



THE FORSYTHE FAMILY
(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)
LAURIE TRYON, ELAINE KOHLER,
REBECCA LOVETTE, TAMMY BRADLEY,
ANDREA BRAGG AND KEITH TILLMAN



ARTICLE BY LINDA S. HOPKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY M.KAT

FORSYTHE JEWELERS

On a Monday morning in early September, six-year-old Kylie Hicks, from Chattanooga, Tennessee, peered through the window at Forsythe Jewelers in The Shops at Sea Pines Center, waiting to select a sterling silver sea charm—a gift the locally-owned jewelry store offers to every child hosted by Hilton Head Heroes, a homegrown charity that provides resort vacations to families with children who have life-threatening illnesses. Hicks was diagnosed with leukemia two and a half years ago and has since undergone a series of treatments to save her life.

“It’s 10 till 10. I see a family outside our door. She won’t even go to the beach until she picks out her necklace,” said store owner Andrea Bragg, recounting her first blessing of the day. Each week, a new “hero” child is afforded the same opportunity, and Bragg gets to be a part of something bigger than the Hope Diamond and more precious than gold.

ABUNDANTLY BLESSED



The selection of charms includes shark teeth, dolphins, sea turtles, sand dollars and starfish. “The children are so excited about coming in and making a memory,” Bragg said. “It is a small thing, and they are always so grateful, but I feel like I’m the one getting the gift.”

Hicks chose a starfish, and according to her mother, Heidi Hicks, later that day, she found a real starfish washed up on the beach. For the Hicks family, the beach represents life, and the charm has come to be a symbol of healing and universal love, as Kylie has completed her chemotherapy and is now in remission.

SHOP FOR A CAUSE

In addition to Hilton Head Heroes, Forsythe Jewelers supports a broad range of nonprofit organizations that positively affect the Lowcountry including the

American Heart Association, Hilton Head Humane Association, Boys & Girls Club, Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra and many others. “As long as I can continue to be successful, I can continue to support these local charities,” Bragg said, “schools, animals, churches, arts—the list is long.”

Last year, Forsythe Jewelers had the opportunity to team up with prestigious jewelry designer David Yurman, hosting an event to benefit a charity of choice. For

FORSYTHE JEWELERS IN THE SHOPS AT SEA PINES CENTER SELLS A WIDE SELECTION OF JEWELRY BY WELL-KNOWN DESIGNERS LIKE DAVID YURMAN AND ROBERTO COIN

A THANKSGIVING DISPLAY BY MACKENZIE CHILDS SITS AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE STORE.



ANDREA BRAGG HELPS KYLIE HICKS PICK OUT A SILVER NECKLACE AT FORSYTHE JEWELERS. HICKS, A LEUKEMIA SURVIVOR, AND HER FAMILY WERE HOSTED BY HILTON HEAD HEROES LAST SEPTEMBER.



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YOU ARE INVITED

WHO: Forsythe Jewelers and David Yurman
WHAT: Second Annual David Yurman Charity Event
WHERE: Forsythe Jewelers, The Shops at Sea Pines Ctr.
WHEN: Thursday, November 10, from 5-7 p.m.
WHY: A percentage of all proceeds will benefit Volunteers in Medicine.



Learn more about VIM at vimclinic.org.

Bragg, who worked at the Hilton Head Hospital from 1992-2001, prior to beginning her career at Forsythe Jewelers, the natural choice was Volunteers in Medicine (VIM), a local organization that provides free healthcare to needy families. "I remember how excited the board and the leadership of the hospital were that Jack [McConnell] had this vision and how they participated in getting it started."

Several Forsythe clients were serving on the board at VIM, and Bragg's employees were equally enthused. "Everybody who works here has lived in the area a long time. We are ingrained in the community, and we wanted to partner with a charity that we were all interested in supporting," she said. Proceeds from the 2015 event yielded a \$10,000 total donation to VIM.

This year's David Yurman Charity Event is a trunk show, to take place November 10, from 5-7 p.m., at Forsythe Jewelers in The Shops at Sea Pines Center. "The public is invited, and if you can't make it for the evening event, come in during the day. Your purchase will still count," Bragg said.

FEEL FREE TO BROWSE

If you typically find jewelry stores intimidating or overwhelming, stop in Forsythe Jewelers any time for a warm slice of hospitality and a refreshing no-pressure shopping experience. Whether you are a local resident, a first-time vacationer or a returning visitor, you will be put at ease the moment you step through the door. You can even have your jewelry cleaned free of charge while browsing at your leisure.

Like the founding family and the Hilton Head Island store's previous owner, Debbie Rochow Berling, Bragg believes that success means more than making a sale. The true measure, she explained, is the joy that comes from serving others. "We love to serve our clients, we love to serve each other, and we love to serve the community. Whatever it is that somebody needs, that's what we're all about."

Forsythe Jewelers offers custom designs in addition to popular jewelry lines such as David Yurman, Roberto Coin, John Hardy, Gurhan, Marco Bicego, Lagos, Naledi and more. They also carry a selection of MacKenzie-Childs hand-painted tableware, furniture, and gifts.

"People are amazed at the selection they can find here—like a big city shopping experience in a small town. Yet it's unpretentious—not a scary place. We welcome you like you're a part of our family, whether you buy anything or not," Bragg said.

Forsythe Jewelers currently employs six fulltime workers and one part-timer. "Everybody here has different skills and talents and we all fit together like a puzzle," Bragg said. "We really care about our customers and want to lead them to the right decision. It is truly our pleasure to be doing what we're doing, and I think that's apparent to our clientele."

In business locally for 35 years, Forsythe Jewelers has a vested interest in preserving the qualities that draw locals and visitors alike to the place they call home, and that means giving generously to the community.

"The way we are successful is through our relationships," Bragg said. "It's all one giant circle. We are blessed to have this store and blessed by our clients, and we are glad to give back in any way that we can."

Forsythe Jewelers is located at The Shops at Sea Pines Center, 71 Lighthouse Rd., Suite 311, Hilton Head Island. For more information, visit online at forsythejewelers.biz, call (843) 671-7070, or stop by during normal business hours, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Saturday.

LOCAL CHARITY THE CHURCH MOUSE THRIFT SHOP

The Church Mouse Thrift Shop, located in Cypress Square at 78 Arrow Road on Hilton Head Island, was opened in June 2004, through the vision of several parishioners of St. Luke's Church. The original purpose was to generate funds for the missions of the church through the donation and sales of gently used household goods and clothing. In time, that purpose has expanded to include grants as well as the pass through of goods to area non-profit organizations and area outreach. Our motto is "Changing Lives Locally and Throughout the World." For the first several years, we struggled to cover our expenses.

In 2015 we were able to donate to 46 entities, for a total of \$264,000 in cash and the pass through of goods. Of course, all this relies on two factors: donations and volunteers. We are so fortunate to live in a very generous community. Many of our donations are simply wonderful and are available for sale at a fraction of their value. As for volunteers, it takes a large number to keep the store functioning, and we are continually seeking help. Opportunities include receiving, sorting and pricing goods, maintaining the sales floor, cashiering, and merchandising. Fellowship is an important component of our venture—many friendships have been formed, and a lot of fun occurs daily.

Won't you consider joining us? While we encourage two-and-a-half-hour weekly shifts, we are flexible and can work with your schedule. Contact our store manager, Debbie Wood, at (843) 785-2322 for more information.



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