and tenacity that led him to establish Raise Financial and Raise Education. With these ventures, Wesley aims to bridge the generational wealth gaps, streamline savings for college education, and empower thousands of families to secure their financial futures. Particularly captivating is Wesley’s discussion around Raise Investment,

a revolutionary product that aims to democratize stock ownership, paralleling the impact of mortgages on home ownership. From explaining the detrimental effects of subscription services on wealth disparity to presenting novel strategies for optimizing 529 college savings plans, Wesley imparts invaluable financial insights. He deciphers the power of compounding returns and elaborates on how Raise Financial makes long-term investments more accessible for young Americans.

Nick Davies, Master Coach with **ProAdvisorCoach**, shares his background growing up and working in England and across three continents with a common thread centered around helping people achieve greater levels of success and how that led him to become a Master Coach here in the United States with ProAdvisorCoach. Nick highlights ProAdvisorCoach and his approach to working with individuals and businesses, the importance of mindset and attitude how it plays a critical role in defining what is possible, and how coaching in business and sports are similar yet different. He also shares a leadership lesson that has become a valuable tool in his personal and professional growth.

Lance Villio, Executive Director for the **Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**, highlights how the office, established by Governor Lee in 2019, partners with nonprofits, business leaders and the faith community to serve Tennesseans in need. Lance talks about their model and how the office has led key public-private partnerships, including Tennessee Fosters Hope and anti-trafficking efforts, and will continue to serve as a resource hub for Tennesseans and their families. He also talks about how the community can support their efforts.

November 19

Marie Pizano, who is the CEO and Founder of **MVP3 Media Group**; Founder of **MVP3 Network**; and Chairwoman of the Board, President and Founder of The MVP3 Foundation, provides background on the different media entities and how they create synergy to benefit the community. The MVP3 Foundation is a member-supported nonprofit educational and entertainment organization that creates opportunities for communities to experience film, theater, artworks, culinary, and music to inspire, educate, challenge, and entertain. MVP3 Network is the new over-the-top social video and multi-channel network that connects audiences around the globe and delivers good content that is productive and responsible for society, as a whole. Marie talks about MVP3 Media Group, The MVP3 Foundation and MVP3 Network, some of the projects she and her teams are working on, launching into the news, the importance of providing access and opportunities for local artists, and how the community can support and access the nonprofit and network.

Ann Souders, Director of Outreach for the **Mustang Heritage Foundation**, shares what led her to get involved and work with the nonprofit organization dedicated to facilitating successful placements of America's excess wild horses and burros through innovative programs, events, and education. Since 2007, the Mustang Heritage Foundation has helped place more than 25,000 horses and burros in homes and private care while an additional 60,000 are waiting to find a home after being removed from public lands. Ann talks about programs and events, the importance and impact of their work, how their efforts save taxpayer dollars, and how working with horses offers powerful therapy for Veterans and skill and character building for youth. She also touches on how the community can support their efforts through events, adoptions, donations, and advocacy.

Patrick Newman, CEO and president of the **Fort Worth Botanic Garden**, highlights the nonprofit organization and its 120-acre campus, which contains a collection of more than 2,500 species of plants and is known as the oldest central botanic garden in Texas. Patrick shares the history and favorite aspects of the garden. Then, he talks about the importance of the merger in 2020 with the Botanical

Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), one of the largest centers for botanical exploration and discovery in the United States. Patrick discusses some of the global and local research and talks about how that plays into their education efforts and mission, “Explore – Discover – Engage.” One of the significant upcoming events highlighted includes [Lightscape presented by Higginbotham](#), which takes place from November 17, 2023, through January 1, 2024. Lightscape is an international, sellout sensation, which is back by popular demand and the perfect opportunity to enjoy the Fort Worth Botanic Garden during the holidays. Patrick concludes by outlining other ways the community can support their efforts and enjoy [reciprocal memberships](#) in different cities, such as Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee.

November 26

Tyler Ford, the Senior Director of Mentors at **tnAchieves**, provides an in-depth understanding of tnAchieves’ mission and impact, the importance of mentorship, and the transformative power of the TN Promise Scholarship. He also shares heartwarming success stories, details about the mentor recruitment process, and the importance of in-person meetings in fostering strong mentor/mentee relationships.

Courtney McNeal, Chief of Staff for **Innovate Memphis**, highlights the nonprofit dedicated to delivering civic solutions and provides some context for their designing, launching and administering the 901RideChoice program. 901RideChoice aims to solve transportation barriers in Shelby County, offering Memphians free rides to a variety of resources that are also labeled as social determinants of health (SDOH), including behavioral health appointments, case management sessions (medical or non-medical), and food access points (WIC, food banks or grocery stores). Courtney talks about the process and how individuals can schedule transportation, how the program is funded by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Uber Health, and how 901RideChoice also powers Rides to Wellness, a non-emergency medical transportation program.

Anika Jackson is a strategic communications maestro who is passionate about amplifying brand voices and catalyzing social change. Throughout her rich career, which spans multiple decades, Anika has championed various roles, from seasoned marketer to graduate adjunct professor at USC Annenberg. As the dynamic VP of Operations for **Full Capacity Marketing** and the visionary behind the popular podcast ‘[Your Brand Amplified®](#),’ Anika’s journey offers a treasure trove of insights for budding entrepreneurs, nonprofit enthusiasts, and individuals looking to navigate significant life shifts. Whether you’re keen on understanding the evolving landscape of PR, unraveling the intricacies of integrated marketing, or seeking inspiration from Anika’s journey of rediscovery, this episode promises wisdom, motivation, and actionable strategies.

December 3

Judith Rautine is the Generations Manager at **Porter-Leath**, an organization that stands out as one of five nationwide grantees of the AmeriCorps Seniors Workforce Development Senior Demonstration Program. Judith discusses the impact of this grant, which will expand opportunities for seniors to engage in early childhood careers and earn their Child Development Associate Credential. Judith shares insightful details about the program, its benefits for seniors and children, and its transformative potential.

Barb Stegemann recently was the keynote speaker for the cityCURRENT signature speaker series event in Nashville, Tennessee, and offers a fun recap and additional context from her presentation. Barb shares some of her entrepreneurial journey and valuable lessons learned, talks about the importance of passion and persistence, some of the personal challenges she has had to overcome and how they have

made her stronger, and some of the exciting things to come for **The 7 Virtues** with a new product launch in the fall.

Zach Montroy, Founder and CEO at **The Intention Collective**. Zach's two-decade experience in executive roles and his expertise in organizational strategy and people leadership give him a unique perspective on business growth and leadership. In this engaging discussion, Zach shares his insights on building brave workplaces, battling toxic cultures, understanding the intersection of meaningful work and accountability, and secrets to successful business scaling. This episode is an invaluable resource for any entrepreneur or business leader looking to take their organization to the next level.

December 10

Tina Blackmon, Senior Vice President of Operations for Memphis Goodwill, along with **Latisha Robertson**, Vice President of Contract Services, highlight the 100th Anniversary of the organization dedicated to the mission to change the lives of people with disabilities and other barriers to employment through the power of work, education, and empowerment. Tina and Latisha discuss the importance of their Donation Centers and how they provide job opportunities for hundreds of individuals who might not otherwise have the chance to succeed and thrive independently. They talk about the Memphis Goodwill Contracts Programs, which offer sanitation services and switchboard operation employment opportunities to over 500 individuals with disabilities through crucial partnerships with federal and state governments, empowering people toward financial prosperity. They also highlight The Excel Center, Goodwill's free high school for adults, which provides opportunities to earn a high school diploma, industry-recognized certifications, and college credits – all at no cost. .

Janie Busbee, Founder and Executive Director of Mother To Mother, highlights the nonprofit organization's mission and efforts "to help low-income families thrive by providing car seats, diapers, cribs, and other essential resources so that under-resourced children in our community can be safe and healthy." Janie shares the story of launching the nonprofit and some of the plans for the future, discusses the model and how the organization collaborates and partners with other nonprofits and healthcare professionals to serve the community, and how their efforts are supporting a healthier planet by accepting gently used supplies rather than letting them go to waste or in a landfill. She talks about the importance of volunteers, their mobile outreach, and how the community can get involved.

Michele Garza is a self-published author and compassionate soul behind the touching Christmas tale of Ruth's Ducks. Michele unfolds how a simple Christmas gift exchange at a young age blossomed into a lifelong lesson and, eventually, a beautiful book and ornament aimed at spreading the message of empathy, understanding, and giving back to the community. Michele recounts her disappointment as a child when she received a pair of wax ducks instead of a fancied toy and how her perspective transformed over the years, especially when her family went through financial hardships. Her narrative is a genuine reflection on the values of gratitude, understanding, and the importance of cherishing what we have. She also delves into the process of self-publishing her story, the significance of pre-sales for self-published authors, and how the love and support from the community helped her project exceed its Kickstarter goal, showcasing the power of storytelling and community support.

With each sale of Ruth's Ducks, Michele contributes a portion of the proceeds to local charities, providing Christmas gifts to children in need, thus embodying the very essence of the story – giving back. This story resonates with audiences, reminding us of the profound impact small acts of kindness can have and the importance of nurturing a giving spirit, especially during the holiday season.

December 17

Dive into the magic of the North Pole with **Santa** as we uncover the behind-the-scenes operations of the most anticipated night of the year, and get to know the heart and soul of St. Nick. Santa shares everything from tales of mischievous elves to the technicalities of navigating a sleigh worldwide. So, please grab a cup of cocoa or your favorite cookies, settle down by the fireplace, and join us for an episode that celebrates Christmas's warmth, wonder, and whimsy. If you're in the Middle Tennessee Area, you can learn more about Santa visiting you in person or virtually and your organization here. You can also book a photo opportunity with Santa Shaw and your family at The Big Event.

Alton Cryer and **Jeremy Calhoun**, co-founders of STS Enterprise Corporation, highlight the Memphis, Tennessee-based nonprofit organization serving 13 to 24-year-old minorities to help them gain confidence, life skills, and tools for secondary or post-graduate opportunities to achieve economic mobility through mentorship, workshops, exposure to careers and experiences, and talent placement. Alton and Jeremy discuss starting the organization as college students at the University of Memphis and how their personal and professional journeys have helped them connect and impact youth over a decade. They discuss some of their main programs, including STS Strive for middle and high school students, and STS Elite for college students. They also talk about their new program, Bridging the Gap, which connects youth and young professionals with industry experts who can share their experiences in a given career through virtual meetings and events. In an hour or less, business professionals can expose students to new career paths and opportunities and build relationships that can bring our community closer together. Alton and Jeremy wrap up by talking about how the community can support their efforts and how that support will help Memphis and the Mid-South.

Jeni Dominelli is the founder and CEO of The Beat of Life. She shares the reason she launched the music-based charity that creates therapeutic songwriting programs for our most vulnerable populations. Jeni discusses how music helped her connect with her father, who was incarcerated for 12 years when she was a child, and how it helped her process her emotions and navigate through the challenges. She talks about the organization's programs, including "Redemption Songs," which is geared toward the incarcerated and those in halfway houses; "Sing It To Stop It," which is geared toward children and teens who are being bullied or going through difficulties; and "Beautiful Minds," which is geared toward adults and teens battling depression, mental illness, and at suicide risk. Jeni also talks about their residency with Sheriff Daron Hall and the Nashville Sheriff's Office and how they are expanding their partnerships with other cities, like Memphis. The Beat of Life was approached by Nashville and Country Music's new hit artist Jellyroll to partner with him for a new Juvenile Detention Program. Jeni wraps up with ways the community can support their efforts and get involved.

December 24

Kristen McBee, Executive Director of **Destiny Adoption Services and Consulting, Inc.**, and **Courtne Mizer**, Assistant Director, highlight the state-licensed nonprofit adoption agency serving Tennessee and Florida that supports and guides birth parents and adoptive families on the adoption journey. Kristen and Courtne discuss the important changes to Tennessee adoption laws that went into effect on July 1, 2023, and why some of the changes are considered groundbreaking, like an expansion of access to living expenses during the entire duration of pregnancy and up to three months afterward for a birth mother. Kristen covers the updates from the perspective of a Birth Parent Advocate, while Courtne speaks about the significant changes from the standpoint of the Adoptive Parent Advocate. Kristen and Courtne also talk about the growth of their family preservation program, Destiny Community Care, and where birth parents and those looking to adopt can go for support and assistance.

Jared Barnett, CEO of **Slingshot Memphis**, and **John Martinez**, Vice President and Director of Program Development with **MDRC**, share background on their organization and the importance of collaborating for **MemWorks** to identify the root causes of employment roadblocks for Memphis experiencing poverty so evidence-based solutions can be implemented to enable pathways to economic mobility. Jared and John provide an update on the insights after concluding the initial round of data research. They discuss five of the ten most significant Roadblocks MemWorks has identified, including insufficient math and literacy proficiency impeding entry to and success in technical training, the lack of resources and support that allow seemingly insignificant factors to derail the completion of career and technical education programs, and limited coordination within and between systems making accessing workforce services unmanageable. Jared and John highlight how MemWorks is moving into the primary research phase, where Slingshot Memphis and MDRC will work with local organizations who serve in these areas every day and verify findings against the lived experience of Memphians. They also share solutions that are being explored and how the community can support their efforts with MemWorks.

Dr. Kevin Dean, President and CEO of **Tennessee Nonprofit Network**, shares the history of the organization that expanded and rebranded to become the state's first statewide association connecting nonprofits in Tennessee to resources, decision-making forums, and each other. The organization leverages national nonprofit expertise, statewide research, and insight from partners across Tennessee to provide resources that promote operational excellence among partner organizations while advocating for policies at the State Capitol that strengthen nonprofit business operations. Dr. Dean talks about why Momentum Nonprofit Partners chose to expand and rebrand to Tennessee Nonprofit Network, why connecting nonprofits across the state is essential and urgent, why nonpartisan public policy support is vital, and how nonprofits can get involved. Becoming a member is free and open to nonprofit organizations and those seeking nonprofit status. Members receive various benefits, including discounts on learning opportunities, access to members-only events, and free job postings on their Job Board. Membership opens on January 1, 2024.

December 31

Eric Harris, founder of **JESSRAN**, has a rich background from teaching history to leading state-wide educational operations. Eric has been at the forefront of advocating for early childhood education as a tool to combat poverty. In our enlightening discussion, he delves into JESSRAN's mission, the inspiration behind its name, and the transformative Equity 2 Prosperity (E2P) initiative. Discover why Eric believes starting education as young as 2 years old can be a game-changer in eradicating poverty. We also explore the financial facets of the program, debunk myths surrounding poverty, and discuss how the community can get involved. Join us for this insightful conversation as Eric Harris shares his journey, challenges, and the unparalleled impact of JESSRAN on communities.

Dwayne Spencer, President & CEO of **Habitat for Humanity of Greater Memphis**, highlights the 40 years of impact in the Mid-South for the nonprofit organization helping local families build or improve places they can call home through affordable home mortgages, rehabilitation projects, and renovations to help seniors live in the homes longer. As part of the 40th anniversary, Memphis Habitat's 600th local homebuyer will be served in 2023. Dwayne discusses their Habitat home buying program and how affordable home mortgages are realized with zero percent interest. He talks about Habitat's Aging in Place program, which provides older homeowners with accessibility modifications, safety interventions, and critical structural repairs – improvements they cannot make – along with how the program works and why it is so needed.

Jay Clementi, Music Director for **SongwritingWith:Soldiers**, highlights the nonprofit organization's mission and efforts to pair professional songwriters with veterans to connect with others through the songwriting process. Since its founding, the organization has served more than 2,000 combat veterans through retreats and partnership programs, and more than 1,000 songs have been written. Jay talks about their model and how the songwriting process impacts the veterans, their families and friends, and the songwriters and audiences worldwide. He shares some powerful personal examples and how the organization will write with more than 1,000 veterans in 2023 to help them on their healing journey.