



SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

EVENT Professionals

If you are planning a birthday party, wedding, retirement fete, anniversary soirée, bar or bat mitzvah, or corporate event in the near future, this special advertorial section can serve as a resource. Herein you will find information about the venues and suppliers, and also meet the event professionals who will assist you.

Photos by Martin Boling

Vickie Blake Creekside Retreat and Conference Center, General Manager

Vickie Blake, general manager of Creekside Retreat and Conference Center, describes the 40-acre upscale destination as a place for brides, families, and groups to go that feels like home. “We try to make the customer feel right at home here,” she says. “We want them to feel like it’s their home while they are here.”

The retreat boasts 38 guest rooms and 2,400 square feet of meeting space, as well as a 4,800-square-foot patio with three gas fire pits and a new pergola. Despite being just 2 1/2 miles from Nashville’s shops, a mile from Brown County State Park, and in close proximity to the new Brown County Music Center, the retreat offers a tree-lined, peaceful setting. “The large maple trees surrounding the buildings give the feel of being in the woods and yet close to everything,” she says.

With more than 40 years of experience working with clients on events, Blake says she strives to fulfill dreams by setting up the facilities, offering advice, and suggesting caterers. “I love working with people and helping their events happen as they envisioned,” she says. “For instance, every bride has an idea of what her wedding will look like. We do everything we can to make the facility fit her dreams.” Learn more at creeksideretreat.net or call 812-650-7305.



Vickie Blake.



Cathy Johnson.

Cathy Johnson Fountain Square, Events Manager

Fountain Square events manager Cathy Johnson enjoys helping her clients see their dreams come to fruition. “I absolutely love being a part of my clients’ planning, it’s such a happy and special time, the beginning of their lives together,” she says. “I love the one-on-one interaction that I’m able to have with my brides—and grooms, too. It’s heartwarming when I run into them in Bloomington or once they have started a family. A majority of them come back to see me during the special holiday events we have. It’s very rewarding.”

The space Johnson manages spans four floors in the historic Fountain Square venue. In the 1980s, CFC Properties, the real estate arm of Cook Group, recognized the need to revitalize downtown Bloomington and a project to restore buildings along West Kirkwood was its focus. The result was Fountain Square, now an iconic downtown landmark highlighted by its eclectic style, stacked bay windows, shaped shingles, and curvilinear parapet.

While the Fountain Square Ballroom, the crown jewel of the building’s event spaces, has often been rented for wedding receptions, birthday parties, retirement celebrations, corporate meetings, and holiday events, CFC Properties is opening up the building’s other features—The Fountain area and two Atriums—to rent individually or together.

The Ballroom features a restored open floor plan with a historic, stenciled ceiling, and comes equipped with a kitchen, tables and chairs, an optional dance floor, and views of the courthouse and downtown Square. It is ideal for events, meetings, or seminars with up to 150 guests.

The lower level includes a glowing, one-story fountain in a secluded area ideal for exclusive events. It can accommodate

small groups or a larger function when paired with another space, according to CFC marketing specialist Rebecca Ellison.

The Main Atrium and South Atrium offer urban, open floor plans with multiple entry points that easily accommodate small or—when used together—large events, allowing more room for guests to mingle.

Ellison is especially excited about the new event package—the Ultimate Experience—which includes all four event spaces. “The Ultimate Experience allows for different event scenarios with options to use all spaces and levels—this is an exciting new development for Fountain Square,” Ellison says. “It’s definitely an interesting way for people to interact and mingle with each other. I think, over time, we’ll start to see larger events because all of the spaces can be used. It’s the only historic venue of its type on the downtown Square.”

Ellison explains how a wedding style photo shoot last year did just that, with the ceremony taking place in The Fountain area, cocktail hour in The Atriums, and The Ballroom became the perfect place for the wedding reception.

Johnson has helped several large events utilize the combined spaces. “I think one of the best events we’ve had in The Atrium has to be the Be Golden event,” she says, adding that another large, extravagant event was the Lumiere Ball. “They have been able to totally transform The Atriums for their events. I think this is a benefit for my clients to use The Ballroom, The Fountain, and The Atriums together.”

Rental includes an initial consultation plus room setup and tear down. Johnson offers direction for any type of layout and makes recommendations for local resources to help fill an organizer’s needs. Because there is no designated in-house caterer for the space, hosts are free to select any caterer they desire.

“Fountain Square is a historic venue that offers a really great opportunity to bring additional events and people to the downtown Square,” says Ellison. “It’s wonderful that Fountain Square can continue to attract people downtown in a new way.”

For more information, visit the newly redesigned website at fountainsquarebloomington.com.



The game room at the Northwest YMCA.

Brittany Crawford Northwest YMCA, Program Coordinator

As program coordinator for the Northwest YMCA of Monroe County, Brittany Crawford has met a lot of children and learned how they like to play, especially when she hosted their birthday parties. “It gives me a better perspective of what different age groups are playing or participating in at that age,” Crawford says. “I see 7-year-olds who are really into tag or scooter games, while 9- and 10-year-olds are into video games. We offer different parties tailored to their interests. It’s all about a positive experience for kids.”

The YMCA offers five birthday party options—sports, game room, gymnastics, and two different swimming parties—to encourage participants, families, and anyone not familiar with the Y to attend and learn more about programs and the facility. “We want them to meet our staff and build relationships so they want to become part of the Y or be a part of our programs later on,” Crawford says, adding that all parties include trained staff supervision acting as the birthday party host, a party room, a

T-shirt for the birthday child, and organized activities in the gym or game room, or swim time for the pool parties. The minimum age for all parties is 3, but Grand Swimming and Game Room parties are for children 7 years and older.

Crawford says the party host stresses the YMCA’s core values—honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility. “We feel that it’s a very inviting environment, and we hope that they participate in further birthday parties and activities here,” she says.

The parties are individualized by scheduling activities based on the birthday person’s likes and dislikes. “However, if someone is attending a swim party, but doesn’t want to swim around the whole time, they can ask the party host for games and activities that they can do in the water, like Sharks and Minnows,” Crawford says. “We take the extra step to make it memorable for them. We’ve had several families that came back here year after year because of the positive experience of the parties.”

She says the swimming birthday parties are the most popular ones offered, because they are held year-round. “Bloomington doesn’t have many places that have an indoor pool where kids with birthdays in November can have a swimming party,” she explains. “This is just one additional service we wanted to provide as Monroe County YMCA to help promote community and family relationships. We give people a space where they can have their friends and family together and celebrate an important time in children’s lives.”

For information, visit monroecountnymca.org or stop by 1375 N. Wellness Way.



Angie Riggs.

Angie Riggs Fourwinds Lakeside Inn & Marina, Events Coordinator

Bloomington native Angie Riggs grew up about five minutes away from Fourwinds Lakeside Inn & Marina, and visited often when her sister worked there in high school. “We’ve always been around Fourwinds,” she says. “It’s always been a great place, and I enjoy coming to work every day.”

Now, as events coordinator for the venue, Riggs has taken the organizational skills from her secretarial experience and spun those into a fulfilling career. “This is my first hotel and I have absolutely loved it,” she says. “It’s a new event every day. I get to interact with a lot of different people, and while the spectrum can be crazy, I enjoy helping people the best way I can.”

Riggs will often see the fruits of her labors when wedding participants return for baby showers. “We do get involved with different families, and I like that,” she says. “Their wedding was a huge success, and they’re doing well, and now it’s time for babies.”

On a daily basis, Riggs can go from a small birthday party to a 200-person wedding. “I work from corporate events to family reunions to weddings and rehearsals, and we do all that here,” she says. “We are a full-service venue, taking care of all the catering, the setup—however the clients want it set up. I am the person who walks through that entire event with the client, and then I work with our staff to make sure everything is set and ready for when the clients arrive.”

Although she coordinates everything, Riggs says she is only a small part of the process. “It’s definitely a team effort,” she explains. “I can’t do this by myself. It’s all hands on deck, from housekeeping to the kitchen. We are all in it to make sure each event is a success.”

Fourwinds has three locations for hosting events—the Admiral and Commodore ballrooms, each accommodating 150–180 people, and the Anchor Patio, which overlooks the lake and seats 300 for dinner and 400 for stand-up receptions. The resort offers a variety of backdrops for outdoor weddings and events, and those held on the lawn overlook a tiered view of the beach, lake, and hills. People choosing Fourwinds have a plethora of activities in which they can participate, such as boating, hiking, golf, fishing, and swimming in the indoor-outdoor pool.

“It’s such a lovely spot with Lake Monroe in the background,” Riggs adds. “It’s calming and relaxing. You can get your work done, but with the relaxing feel that comes with being on the lake.”

For information, visit fourwindslakeside.com.



Lynn Schwartzberg.

Lynn Schwartzberg One World Catering, General Manager

Lynn Schwartzberg, general manager of One World Catering, is passionate about providing flavorful and thoughtfully made food for her guests. “We have always differentiated ourselves by preparing everything from scratch,” she says. “When we say we prepare your food from scratch and that it’s fresh, we truly mean it.”

Having the same executive chef—Corbin Morwick—since One World’s first day also attributes to the continuity of quality guests receive. “He deserves a lot of credit for the development of how successful we’ve become,” Schwartzberg says. “If a client wants a specially themed menu, Chef Corbin has the ability to create it. He is credited for making that all come together.” She adds that he also roasts all his own chiles and grinds and blends more than 10 different spice blends.

When people walk into the One World kitchen, they won’t see racks and racks of large cans that are opened and turned into

prepared food. “For example, when we serve carrots, we actually do the work of peeling and cutting, and it makes a huge difference in food safety and food quality” she explains. “It’s that attention to detail you will find in every area of what we do.”

Fresh food isn’t the only aspect that makes One World different. “We have always focused on the guest experience,” Schwartzberg says. “We want the guest experience to drive all of our decisions. We want to make sure we are presenting what we do in the most gracious and efficient way we can.”

An unforgettable guest experience includes exceptional customer service intertwined with the fresh, quality food for which One World is known. “We want our food to look tempting, and we want our food to be presented in such a way that the guest can experience it without any effort on their part,” she adds.

When One World caters an event, Schwartzberg wants guests to always see a smiling staff person, and she never wants someone waiting to have their glass filled. “We want to think of our guests’ needs before they think of them,” she says.

One World Catering operates from its 25,000-square-foot facility—One World at Woolery Mill—which offers an industrial chic venue with exposed girders and ductwork. “It’s a nostalgic place for a lot of people in Bloomington,” she says. The venue supports events of up to 520 people, but One World has catered off-site events of up to 2,000 people. “On the upper end, there isn’t much of a limit, and we’re perfectly happy to take them on.” For more information, visit oneworldcaters.com or oneworldatwoolery.com.



Bridgett and Steph DiVohl.

Bridgett & Steph DiVohl Royale Hair Parlor, Owners

Even before they opened the doors of Royale Hair Parlor seven years ago, Bridgett DiVohl and her wife, Steph, were giving back to the community—and they haven’t stopped. “It’s been a focus of myself and my wife to have our business be a platform for unique events and to give back to the community,” Bridgett says. “I didn’t really plan for events to be a part of our business, but it sort of happened in a unique way.”

A month before opening the salon, a client approached them about a mutual friend who was going through chemotherapy. “They wanted to host an event to raise money to help her afford holistic care, so we held an event called Shaving for Shady, which was her nickname,” Bridgett says, explaining that the outpouring of support was overwhelming. “It was really a powerful moment to realize that we could use our business to do good.”

Bridgett says that moment catapulted her into trying to figure out how they could afford to plan events and make them a part

of their mission. “It was so moving at the beginning of our careers as business owners—that feeling of having so many community members in our space and feeling that kind of love.”

Through the years, they have hosted gallery exhibits and team members’ celebratory soirées in the salon. They’ve also donated hair and makeup services to events that empower women, such as Be Golden and SPARK Weekend. Their biggest event yet was this spring’s Lumiere Ball, through which she and co-organizer Chelsea Sanders of Blueline Media sought to break down the stigma surrounding mental health. They raised money for Amethyst House, Mental Health America-Monroe County, and Project Stay, a local suicide awareness campaign.

“There’s so much of a taboo about talking about mental health,” Bridgett says. “We decided we wanted to create a big event that tells a story and creates a conversation about mental health.” The ball featured 30 models in a runway avant garde hair show, live music, and art installations. The 200-ticket event sold out and raised more than \$6,000. “The cause meant a lot to the people that were there,” she says.

Whether it’s planning next year’s Lumiere Ball or other events, the DiVohls know that Royale Hair Parlor will continue giving back to the community. “It just feels right to me,” Bridgett says. “It truly is what I feel at my core. We have the opportunity to make an impact. I can’t imagine not giving back.” For more information, visit royalehairparlor.com.