

Priceless

November 2010

LAKE NORMAN

# Woman

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF WOMEN

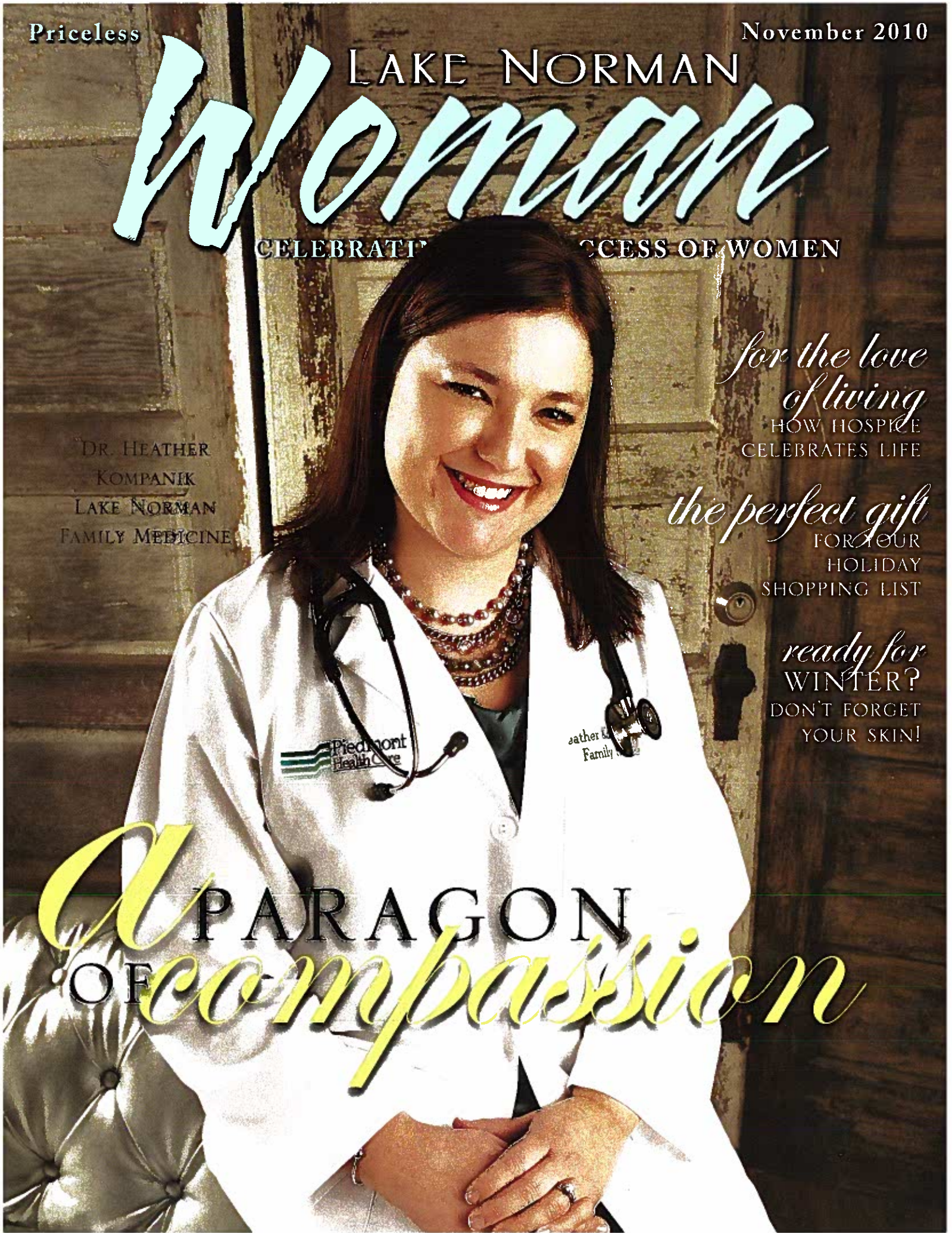
DR. HEATHER  
KOMPANIK  
LAKE NORMAN  
FAMILY MEDICINE

*for the love  
of living*  
HOW HOSPICE  
CELEBRATES LIFE

*the perfect gift*  
FOR YOUR  
HOLIDAY  
SHOPPING LIST

*ready for  
WINTER?*  
DON'T FORGET  
YOUR SKIN!

A PARAGON  
OF *compassion*



cover story

“...I’M INTERESTED  
IN THEIR JOB, THEIR  
FAMILY, THE REASON  
THEY LIVE IN THE AREA,  
AND WHAT THEIR  
GOALS FOR THEIR  
HEALTH AND THEIR  
LIVES ARE.”



A PARAGON  
OF *compassion*

By: Leslie Ogle Photography By: Blair Phillips Photography

## "I'M HONORED THAT PATIENTS ALLOW ME TO CARE FOR THEM AND BE A PART OF THEIR LIVES."

**Y**ou have a doctor's appointment! It has been on your calendar for weeks, and you know the time is drawing nigh. Most of us have a bit (or maybe a lot!) of anxiety revolving around a doctor's visit. Even if you are in good health and it's a routine physical, there still seems to be something unnerving about "the doctor's office." It may stem from childhood when needles and tongue depressors were our enemy. But doctors are not only our healers; they are our friends, our confidants, our therapists.

"It was during residency at Cabarrus Family Medicine in Concord where I truly learned what being someone's physician means," says Dr. Heather Kompanik of Lake Norman Family Medicine. "My proudest moment was when I was introduced to someone's family as 'my doctor,' knowing what trust that phrase carried. From delivering babies to being at the bedside comforting a family as their loved one passes away, being a family medicine physician requires that I become a part of patients' lives and, in doing so, they also touch mine. I chose family medicine because it is part of my nature to want to know the whole story about someone. I'm interested in their job, their family, the reason they live in the area, and what their goals for their health and their lives are."

Dr. Kompanik attended Mooresville High School and then went to Davidson College where she majored in biology with a concentration in medical humanities. She also spent a semester studying abroad at St. Andrews University in Scotland. She received her medical degree from Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University in Greenville where, Dr. Kompanik says, there is a strong emphasis on primary care.

"Although I could have made more money entering a medical specialty other than primary care, the relationships with patients that I formed on my family medicine rotations were the most meaningful to me, and I appreciated that as a family medicine physician I could take care of children and adolescents, as well as adults."

From an early age, Dr. Kompanik knew that she had an interest in medicine. "My first memories of wanting to be a doctor," she recalls, "started as a young child playing with a Fisher-Price plastic doctor kit. Through the encouragement of my parents, who stressed the

importance of education no matter what career I chose, I continued with this dream during all of my school years. The illnesses of my grandmother and grandfather (who were, within one week, diagnosed with leukemia and a stroke, respectively) reaffirmed my interest in medicine and in becoming a doctor.

"Despite my contact with many inspiring physicians during my education and career," Dr. Kompanik continues, "the people that have inspired me the most are my parents. Their belief in me, and in the good I could do for others as a physician, has been the most important reason that I am where I am today. Becoming a physician is a long and tiring journey, and any time when I doubted my career path, my parents were always there with an encouraging word."

From all-night study sessions in medical school to 30 hours of continuous hospital shifts in residency, medical education can be draining and daunting. However, Dr. Kompanik's lifelong goal of being a physician, and the encouragement from her family and friends, was enough to keep her going.

"Any working woman (whether working outside or inside the home) knows the pressures that women face these days. Self-discipline and time management are crucial to getting the professional and personal to-do lists completed ... it is important to surround yourself with people who are positive, encouraging, and supportive—at home and at work."

Dr. Kompanik has found both. Not only does she have the unwavering support of her family and friends, but she works with an incredible staff at Lake Norman Family Medicine.

"I am fortunate to have found a practice that is part of a larger physician-owned group, Piedmont HealthCare. I have wonderful support in our practice, as well as in our larger organization, which allows me to focus on the medicine and the patients, leaving the practice management to other qualified individuals. Again, I understand the importance of surrounding yourself with qualified people who function at the top of their skill level, which allows medical providers to do the same. I am very proud of the relationships I've built with my patients and the differences that I've made in people's lives. I'm honored that patients allow me to care for them and be a part of their lives." 🐾