



Postmaster Monica Boyer says she is thankful for her job. "Sometimes, people open their packages in the post office," she says. "I love sharing their joy when they get something special."

# The Heart of the Community

Postmaster shares the simple joy of a heart rock garden

Story and photos by Jody Foss

It's a busy Friday at the Monument Post Office. Postmaster Monica Boyer carries a bundle of mail out to a local veteran. He looks down at her newly designed rock garden and says, "Look, it's a heart!" before he realizes the rock garden is all heart rocks: all colors, designs, sizes and patterns.

Perfect stone hearts are lined up in a neat row. There is one painted bright red

that reads "Teddy." There are tiny ones and big, heavy ones you can barely lift with two hands.

"The kids from the school love the heart rock garden," Monica says.

They bring her heart rocks they find in the woods or by the river.

"This community is filled with so many really great people," Monica says. "So many people with big hearts. Everyone has something to offer.

"Living in the city, everyone's in a hurry. Out here, people are genuinely nice. I mean, everyone's entitled to bad days; I get that. I'm not all unicorns and rainbows, but people live differently here. They're not in a hurry."

Monica explains the origin of her heart-rock collection.

"When I would be out and see a heart rock, I would view it as a message from heaven," she says. "I had a son that I lost at four months."

In 1998, Monica's son Austin was 2½ years old. Her twin sons, Brandon and Corey, were four months old. Corey died of sudden infant death syndrome.

Years later, Monica was going to visit Corey's grave and had searched in vain for a heart rock to leave there. Returning home, she discovered a perfect heart rock on her pillow and viewed it as a sign from heaven.

"I enjoy believing it so much," she says.

“Believing it brings me peace. I found some rocks that are so perfect I can’t even believe it.”

It is still difficult for Monica to handle the grief she feels about the loss of her son. “I don’t think there’s a time frame of when you are supposed to be OK, but it helps to talk about it sometimes,” she says. “Other people have similar situations.”

Monica moved to Monument in 2015 after visiting her former mother-in-law, Patty Johnson. Monica says she instantly liked the small-town feel.

She met Jeremy Boyer for the first time in front of the post office when he was picking up his mail and Patty was giving her a tour of the town. He proposed to her July 12, 2019—her birthday—and they married February 1, 2020.

“We go to the river a lot,” Monica says. “I would always see heart-shaped rocks, and they would always make me smile. Then I felt like I was supposed to start keeping them.”

Monica ended up with more heart rocks than she knew what to do with. She was looking at the overgrown flower garden at the post office—she says she doesn’t have a green thumb—and knew she needed to make a change.

“I knew the heart rocks were what the post office garden needed,” she says. “I could still enjoy them and share them with the community.”

It took Monica a few weeks to finish the garden at the post office, hauling her hearts in 5-gallon buckets.

“I just picked the super-awesome ones,” she says. “Some didn’t quite make the cut.”

Monica enjoys the reactions of others when they see her garden.

“People walk into the post office and say, ‘Oh my gosh, I love your hearts, they make me smile,’” she says.

Monica recently celebrated her one-year anniversary as Monument postmaster.

“There’s a lot more to it than filing mail,” she says. “You are actually running the whole office. You order supplies, have meetings, do certifications all day long. Time management is really important. There is a lot to learn. And I am still learning.”

For 20 years, Monica worked at a bank



**LEFT:** Monica’s extensive and varied heart rock collection includes rocks she has found, as well as others given to her by friends and family.

**BELOW:** Monica is always careful to protect herself and customers by wearing a mask and practicing social distancing.



and didn’t often see customers face to face. As Monument postmaster, she has plenty of interaction with customers.

“I love the community, helping and serving,” she says. “I love making people smile.”

When they are not riding their Harleys, Jeremy and Monica are down at the river fishing and looking for heart rocks. Jeremy is busy building a remote-control track in town and hopes to get other people to get RC cars or trucks so they can race each other. Monica’s favorite hobby is painting on rocks.

“I love giving them as random gifts and leaving them around town for people to find,” she says.

These days, Monica’s son Austin has a 5-year-old boy of his own.

“He finds me heart rocks all the time,” Monica says.

As Jeremy casts out into his favorite fishing hole, Monica and her grandson walk hand-in-hand and scour the river’s edge for a perfect heart-shaped rock. Before long, the boy reaches down and picks one up, turning it over in his hand before handing it to Monica. ■