

POSSIBLE CONTINUED FROM PAGE A7



PHOTO | SUBMITTED
Steven Reneau is pictured in August 2026. Today, he says he is the happiest and healthiest he has ever been.

anxiety and depression. But being willing to talk about his emotions also made Steven aware of the expectations that can be placed on men when it comes to expressing them.

“I was always pretty open about my feelings, and it was very clear early on that other men weren’t,” Steven shared. “I’d hear often, if I told someone something made me cry, that it wasn’t normal for men to cry. Or, there was always someone that had something negative to say about men who cried. It made me feel like an outcast sometimes, whereas now I wear it as a badge of honor.”

Similar messages were sometimes present at home.

“It was pretty standard practice in my home that you ‘suck it up’ and that it was ‘mind over matter,’” Steven said. “Instead of being vocal about your feelings, the expectation was you moved on from them.”

“It was never pushed on me in a negative way. Instead, it was intended to encourage resilience,” Steven added in regards to those mindsets and expectations. “However, with the feelings I already had, it just felt like I was being undermined for feeling the way I did.”

As Steven’s anxiety and depression continued, the consequences became more serious. Eventually, he turned to alcohol.

“At some point, I started leaning into alcohol as a crutch to avoid the feelings that weighed on me every day,” Steven said. “I drank basically off and on all day from morning to night on days where I didn’t have other obligations.”

Instead of providing the escape he was looking for, Steven said drinking only compounded the problem, making his anxiety and depression worse. His mental health also began interfering with his ability to maintain steady employment.

“It got to a point that I couldn’t hold a job,” Steven said. “I’d get a great position with a wonderful company, but the first time I had to miss work because of illness or even something like a doctor’s appointment, I dreaded going in the next day.”

The fear was not necessarily about the job itself. Instead, Steven worried about what the people waiting for him when he returned might think.

“I had this immense fear that my co-workers

or supervisors would be upset with me because I didn’t come in the day before,” he said. “Oftentimes, that would lead me to missing more (work days) to avoid going in and facing them.”

“So, of course, not being able to keep a steady job meant I didn’t have steady income, and most of the income I had went into alcohol,” Steven continued. “That meant that paying my bills or having any kind of stability became increasingly difficult. Eventually, that led to me couch surfing, or even staying with extended family, just to keep a roof over my head.”

Steven had sought professional help before, including therapy and medical care for his anxiety and depression, but he said he had never remained committed to it. Eventually, he reached a point where he knew something had to change.

“Once I had hit rock bottom, the realization set in that I couldn’t continue to live the way I was if I ever wanted to be happy,” Steven said. “I knew what the tools were that would help me get out of where I was. I just needed to actually use them.”

For Steven, professional treatment became a critical part of getting better, and he did not make that journey without those who loved him.

“I would be lying if I said that therapy, counseling, and medication weren’t the biggest contributing factors in me getting well again,” Steven said. “While there were people I could turn to and lean on, they were more like supports that encouraged me to keep pursuing the things I needed to help me heal.”

“My sister, and a few close friends, always listened to me when I needed to vent or express my feelings,” Steven added. “They would build me up and show gratitude and excitement when I’d tell them about a new medication I was starting or skills I’d learned in therapy. That encouragement pushed me to continue doing those things, because knowing they were happy for me and excited for my future made me feel seen and heard.”

Getting help did not mean anxiety simply disappeared from Steven’s life. He still struggles with it today. The difference is that he now has tools to recognize anxious thoughts, challenge them, and approach them differently.

“Managing my anxiety now is about using the tools I gained from therapy to essentially trick my brain into finding different ways of thinking,” Steven said.

His first thought, he explained, is often “What if...” followed by the worst-case scenario. For example, if Steven’s wife is traveling and he hasn’t heard from her for a while, his mind may immediately jump

to the fear that she has been in an accident. Rather than allowing that thought to take over, Steven reminds himself of the more likely explanations.

“So, when I have these horrible thoughts, I will go through the list of very probable - and almost always right - reasons she hasn’t messaged or called me,” he said. “She’s working right now. She’s on the phone. She’s gotten home and is taking a nap. She’s busy with the kids.”

Steven uses the same approach when anxiety surfaces in other areas of his life, including missing work or making a phone call.

“The truth is statistically almost never your worst-case scenario,” he explained. “Sometimes you just have to remind yourself of that.”

Learning to manage his anxiety required Steven to acknowledge what he was going through and accept help. But his own experience has also made him consider why taking those steps can be particularly difficult for men.

For Steven, part of the answer lies in expectations that have been passed down for generations.

“I think it’s because for many decades it was seen as a weakness,” Steven said of depression and anxiety. “Men were supposed to be the protector and provider. They were expected to be strong and capable. You still hear it today in old phrases, for example, ‘Be a man. Man up. Don’t be a crybaby. Real men don’t cry.’”

Steven believes those messages became deeply rooted in society.

“It was just the social norm, and I think it became ingrained in our culture for a long time,” he said. “I also think that part of it was simply a lack of understanding and a lack of medical science around mental health.”

“But times are changing, so are we,” Steven continued. “And I believe we have come a long way from where we were.”

Looking back at his own journey, Steven wishes he could give his younger self the perspective he has today. At his lowest, Steven feared that his struggles defined who he was and what his future could become.

“I would love to show my past self where I am today and explain that it was all going to be okay,” Steven said. “My biggest concern back then was that my battle with depression and anxiety made me unlovable and a failure, and made me feel very alone at times, even with a great group of supporters. In reality, they were struggles that millions of people face every day. I wish I had known how common it was and how treatable it was, and just how many people would have and did accept me as I was.”

Steven credits his decision to seek help

with changing the course of his life.

“Seeking help and finally addressing my anxiety and depression are some of the best decisions I’ve ever made in my life,” he said. “I’m the happiest I’ve ever been, the most successful I’ve ever been, the healthiest I’ve ever been. I’m loudly, proudly, happily married to a remarkable and gorgeous woman. I have three beautiful and amazing kids, and a job that I love. None of that would be possible if I hadn’t acknowledged my anxiety and depression, and then got help for them.” It is a perspective Steven wishes everyone struggling with their mental health could see for themselves. His desire to share that message is also deeply personal.

“I want people to understand they aren’t alone,” Steven said. “I’ve lost friends to suicide that seemed like the happiest people, and that I’d never known were struggling. As I get older, I can look back over the years and see the people that were there for me and how foundational they were in helping me keep going.”

By sharing the parts of his own story that were not always easy to live through, Steven hopes someone else will see that where they are today does not have to be where they remain.

“I want others dealing with these same issues

and thoughts to know it IS possible to feel better,” Steven said. “There are so many resources out there, many of them are covered by insurance, or are very affordable even if you don’t have it.”

And just as Steven wishes he could go back

and tell his younger self that everything was going to be OK, he has a message for anyone who may be struggling to see beyond today.

“A better tomorrow is possible, and every day is better with you in it,” Steven said. “Don’t be afraid to ask for help. I did it, and you can,

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that the following fiduciary appointments have been made by the District Court of Hart County, Kentucky, and that all persons having claims against the estate must present same, proven according to law to the fiduciary or attorney representing the estate no later than six months after the appointment date.

In the Estate of **Dan J. Sullivan**, 605 W. Center St., Munfordville, KY 42765. Beth Crump, 7150 Hammonsville Rd., Bonnieville, KY 42713, Tanya Veitschegger, 290 Bath Club Blvd S, North Redington Beach, FL 33708, Fiduciaries. Atty: Justin Baird, P.O. Box 187, Munfordville, KY 42765. Date Appointed: 08/13/2026. Deadline for Filing Claims: 02/13/2027.

In the Estate of **Billy Rayburn Harris**, 1308 Buckner Hill Rd N, Bonnieville, KY, 427135. Charles Dwayne Sullivan, 1308 Buckner Hill Rd N, Bonnieville, KY 42713; Lena Roxann Sullivan Walker, 6611 New Glendale Rd, Elizabethtown, KY 42701, Fiduciaries. Atty: William T. Clauson, PO Box 310, Munfordville, KY 42765. Date Appointed: 08/24/2026. Deadline for Filing Claims: 02/24/27.

In the Estate of **Stella G. Stasel**, 3012 Macon Kessinger Rd, Munfordville, KY 42765. Barbara Childress, PO Box 534, Munfordville, KY 42765, Fiduciary. Atty: none.. Date Appointed: 08/27/2026. Deadline for Filing Claims: 02/27/27.

In the Estate of **Danny McCubbin**, 1404 Liberty Schoolhouse Rd., Hardyville, KY 42746. Todd A. McCubbin, 302 Wathall St, Horse Cave, KY 42749, Fiduciary. Atty: Patrick Ross. PO Box 350, Horse Cave, KY 42749. Date Appointed: 08/27/2026. Deadline for Filing Claims: 02/27/2027.

In the Estate of **Diana Dee Paczosa** 1185 Eudora Rd, Cave City, KY 42127. Shonna Baldwin, 1300 Glenbrook Rd, Louisville, KY 40223, Fiduciary. Atty: Justin Baird, P.O. Box 187, Munfordville, KY 42765. Date Appointed: 08/27/2026. Deadline for Filing Claims: 02-27-2027.

URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT

American Cave Conservation Association announces the receipt of a grant award from the USDA's Division of Forestry to plant trees in Horse Cave and Munfordville, hire foresters, and increase public awareness of the benefits of urban forestry.

Join leading experts and fellow community members at these special events at Hart County Public Library.



MEET YOUR FORESTER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
5:30 - 6:30 PM

Celebrate the beginning of the planting with James Bauch, who will discuss the advantages of native trees, give advice for eliminating invasive plants, and respond to community members' tree-related questions.

HORTICULTURAL CLASSES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10 &
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14
10:00 - 11:00 AM

Master Gardener Gary Puckett will teach classes designed to help community members with their personal gardening issues and demonstrate helpful techniques. Learn about pruning, fall maintenance, fertilizing, and winter preparedness.

CREATE A CHRISTMAS WREATH

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12
5:30 - 6:30 PM

Guest instructor Scott Baird will show participants how to create a Christmas wreath using dried natural materials. Some materials and supplies will be provided, but please bring a pair of hand clippers and additional materials if possible. This class is limited to 8 people, requires a deposit, and will not be held at the library.

Please send a \$10 deposit to Mary Margaret Villines, P.O. Box 126, Munfordville KY, 42765.
Class location: 100 River Bluff Road, Munfordville KY, 42765.

FREE &
OPEN TO ALL!

HART COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
500 EAST UNION STREET
MUNFORDVILLE, KY 42765
270-524-1953

