

Advent Health Daniel Boone Clinic Celebrates Opening

By Bryleigh Middleton
Reporter

Community leaders and health care officials gathered to celebrate the grand opening of Barbourville's new Advent Health Daniel Boone Clinic, marking what speakers called a renewed commitment to compassionate, faith-based care and expanded access to local health services.

The ceremony began with a warm welcome from the President and CEO of Advent Health in Manchester, Nick Bejarano. Bejarano opened by expressing a thank you and welcome to Rodney and Melinda Smith, Barbourville's clinical leaders, at the new Advent Health Daniel Boone Clinic. Following the introduction, Bejarano outlined their mission, emphasizing healing, faith, and comfort.

"Our mission at Advent Health is to extend the healing ministry of Christ, and that is something that we take very seriously, and aligns with Rodney and Melinda's mission with the team," stated Bejarano, "we are so grateful for them."

Bejarano closed with once again expressing gratitude for their new partnerships and their goals within Healthcare.

"Advent Health's mission is to care for all humanity



Rodney and Melinda Smith, center, serve as the clinical leaders at the Advent Health Daniel Boone Clinic in Barbourville. The clinic originally began as Daniel Boone Family Health Center, founded by the Smiths.

Photo by Bryleigh Middleton

and to ease human suffering," stated Bejarano, "And we want to make sure that we can do that in a way that is both compassionate, kind, and caring for everybody that we see."

Rodney Smith, local clinical leader and advanced practice nurse, stated that he and his wife's journey in healthcare began nearly 18 years ago, and that this was the only opportunity for their growth that felt right for them.

"We never dreamed we'd be acquired," stated Smith, "We had several offers throughout the year that just never felt right. I believe in God's timing, right down to this ribbon cutting today."

Smith shared that his and his wife's only mission was to treat everyone who came through their doors like family, and that their hard work has greatly contributed to their success today.

"My number one is my wife, Melinda," stated Smith, "We would have never survived without all of the behind-the-scenes work that she has done 24/7 for the last 18 years."

Lastly, Smith extended sincere thanks to the local leaders and service providers in attendance, as well as to his staff and business partners.

Claudia Greenwood, representing the Knox County Chamber of Commerce, left

the new business with words of encouragement and congratulations. Greenwood stated that she is grateful to be celebrating and welcoming a new chapter for care within their community. "Today, we're not closing a chapter; we're building onto it as we welcome this new Advent Health Daniel Boone Clinic into our community," stated Greenwood.

Greenwood added that it is important that locals feel they do not have to leave home to receive adequate care, and the new Advent Health clinic is important in fostering that feeling, attracting newcomers, and giving them a chance to feel confident settling and thriving in Knox County.

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ing in Knox County.

"When a company invests in our community the way Advent Health is doing, it lifts us all up," stated Greenwood.

Greenwood closed with a warm welcome to the new leaders of the Advent Health Clinic and congratulated them on their new chapter within their journey.

Lastly, Johnathan Owens, Spiritual Integration Manager for Advent Health in Manchester, shared that he is grateful for the opportunity to join together and celebrate the new clinic, as well as the mission for both Advent Health and Melinda and Rodney Smith.

"This ribbon cutting represents more," stated Owens, "It represents hope, access, and our continued commitment to extend the healing ministry of Christ in Whole Person Care."

Owens then closed with a blessing over the community and clinic before concluding the service with the ribbon-cutting and welcoming the new Advent Health Daniel Boone Clinic.

Knox Association of Baptists Hosts Inaugural Valentine's Banquet



SUBMITTED

This past Saturday, the Knox Association of Baptists hosted its inaugural Valentine's Banquet, and it was a night to remember! With a packed house, attendees enjoyed a delightful evening filled with great food provided by David's Steakhouse, lively music from the talented Rahab's Rope Singers

and Band, and an inspiring message from the nationally known speaker, Dr. Matthew Sleeth, alongside his wife, Nancy.

The atmosphere was vibrant as guests from various churches and denominations came together to celebrate love, fellowship, and faith. It was truly refreshing to have a space dedicated to con-

nection and community on such a special occasion.

Everyone left the banquet with full hearts and a desire for more. We can't wait to make this an annual event and look forward to seeing even more friends gather next year for another wonderful evening of fellowship and inspiration."

Board Approves Grants, Little League Field Lease



The Barbourville Independent Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, February 10. Photo by Bryleigh Middleton

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Reporter

The Barbourville Independent School Board advanced several key initiatives during its February 2026 meeting, highlighting progress on the renovation of the former Stivers Center, approving a lease agreement for a local Little League field, and introducing three options for the 2027 school calendar. Superintendent Dennis Messer reported that construction remains

on pace for an Aug. 1, 2026, completion date despite HVAC delays, while board members also addressed grants, student assessment, and concerns about district food services.

Board members began by acknowledging and approving actions by consent, including monthly financial reports, the minutes from the January meeting, the bills for January and February, personnel actions, and the reimbursement of funds to the High School

Cheerleading team for their recent trip to Orlando, Florida, for National Championships.

First, in actions with discussion, Superintendent Dennis Messer provided updates on the renovation of the building, formerly known as "the Stivers Center," which they purchased from Union Commonwealth University. Messer shared that since January's meeting, the pool has been filled with concrete,

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Photo Courtesy of Knox County Public Schools

Knox Schools Receive Nearly \$1 Mil. for Distance Learning, Telehealth

BY FRANK SHELTON
KCPS Communications Director

Knox County Public Schools (KCPS) has been awarded nearly \$1 million in federal funding through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to enhance distance learning and telehealth services across the district. KCPS was one of three school districts in Kentucky selected to receive funding during a special announcement held Monday in Rockcastle County. Bell County Schools and Rockcastle County Schools were the other two districts awarded grants.

USDA Kentucky State Director Travis Burton emphasized the transformational impact of the funding.

"We want to yell about it from the top of the mountains because it is the way forward. It is creating new opportunities for students here in rural Kentucky," Burton told news media at the event.

The grant will allow KCPS to equip every school in the district with advanced technology designed to remove barriers and expand educational access for students and families. Knox County received \$998,265 of the \$2.8 million grant award.

Amy Pennington, Director of Academic Programs for KCPS, said the possibilities

for student learning are significant.

"All schools will be equipped with technology that will allow teachers and students to bring in guest speakers, collaborate between schools and programs, take virtual field trips, and form partnerships with universities and organizations to enhance learning through video conferencing," Pennington said. "For example, biomedical students may be able to sit in virtually on a live surgical procedure in partnership with a university's College of Medicine. Eighth grade students may be able to sit in virtually on a legislative session while studying the legislative branch of government. Kindergarten students may take virtual tours of farming operations or perform songs and skits for nursing homes while learning about community partners and service."

In addition to expanding instructional opportunities, the grant will strengthen student health services districtwide. All schools will receive telemedicine and telecounseling carts, further enhancing the district's partnership with Access Health.

"In conjunction with our partnership with Access Health, our school nurses

will have specialized equipment to help diagnose and assist students and families in seeking medical care through telehealth visits," Pennington explained. "These visits will be guided by our registered nurses who are already placed in our community schools. School counselors, social workers, and our mental health partners will also be able to connect students and families with doctors and other mental health professionals through telehealth services available at every school."

Beyond academics and healthcare, the new technology will support broader community engagement.

"All schools will have the capability to bring in community resources, preventive care programs, drug and mental health awareness initiatives, and other partners for community education," Pennington added.

District leaders say the investment represents more than just equipment upgrades—it reflects a long-term commitment to removing barriers for students across Knox County. By expanding both educational access and healthcare availability, KCPS continues its mission to ensure every student has the support needed to believe, achieve, and succeed.