



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 6, 2021

Contact: Mike Donila Abbey Harris
306-1177 cell 215-4579 office
705-1681 cell

Community Connections Series Features Vanilla Feeds Tomorrow

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviewed William Cabaniss, the 14-year-old founder and CEO of Vanilla Feeds Tomorrow, a local non-profit that raises money for Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee.

The interview is the last part of Community Connections—a spinoff from the Mayor’s small business series that provides owners the opportunity to talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their families and employees and helping them share any plans they hold for the future. In this series, Mayor Jacobs focused specifically on local charities and non-profits, though these types of organizations will still be featured throughout the year.

Cabaniss, a Farragut resident, began making and selling homemade pure vanilla extract in May while quarantined during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, he saw a news story that touched on the long lines at food banks across the nation. He got the idea that day while using vanilla extract to make brownies.

“They were overwhelmed...and couldn’t keep up with demand because the monetary donations were slipping with the economy,” Cabaniss said. “I was watching and thinking that something needed to change.”

Since then, he’s sold 1,500 bottles and donated \$45,000 to Second Harvest, which turned the donations into 135,000 meals.

“It’s amazing how much they benefited Knoxville,” he added.

Cabaniss and the Mayor talked about the venture and the challenges the teenager navigated as he started high school and created his own non-profit.

“I had my biggest surprise then but in a good way because I raised a majority of the \$45,000 then,” Cabaniss said.

Commending him for a job well done, Mayor Jacobs noted that a new business is a lot for anyone to juggle, let alone a teenager entering high school.

To hear more of what was said, check out the [video](#).

###