

PES student gets support from Monkey in My Chair



By Guest Columnist
Robin Sanders,
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Special to
Pelahatchie News

There is a lot of excitement in Mrs. Paige Tucker's second grade class this semester.

Mrs. Tucker's class at Pelahatchie Elementary has a new face in the room, a stuffed monkey named Joey. Joey is visiting the room and participating in class while 8-year-old Ames Lee, son of Chad and Wendy Lee, is out for an extended period of time. Ames was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. Ames is receiving treatments at Batson Children's Hospital. The monkey (Joey) is part of an organization called Monkey in My Chair. Joey sits at Ames's desk while Ames is unable to be at school. Students take turns being responsible for Joey and carrying him to and from activities within the school.

Monkey in My Chair keeps kids in cancer treatment connected to their classmates in school.

Monkey in My Chair is a program originally developed in honor of Chloe Watson Feyerherm for Preschool and elementary aged children who are away from school because of a cancer diagnosis. As a result of Chloe's experience, her mother, teachers and community got together to develop the Monkey in My Chair program through the efforts of their newly established charity, the Love, Chloe Foundation.

Through the program, each child is provided with a "monkey kit" which includes a big stuffed monkey that



Pictured above, Aniyah Harvey, is one of the students who helps tote Joey when they leave the classroom for different school activities.

takes their place in school when they are unable to be there. The kits include the monkey with a backpack, a book to help teachers explain to students the situation their classmate is facing and how it affects them, teacher companion guide, along with other items that can be utilized by the child and/or their classmates. All kits are sent out at no cost to the families or hospitals.

When students from Mrs. Tucker's class were asked, "How does Joey help Ames feel connected to the classroom?" Sunnie McCrory said, "Joey gets to be here when Ames can't." Dillon Courtney said, "Joey pretends to read books and write like Ames would if he were here." Ava Keeton said, "Joey makes



Photos special to Pelahatchie News

Ames Lee's monkey, Joey, sits in his chair while he is out for an extended period of time.

Ames feel happy because he knows the monkey is supposed to be like him. I wish he had red hair like Ames!" All three of the students agreed Joey needs red hair. We are so thankful we have

a way to keep Ames connected to his class while he is receiving treatment. Pelahatchie Elementary School is sending positive thoughts to Ames and his family during this challenging journey.

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Sledge pleads guilty in murder-for-hire plot

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Jessica Sledge, who is accused of using the internet to hire a hitman to kill her husband, changed her plea to guilty on February 7.

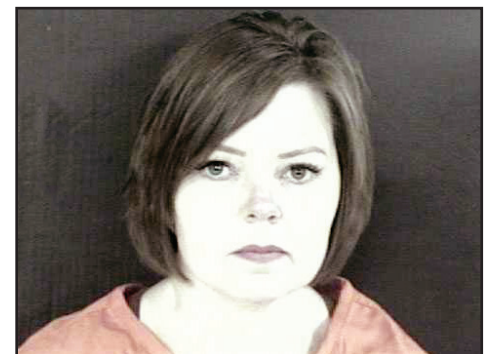
Sledge used the dark web to hire a hitman, made three Bitcoin payments totaling \$10,000 to the alleged hitman, and communicated with an FBI agent posing as a hitman via a cell phone and WhatsApp, all of which was a violation of federal statute.

U.S. District Court Judge Carlton Reeves accepted Sledge's plea during a hearing Monday, February 7, and set a sentencing date for May 16, 2022.

She will remain behind bars at the Madison County Detention Center until then.

She and her attorney appeared at the hearing via teleconference.

Sledge showed little emotion as the judge asked her various questions and read the record to her.



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Jennifer Sledge

The 40-year-old is facing up to 10 years in federal prison and three years of supervised release.

She also faces up to \$250,000 in fines related to the crime.

The U.S. Attorney's Office is providing a sentencing recommendation as part of the plea agreement.

That recommendation has not been made public.