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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to 2024 - as we sat down to come up with a theme for this month there was one word that kept coming up - MORE!

We have tips for your goals this year whether they include achieving more, spending more time with your kids, acting more like a kid yourself, cooking more, reading more, or giving more, the Winchester community delivers plenty of ways to help fulfill your life this year.

We'll see you in Old Town!



*Misty Weaver  
& Katie Jordan*

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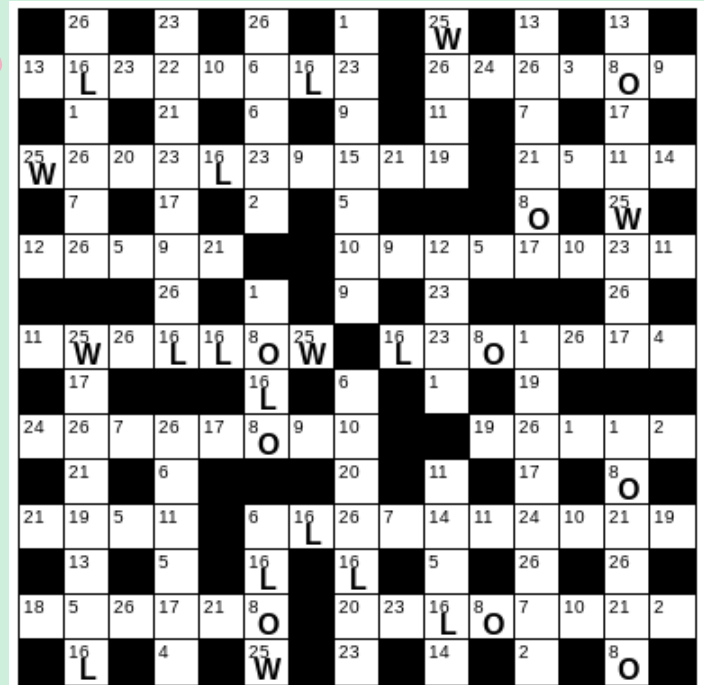
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Each letter is assigned a number. Every square with that number corresponds to that letter. Start with the smallest words to begin guessing the remaining letter-number matches!

## THE CHOCOLATE WARS - W.H. BAKER & CO 1897

The dark office in the large Victorian home called "The Gables" was beautifully decorated in dark wood and stained glass. The large velvet drapes were slightly open allowing a single beam of natural light to hit the colorful Persian rug. The sunlight accentuates fine dust particles floating freely in the air. The weightless specks eventually settle on a stack of leather bound books. There is a large mustached man sitting behind a massive mahogany desk. He is casually lighting his meerschaum pipe as he reads the morning paper. This is chocolate magnate, William H. Baker of Winchester. As a billow of white smoke envelops his face, a knock is heard at his office door. "Enter!" Baker orders. A nervous man with round wire glasses hurriedly enters the room and proceeds to unroll various advertising posters onto a table. Baker stands and slowly walks over. He looks over the posters carefully and nods. The spectacled man makes notes and scurries out. Baker lets out another billow of sweet cherry smoke and looks out the stained glass window onto Boscawen Street.

The Baker family had owned a grocery business as early as 1780 in Winchester. In 1888, WH Baker would invest in a brand new hardware store in town. This would become Solenberger's True Value Hardware which still exists today!

By 1894, W. H. Baker, a former Mayor of Winchester, decided he would go into the chocolate business. Winchester's climate was too warm for successful chocolate production, so he moved the manufacturing aspect to Red Hook, New York.

In 1896, Baker had found a Victorian home design in a catalogue that he felt was quite unique. Preservation of Historic Winchester's Sandra Bosley states: "The Gables home design is the most exuberant display of nearly every imaginable late Victorian-era architectural confection in Winchester, but it was not a one-of-a-kind house. It was, in fact, designed by mail order architect George F. Barber, and at least one twin of W. H. Baker's home was built in Orange, Virginia." Yet, the interior would be customized to Mr. Baker's tastes.

During the late 1890s, W. H. Baker's new chocolate company was in direct competition with a chocolate empire. The Walter Baker Chocolate Company, out of Dorchester, Massachusetts, was created in 1779 and was in a league all alone until W. H. Baker entered the game. W. H. Baker was a marketing genius as he knew his family name may influence (or confuse) people into buying his product. Did he knowingly enter a gray area of legality when he created packaging and logos that closely resembled the original Walter Baker Chocolate company? Maybe. The Walter Baker Co. believed W. H. Baker was fraudulently trying to capitalize on the Baker name and intentionally mislead customers who had intended to buy Baker's Chocolate but were being sold W. H. Baker's Chocolate. The son of the Walter Baker company's founder was a lawyer in the 1830s and trademarked the name "Baker's Chocolate" to protect the brand. Yet, copyright infringement at this time was hard to prove and usually meant lengthy and costly litigation, but both Baker Companies had deep pockets. The chocolate wars had begun when W. H. Baker received his first cease and desist order in 1895.

The lawsuit dragged on in the courts for a couple of years, and on July 20, 1897, the court decreed that the W. H. Baker Co. of Winchester, Virginia must revise the logo and packaging. Going forward, the label would be required to say "W. H. Baker is distinct from the old chocolate manufactory of Walter Baker & Company." This didn't stop W. H. Baker... his company still thrived. His home "The Gables" would be finished in 1898 and he would live here and he would die here in 1915. The business passed to his sons, who sold it to another confectionary company which went out of business in the 1930s.

The Postum Cereal Company, which later changed its name to General Foods, bought Walter Baker & Company in 1927 and moved the production to Delaware in 1965. By 1995, the Walter Baker & Company was incorporated into Kraft Foods.

By Mike Robinson  
Author of Winchester Tales book series





# ACHIEVE MORE: GOAL SETTING WITH SIERRA COLLINS

As the New Year dawns, it brings with it an opportunity for reflection and growth. The annual tradition of New Year's resolutions, along with the year end for most businesses, many of us have been contemplating setting goals, creating better habits, and personal changes we'd like to focus on in 2024.

According to research across several nations there was an increase of 22% in making resolutions in those who typically don't make them, and a 45% in those who never make them in 2023. Will the trend continue in 2024?

The question on everyone's mind of course is how they compare to people who complete their resolutions. In 2022, almost 9 out of 10 people achieved at least part of their resolutions, with 23% completing their goals, and 65% meeting at least a portion.

Sierra Collins, a distinguished Leadership Development Coach and the Founder of Sierra Learnership Collaborative, offers valuable insights into setting meaningful goals. Born in Winchester, VA, and a proud descendent of a family that has been part of the community since 1865, Sierra combines her deep local roots with a global vision for leadership and personal development.

Sierra's approach to setting goals is both practical and profound. As many of us know, New Year's resolutions are rarely kept through the year, for many reasons. Sierra's approach helps combat the usual mistakes such as taking on too many changes at once, and often focusing on areas we like rather than what needs attention in our lives. Here's how she advises tackling this crucial process:

**Identify Core Values:** Begin by understanding your core values. These act as a compass for decision-making, ensuring your goals align with what truly matters to you.

**Find Your Purpose:** Understanding your 'why' is crucial. It gives your goals a deeper meaning and keeps you motivated.

**Wheel of Life Assessment:** This tool examines eight key life areas, including finances, relationships, and health. Assessing your current satisfaction in these areas helps narrow your focus to the most impactful aspects.

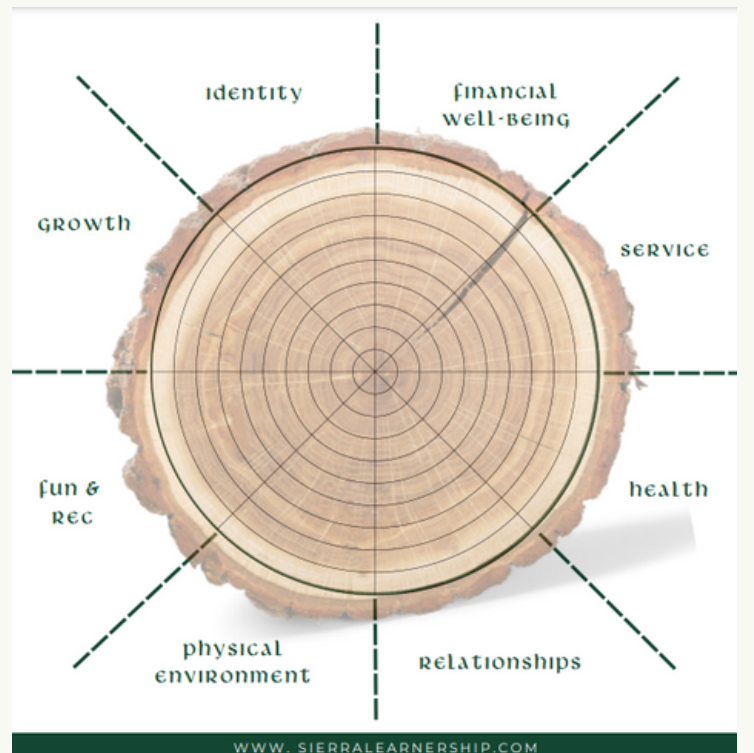
**Setting Priorities:** With a clear understanding of your values and areas for improvement, you can set priorities that are realistic and meaningful. Priorities that align with your core values and purpose, using each step of this process to build on each other for success.

**Envisioning Success:** Visualize what achieving these goals will look like. Determine whether your goal is a habit you wish to develop or a specific achievement you aim to reach. The process, specific goal, vision, and accountability can be drastically different for habits vs achievements.

Sierra emphasizes the importance of adaptability. When setbacks occur, it's crucial to reassess and adjust your strategy or timeline as needed. Adding accountability through a coach, mentee, or friend can improve your odds of reaching your goals.

Beyond goal setting, Sierra's passion for leadership development and education shines through her community involvement. Whether it's her role with the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber or her educational initiatives, her commitment to fostering growth and leadership is evident.

As we continued our conversation in creating goals that aligned with our values and delved into personal issues, Sierra shared tips to make 2024 more intentional and provide space to meet our goals with the least stress.



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**Write It Down, Make It Happen:** Transform wishes into tangible goals by putting them in ink. Strategically place your goals where you'll encounter them daily for a constant reminder of your aspirations.

**Momentum Through Mini-Goals:** Break down larger goals into bite-sized chunks. Witness your progress unfold, building momentum that propels you toward lasting success.

**Fuel Your Journey with Purpose:** Fuse goals with personal motivations. When obstacles arise, your intrinsic drive becomes the fuel that propels you over challenges and towards achievement.

**Distraction Defense:** Identify and conquer common distractions. Turn off email notifications, schedule specific times for responses, and remain focused. Remember, emergencies warrant a call, not an email.

**Prioritize with Precision:** Wrap up each day by outlining your top 3 priorities for the next. Wake up with a clear agenda, ensuring completion of essential tasks. Adapt as needed, but stay on course.

**Master the Art of Saying "No":** Align opportunities with your life priorities. Politely decline what doesn't harmonize with your focus and remember, a simple "no" suffices. No detailed explanations required.

**Power Up with an Accountability Partner:** Elevate your journey by identifying reliable accountability partners. Their support will fuel your determination, turning aspirations into tangible achievements.



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# READ MORE: TJ O'CONNOR

I spent two days ignoring everything else in my life so I could finish reading *The Hemingway Deception* by Tj O'Connor. I bundled up in my recliner and was sent on a wild and thrilling ride following an assassin, a former guerrilla fighter, and various CIA and law enforcement officials. This counter-terrorism novel is one of my favorite reads in quite some time. There were so many twists and unexpected events! I found myself delaying work and living on leftovers in the fridge so I could maximum my time spent reading.

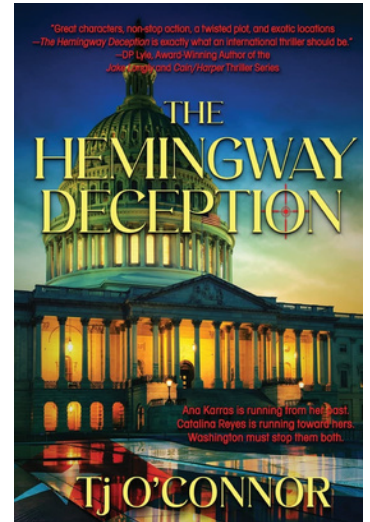
Author Tj O'Connor first discovered Winchester when he was selected to be Air Force OSI's Chief of Terrorism overseas. He was sent to Winchester for advanced shooting, surveillance training, as well as tactical and defensive driving at Summit Point in the mid-1980s. When he came back from overseas and joined the private sector, his company moved to Winchester and Tj moved with it.

After leaving the first Gulf War, Tj had a recurring nightmare for 22 years that he was killed and came back as a ghost to hunt down his killer. Tj's daughter, a local schoolteacher, encouraged him to write the story, set it in Winchester, and allow her book club to read it. He recalls how quickly the story came to life, writing it in just over three months. That book became his first published novel, and started a series of paranormal mystery books.

Today, Tj works as an anti-terrorism security consultant for a federally funded research and development center. Tj works on projects contracted through the Department of Homeland Security to help the private sector defend against, mitigate and respond to terrorist threats. He

writes counter-terrorism thrillers, inspired by (but not directly about) his work. He wants to depict a true-sounding story without giving away any information that could be potentially harmful.

His professional life has given Tj the privilege of working with many incredible people, and he's seen and been places that most people will never experience. He speaks in reverence of the people he's worked with, and says he's a small player in the anti-terrorism world. His counter-terrorism characters are unlike the superhuman personas portrayed by other authors in the genre. Tj aims to create characters who are real; characters who are fallible, make mistakes, have idiosyncrasies, and flaws. The ones in *The Hemingway Deception* were all those things, but also very cool. Some of their feats make you want to start hitting the gym... in case you too need to escape any number of assailants trying to capture or kill you.



You can learn more about Tj and his works at [www.tjoconnor.com](http://www.tjoconnor.com)

## Old Town Apartments

TWO great apartments available now! Live right in the action above the Winchester Book Gallery in a two story loft with an incredible amount of space and charm featuring two beds and baths - with a roof top patio! OR head two blocks up Loudoun St for a historic Victorian two story apartment within a park like setting behind a white picket fence! This one bedroom apartment features gorgeous wood floors, gas fireplace, and beautiful built-ins - plus hall access from both levels for easy move-in!



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121 Weems Ln, Winchester



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# SEE *January events* AND BE SEEN

## 1 WINCHESTER BEER MILE

Run a mile, while chugging beer? Sing me up.....er, sign yourself up to participate in this annual tradition! [Winchester Brew Works](#)

## 4 THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

A brave few actors weave their wicked way through all 37 of Shakespeare's plays. It is an irreverent, riotous romp through the Bard's plays. [Winchester Little Theater](#)

## 15 MLK MARCH

In remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King's fight for equality and social justice the Winchester Area NAACP Youth Group will host a peaceful March/Walk. Details on [Facebook](#)

## 19 GEORGE'S GENTS

Ladies' Night at The George Washington Hotel! Get ready to have a great time raising money for Literacy Volunteers of Winchester! [Tickets here](#)



## 20 TIM YOUMANS TALK

Hear how Tim researched to include 571 entries of historic named streets in Winchester. [Handley Library](#)

## 28 WINCHESTER BRIDAL SHOW

Engaged couples can explore vendors to help them prepare for their nuptials, from dresses to table linens! [Bridal Expo](#)

SEE MORE EVENTS ONLINE....

[Old Town Events](#)  
[Visitor Center Event Listings](#)

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## ONLINE HOME BUYER WEBINAR

Buying a home can be intimidating, and many things have changed over the years, like not needing a 20% down payment. Join us for a webinar on what is happening in the market, three ways to get lower interest rates currently, the common mistakes buyers make, and more.

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As we explored last month, real estate is the quickest way to wealth for most people and homeowners have a net worth 40 times greater than a renter! As prices continue to rise it's smart to explore your options as early as possible. Did you know college graduates can even purchase a home based on verified income from a job offer? Learn more in our webinar!

Ask Misty a real estate question:  
[misty@dreamweaverteam.com](mailto:misty@dreamweaverteam.com)



## MORE TIME: ACT LIKE A KID

What better way to spend more time with your kids than to act like a kid? Here are our top recommendations for opportunities to play with your kids:

### Open Bounce at the Sportsplex (221 Commonwealth Ct)

The second floor of the Sportsplex has numerous inflatables to bounce to your hearts content. A two-hour bounce pass is only \$10 per child. If you get tired, you can lounge on the recliners. Be sure to call ahead because the space may be booked for private events.

[Winchestersportplex.com/bounce](http://Winchestersportplex.com/bounce)

### GUI Esports Arena (88 Featherbed Ln)

Have a child who loves video games? Take them to GUI Esports and WOW them! The facility boasts high end gaming desktops with PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X, and Nintendo Switch consoles available to use. Kids can game in a social setting and make new friends. You can pay by the hour, get a very affordable monthly membership, join a club team, and/or participate in Friday night drop off events.

[Gui.gg](http://Gui.gg)

### Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum (19 W Cork St)

There's so much to discover in the four floors of the kids' museum. It is a place where parents are encouraged to play alongside their kids to increase learning. Through the end of this month, the museum has a sock skating rink on the roof. Other exhibits include apple packing, building, the water tables, farm to table, and the ever-popular climbing maze and slide on the ground floor.

[Discoverymuseum.net](http://Discoverymuseum.net)

### Polka Dot Pot (157 N Loudoun St)

Unleash your creativity by spending time with your child at Polka Dot Pot's art studio on the downtown walking mall. There you can paint your own pottery, learn the techniques to glass fusion, make your own candles, and sculpt with clay. You will leave with your own treasured works!

[Polkadotpot.com](http://Polkadotpot.com)

### Kids Art Club (871 Tasker Rd, Stephens City)

Shenandoah Arts Council hosts a monthly art club for kids ages 6-12 at Bowman Library on the last Tuesday of every month from 4:30-6. Participation is free! You can encourage your kids' imaginations as they work on that month's art project.

[Shenarts.org/programs/kids-art-club/](http://Shenarts.org/programs/kids-art-club/)

### Imagination Library

Dolly Parton had a vision of every preschool child having their own library of books, and in turn created Imagination Library. Children from are eligible to receive one free book per month, delivered to their home, until their fifth birthday. Literacy Volunteers Winchester Area is implementing the program for residents of Winchester, Frederick and Clarke Counties. It's a wonderful opportunity to increase your child's love of reading, and a chance to spend quality time reading together.

Enroll your child at:

[Lvwa.org/literacy-volunteers-winchester-area-imagination-library/](http://Lvwa.org/literacy-volunteers-winchester-area-imagination-library/)

## LAST CALL



### Sparkling Pomegranate Punch

Celebrate the New Year with a little fizz!

- 1 bottle Prosecco
- 2 cups pomegranate juice, chilled
- 1 cup Grand Marnier
- 1/2 cup vodka (optional)
- 1/2 cup simple syrup
- Garnishes: pomegranate seeds, orange and lemon slices, fresh mint leaves

Combine pomegranate juice, Grand Marnier, and vodka in punch bowl, stir well.



Mix in the simple syrup, then chill until ready to serve.

Add the Prosecco, top with seeds, mint leaves, and sliced garnishes, serve over ice.

# MOVE MORE: BE A NINJA AT EAST COAST GYMNASTICS

As the quest for innovative and engaging fitness routines continues, two dynamic disciplines have taken the spotlight in cities around the globe: parkour and ninja warrior classes. Originally born from military obstacle course training and popularized by thrilling urban acrobatics, parkour involves navigating complex environments with speed, efficiency, and fluidity. Meanwhile, ninja classes, inspired by the obstacle-laden courses of television shows like "American Ninja Warrior," challenge participants with a variety of physical tasks requiring strength, precision, and agility. Together, these disciplines are redefining what it means to be fit, offering a unique blend of athleticism, creativity, and play that attracts people of all ages and backgrounds.

East Coast Gymnastics and Cheer were eye witnesses to the growing sport when they added ninja classes to their offerings and saw new students, kids and adults alike, flock to the gym. Today owners Mandy and Kyle VanFossen offer mini ninja classes for ages 3-5 with progressively challenging obstacles in classes for older children and teens. Adults can get in on the action during open gym time on Fridays, weekend clinics, and competitions throughout the year.

Three typical obstacles that are often included in a kids' ninja warrior course, including the famous warped wall:

**Warped Wall:** This iconic obstacle is a curved, inclined wall that participants must run up and climb over. It provides a significant challenge in terms of requiring speed, leg strength, and timing.

**Floating Steps:** These are a series of elevated platforms or steps that are spaced apart, requiring participants to jump from one to the next. This obstacle tests balance, coordination, and leg strength. The steps can vary in size and distance apart.

**Monkey Bars or Ring Swing:** This obstacle involves a series of bars or rings suspended from above, which the kids must traverse by swinging from one to the next. It tests upper body strength, grip strength, and coordination. For children, this obstacle can be both physically demanding and mentally challenging as it requires planning and a steady pace to complete without losing their grip.

These obstacles are designed not only for physical challenge but also for fun, encouraging kids to develop their physical fitness in an enjoyable and engaging way.

While some may see a warrior course as just a fun workout, others have had loftier goals. The adult ninja events have attracted competitors from across the country. Each attempting to practice their skills enough to earn a spot on American Ninja Warrior. Three past coaches at East Coast have gone on the show, including local Eli Bell who went on to tour with Jurassic Park and Marvel with Feld Entertainment.



Mandy relayed that students “learn how to think quick and problem solve. Skills that they will need in the competitive workplace.” The entire team strives to teach kids grit and dedication, while leaving room for students that just want to learn and have fun but not compete. “We hope the students at East Coast keep their childhood memories of the gym with them forever.”

East Coast also offers gymnastics, cheer, dance, birthday parties, and camps. <https://ecgymnastics.com>



**Jasmine Frye**

“Living here and experiencing memories with my family and friends inspired me to try my hardest and to use my voice in rooms where that was not always a lot of diversity. I speak up for those I believe are not heard. It energizes me to “be the change you wish to see,” and as someone born and raised here the stakes are high. I wish to see all my loved ones succeed.”

A native of Winchester, Jasmine has served the community in a number of different ways.

Read more about Jasmine and her journey in Winchester: [Dreamweaverteam.com/6yxl](https://dreamweaverteam.com/6yxl)



# LEARN MORE: NIBBLINS COOKING CLASSES

Even if you don't consider yourself a foodie, most of us would agree that we all love bonding over meal times. When my daughter expressed interest in being a chef years ago we hired local Annette McManigle, a former Thai missionary, to come to our home and teach us how to cook our favorite Thai dishes. While I prefer someone else make my own food, I loved hearing the history of the food, learning how to prepare it to my personal liking, and bonding with my children as we all attempted each dish at our very own burner. Photo evidence still remains that my daughter was the best cook of the evening.

Today Annette continues teach classes, along with other brilliant chefs at Nibblins on the Old Town walking mall. In the heart of our city, Nibblins co-owners, Susan and Blair Dolinar, offer family-friendly cooking classes above their ground level shop that features gourmet foods, fresh fudge, cookbooks, gift items, and all your cookware needs.

In business since 2003, Nibblins owners are also very involved in the community. In years past they have hosted Winchester Whipped, a three-day cooking competition that featured local chefs in a Chopped-style competition that benefited a local cause. They also offer several fundraising opportunities organizations can take advantage of to raise funds for their own initiatives.

The Blairs bring a wealth of culinary expertise to their venture, Nibblins. Their impressive backgrounds include certifications

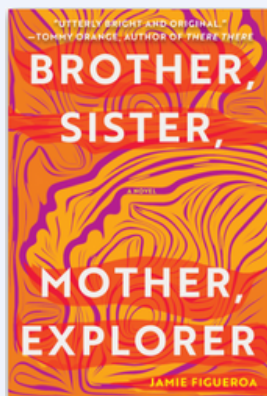


from L'Academie de Cuisine, a blend of scientific knowledge, and experience in gourmet cooking. Blair's extensive experience in the food science sector as a chemical engineer has equipped him with a deep understanding of the interactions between food components and the reasons behind specific ingredient reactions. Susan, on the other hand, has honed her skills through various culinary programs, specializing in baking and mastering the art of French pastry. Susan has also developed an array of keto/low-carb delicacies, including handmade fudge, and cheesecakes.

Cooking classes are not just about learning to cook; it's about strengthening family bonds and creating lasting memories. Offerings are available for every age, and several levels of courses are available for those looking to develop more cooking skills. Classes coming up this month and beyond include cake decorating, donuts and fritters, keto friendly pizzas, soups from your pressure cooker or Instapot, to higher level classes like gourmet empanadas, croissant-making, knife skills, German foods, and macarons.

Ready to stir up some fun with your family? Visit [Nibblins.com](http://Nibblins.com) to check out the latest class schedules and other services. Embark on a delicious journey that promises to bring your family closer, one dish at a time.

## Winchester Book Gallery Recommends:



In the tourist town of Ciudad de Tres Hermanas, in the aftermath of their mother's passing, two siblings spend a final weekend together in their childhood home. Seeing her brother, Rafa, careening toward a place of no return, Rufina devises a bet: if they can make enough money performing for privileged tourists in the plaza over the course of the weekend to afford a plane ticket out, Rafa must commit to living. If not, Rufina will make her peace with Rafa's own plan for the future, however terrifying it may be.

As the siblings reckon with generational and ancestral trauma, set against the indignities of present-day prejudice, other strange hauntings begin to stalk these pages: their mother's ghost kicks her heels against the walls; Rufina's vanished child creeps into her arms at night; and above all this, watching over the siblings, a genderless, flea-bitten angel remains hell-bent on saving what can be saved.

[WinchesterBookGallery.com](http://WinchesterBookGallery.com) | 7 N. Loudoun St



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In the biting cold of Winchester's winter in 2008, a tragedy unfolded that would stir the hearts of the community: a local homeless man lost his life to the unforgiving freeze. This poignant event became a catalyst for change, leading to the creation of a remarkable initiative known as the Winchester Area Temporary Transitional Shelter (WATTS).

Faith-based leaders, moved by the incident, recognized an untapped resource within their grasp: the church buildings. These warm, secure structures, equipped with essential facilities, lay unused during the night. The idea was simple yet profound—transform these spaces into shelters for the homeless during the harshest months.

November 2009 marked the beginning of this ambitious journey. Churches and organizations across the area opened their doors, providing a week-long sanctuary on a rotational basis. The impact was immediate and profound. Volunteers from these host groups not only offered meals and shelter but also engaged with the guests through various activities, establishing a judgement-free zone of fellowship.

## GIVE MORE: WATTS

Community Outreach Coordinator Cindee Steele said “This season, we're in the 7th week of our Overnight Shelter and have already served 70 unique individuals. Our daytime Warming Center is only in its 4th week of operation and has already seen over 110 individuals come through. We are grateful to have 21 church partners this season, so we can offer 21 weeks of overnight shelter (through the end of March).”

A distinctive feature of WATTS is its inclusive approach. The shelter, a low-barrier haven, welcomes all homeless adults, irrespective of their sobriety or criminal background. This policy underscores a commitment to compassion and support for every individual in need.

Volunteers are the backbone of this initiative, contributing their time and talents in various capacities. They provide meals, personal care, medical services, and even unique offerings like music therapy and haircuts. Cots and linens, owned and maintained by the shelter, are cleaned and transferred weekly among host locations. Some sites even offer shower facilities, adding to the guests' comfort.

The increasing demand over the years highlighted a need for expanded services. In October 2022, WATTS unveiled its evolved mission: To break the cycle of homelessness one life at a time. This new mission aims to empower individuals towards workforce re-entry and connect them with resources for self-sufficiency, while still providing temporary shelter during extreme weather. New services include Transition Support Staff (TSS) and a program to assist guests with essential tasks like obtaining identification, applying for jobs, and accessing social benefits. The ultimate goal is to guide them towards a stable, secure future.

Donations are of course accepted to help run the shelter. Current needs include regular ground coffee, sugar, powdered creamer, paper products, plastic-ware, shelf-stable snacks and individual 'lunch-on-the-go' items, microwavable cup-o-noodles, and similar items.

'Coldest Night of the Year' fundraiser walk is coming up on Saturday, February 24, 2024 and we need walkers! Anyone can join this family-friendly event to raise money for WATTS. Walkers will raise money and then choose from a 2k or 5k route that wind through Old Town Winchester, followed by a simple soup kitchen for participants to gather afterwards. Cindy shared “the walk in February is the culmination of our fundraising efforts from now until then. It's a meaningful event, stepping outside into the cold for a few hours and experiencing a little bit of what it might be like to be homeless, but it's also a fun event.”

Register for the walk: [cnoy.com/location/winchester](https://cnoy.com/location/winchester)

For more information or to contribute, visit <https://www.watts-winchester.org>





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