

Good Housekeeping Lauds ‘Awesome’ County Woman

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Daily News-Record

August 17, 2016

HARRISONBURG — There is a place in Adina Bailey’s Monte Vista kitchen where you can see four calendars, each with “its own task,” Bailey explains.

Whether that’s organized or obsessive doesn’t matter. It’s that kind of quest for order and purpose that landed Bailey and her business, Take Them A Meal, on The Most Awesome Women of 2016 list, an honor shared by the likes of actress Geena Davis and “Good Morning America” host Amy Robach.

The list of 25 women appeared Tuesday in the pages of the September issue of Good Housekeeping magazine, which has a print circulation of around 4 million and millions more online.

Bailey’s contribution to the world that won her the awesomeness spot — and actually, she’s at the top of the list — is the business that her desire for order brought into existence: takethemameal.com, which the magazine calls “harnessing the healing power of comfort food.”

In 2007, Bailey’s best friend collapsed from a rare heart disease. Bailey took it upon herself to coordinate meal deliveries to the woman’s family from friends and co-workers during her recovery.

“Things got really crazy,” Bailey said as she sat behind her laptop in her spotless Rockingham County kitchen, where the 42-year-old wife and mother of three puts about two to three hours a day into her website. “This was back when we still used the phone to call each other. Giving the directions to her house, which is kind of hard to find, was getting tedious.”

So the analog-oriented Bailey sought out Scott Rogers, her digitally talented friend, and together the two created a calendar website where people could sign up to deliver food on specific dates.

Nine years later, more than 6 million people have used the site, which now has suggested recipes, as well as a portal allowing users to order frozen food for delivery from two restaurants, instead of making it at home, from Harrisonburg’s A Bowl of Good and Alabama-based Nourish.

“This gives me a little boost every day, even when the news is bad, like a death in the family,” Bailey said. “Just the other day, there was a private plane crash in Alabama that killed three dentists and their wives coming back home from a convention in Florida, and the three schedules just filled up so fast, for months from now, taking food to the children.”

The Good Housekeeping article also came about through a tragedy.

Meaghan Murphy, executive editor of the Hearst Communications magazine, had a sick friend and discovered takethemameal.com.

“A group of moms in my community are using your site to provide meals for another mom with cancer,” Murphy wrote in an email to Bailey in January. “Love, love, love this! And need to tell my 30 million readers about your site and your mission.”

The article ran with a recipe for Bailey’s chicken noodle soup (“it’s love in a pot,” she is quoted as saying) as well as a photo of Bailey holding a big dish of turkey pasta casserole.

Bailey said she’s honored and all, but finds the hubbub a little uncomfortable at the same time.

“All of this is very humorous because ... I don’t need to be in the spotlight,” she said. “That’s why I invented a website; you don’t have to be seen.”

That, and her drive for order and purpose.

“Yes,” Bailey said. “I am always looking for the most efficient way of doing anything.”

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