New Pioneers celebrates 20th anniversary

fledgeling local sustainability movement that spread throughout our community. It's even harder to believe that, 20 years later, that movement is as strong as ever; continuing to educate, demonstrate, and advocate for sustainability throughout Nelson, Marion, and Washington Counties.

New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future, a local 501(c)3 nonprofit promoting environmental sustainability and a projects to improve human

2005, one person began a a significant anniversary in 2025: 20 years alongside our local communities.

New Pioneers was founded in 2005 by Sr. Claire McGowan, OP, with a vision to create a network of "green households" living sustainably in Washington County. Since then, the organization has expanded into Nelson and Marion Counties, developed a robust youth education program, and partnered on several important

It's hard to believe that, in healthy future for all, celebrates health and environmental quality to celebrate our 20th Anniversary to 9 p.m. at the Sisters of Charity drawing will be on Nov. 14. You locally.

Michael Bickett, Board Chair, reflects: "New Pioneers is proud to live and teach a more sustainable lifestyle in the tri-county area, especially alongside our members. As a retired classroom teacher and school administrator of 31 years, I am thrilled that New Pioneers actively collaborates with local schools, libraries, and community organizations to enhance the community's knowledge of how to live a sustainable life. I am honored

and welcome the community to join us!"

Celebrating 20 years is an important milestone for the small but mighty nonprofit — a true testament to the organization's foundress, members, donors, and continued leadership. New Pioneers thanks our community for their continued support for so many years!

To honor the occasion, New Pioneers is hosting a ticketed 20th Anniversary Celebration on Friday, Nov. 14 from 6 p.m. Tickets are \$20 each, and the at https://newpioneers.org/.

of Nazareth Motherhouse. There will be a farm-to-table supper, awards, and live entertainment from the band Ten Fifty Arrival. Tickets are sold on a sliding scale from \$30-\$100+ and can be purchased https://newpioneers.org/ event/20th-anniversary-cele-

bration/. Additionally, New Pioneers is celebrating this milestone with an exciting raffle: Giving you the chance to win up to \$2,000. need not be present at the Anniversary Celebration to win. More information can be found

https://newpioneers.org/ event/raffle/.

New Pioneers is a 501(c)3 nonprofit with a mission to promote sustainability in rural communities to ensure a healthy future for all. Learn more about our work and upcoming events

Democrats voted for a shutdown. Now they have to find a way out

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats kept their promise to reject any Republican spending bill that didn't extend or restore health care benefits, choosing instead to force a government shutdown. Now they have to figure out how

Just hours after the shutdown began, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer was a simple extension of their position.

said that if the Republicans work funding for 45 days, legislation with them, "the shutdown could go away very quickly.'

But that won't be easy. House Speaker Mike Johnson and President Donald Trump — have said that they won't negotiate or be "held hostage " by Democrats demanding concessions to reopen the government. The bill Democrats voted against for the Democrats to change

they say should be noncontroversial.

While that uncompromising Republican leaders — Senate Republican position may not Majority Leader John Thune, last long — there were some early, informal talks on the Senate floor Wednesday reaching a deal would be difficult. It's deeply uncertain, for now, if the two sides could find common ground on health care policy or sow enough trust

Shutdown standoff: Republicans flip roles, Trump must keep ranks united

BY JOEY CAPPELLETTI AND **STEPHEN GROVES**

WASHINGTON Gathered in the unusually quiet halls of the U.S. Capitol, Republican leaders faced the cameras for a second day and implored Democrats to reopen the government.

"We want to protect hardworking federal workers," House Speaker Mike Johnson said Thursday morning, before criticizing counterparts. "Democrats are the ones who have decided to inflict the pain."

It's a striking role reversal. Budget standoffs for years have been the bane of Republican congressional leaders who had to wrestle with conservatives on their side ready to shut down the government to get their policy demands. Democrats often stood as willing partners to keeping the government open, lending crucial votes to protect programs they championed.

"Both parties have completely flip-flopped to the opposite side of the same issue that hasn't changed," said GOP Sen. Rand Paul. "Congress has truly entered the upside down world."

BEST

to get out of it.

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a lonely time for mothers, like postpartum, the early toddler years, early childhood," Powell said. "It's really hard to find connection, to make more friends. I wanted to create a place that kids could come and meet friends and moms could as well."

The Best Day Play Café was designed for children 8 and under with many options for play. Powell said they have memberships for those who make frequent trips to the play café. In her first month of operation, she said they already have around 30 memberships.

In addition to the cafe's regular operating hours, Powell said she wanted the space to be available for private events such as birthday parties. The play



There is something for every child at the Best Day Play Cafe, giving a space for all kids 8 and under to play and connect.

café also has days for crafting, energy drink. homeschool meet-ups and celebrations.

open to the public. She laughed to stop in for a to-go coffee or almost two months since

She said the play café is a space for kids to explore and Powell said the café is also be social, while allowing parents to kick back and enjoy some and added anyone is welcome time for themselves. In the

opening, she said moms have said they love the location and opportunity to get out of the house to socialize.

"It's so rewarding," Powell said. "It's been just amazing to be able to create a place in the community that I know is so needed. Because I've been there as well, and I'm still there. I have a 7-month-old right now, so getting out and meeting other moms and having that connection with them, and knowing that we're in the same season of life, it's been great in my postpartum journey."

Powell said her approach to creating the play space was inspired by Montessori, imaginative play, gross-motor skill development and learning. The far wall of the play café has three spaces for children to play pretend, whether it's a grocery a ribbon cutting for the business.

store or a vet's office. The long table in the middle of the room is great to bring kids together for their activity times.

The play café brings in a wide age range — Powell said it's special to see how each age navigates play and works together. She said it's always so fun to see the older kids leading the younger kids through an activity or scenario.

Powell's venture with the play café has also been an exciting time for her 11-year-old son. She said he is always excited to help out at the café, donning the Bluey costume for appearances at the store. He's also been interested in learning how to operate the café's espresso machine and learning how to make the drinks.

Earlier this week, the local Chamber of Commerce held a moment Powell said was unreal. She has been overwhelmed by the support from the community and wants to strive to bring together more kids and moms. Looking ahead for Powell and

The Best Day Play Café, she

said she wants to continue to be a safe space for kids and families. She said they are the place for kids to come and enjoy themselves and give parents peace of mind. She added in the future she'd like to implement some more

classes, like prenatal or postnatal classes. She wants to be a resource for moms in all capacities — education for moms and playtime for kids. Keep up to date with The Best

Day Play Café via their social media on Facebook and

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Cheryl Burks, BES Science Lad Teacher, was one of the minds behind the event she and her colleagues created unique experiences for students. Burks said the theme of this year's event was STEAM Around the World, with students given passports to be stamped at each activity.

The stations throughout the school connected back to a country, all tying into one or more aspects of STEAM. From a construction play zone to origami, students had their hands busy throughout the event; many built structures out of toothpicks and marshmallows or straws and tape.

In the first hour of the event, every table in the BES cafeteria was overflowing with parents and students as they played games or jumped into activities. Burks said it makes her happy to see so many families come out to the event, knowing all their hard work making it happen was worth

"It makes me feel really good," Burks said of the crowd. "It's cute to see some of the (simpler) activities that the older kids are enjoying because they're getting to just do it. They've already mastered it and then seeing some of the younger ones trying some of the harder activities. It does feel really good that these parents are able to see this is something (they) could do at home.'

Art teacher Candace McCann was one of the many educators at Thursday's event. McCann created an art activity giving every person one quarter of a circle, which she later put together as a part of a larger community mural.

McCann said as they geared their focus for the event toward the global community, she thought allowing each person to contribute mirrored their theme. The circle mural is in the cafeteria of the school — McCann stating she will add onto the display after



BES students learned origami during Thursday's STEAM Night, giving them and their families ways to connect learning to activities and concepts outside of the classroom.

fall break, expanding into is learning. National School Lunch Week for Taste the World.

"I always love being a part of the Bardstown community, especially when families can come in and we get to chat with them," she said. "We're not actually working right now. We can mingle a little bit more, nice to catch up and see people."

BES' annual STEAM Night brings families together. Principal Lance Boston said they get to see their students in the classrooms every day, and having their parent in the school gives them a glimpse of what their students grade," Boston said.

Boston said these events remind him they are preparing students for the next steps events like STEAM Nights expanding their learning and making real-world connections. He said he's privileged to work alongside educators who go the extra mile to create events for students.

"Seeing the kids get to get hands-on with some stuff, put some ideas in motion, really just reminds me of how interconnected the whole educational experience is, from preschool all the way to 12th

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