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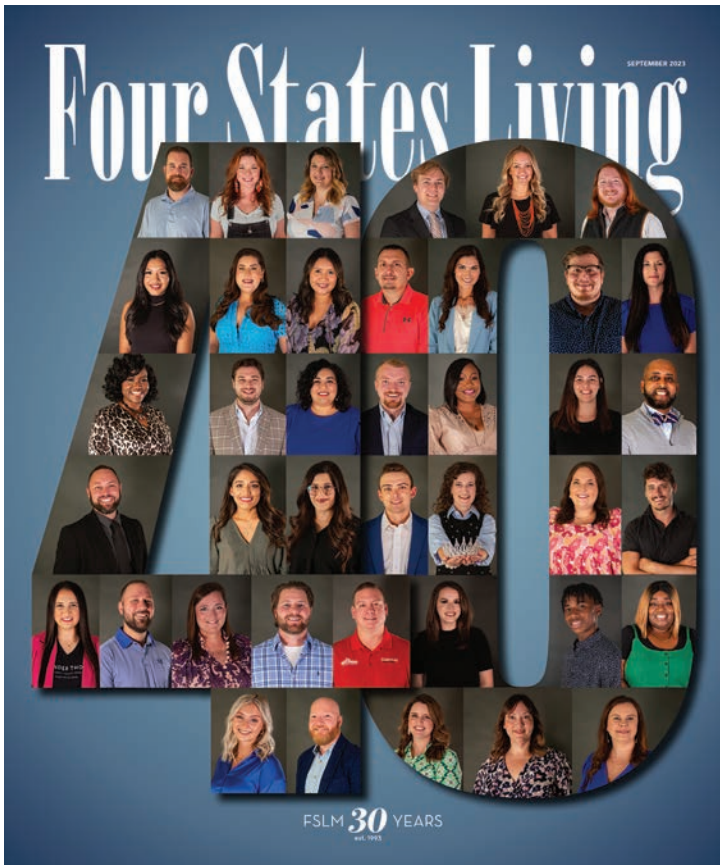
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VOLUME 30 • ISSUE 9 • SEPTEMBER 2023

ON THE COVER

The annual *Four States Living Magazine* Fabulous 40 & Under issue has been a staple of the community for 17 years. Each September, 40 young people from Texarkana and the surrounding area are recognized for their outstanding achievements and community service, and this year is no exception. The 2023 honorees are innovative entrepreneurs, dedicated professionals, selfless public servants, and volunteers extraordinaire. Their stories of perseverance, hard work, and creativity serve to inspire readers of all ages.

See this year's Fabulous 40 & Under starting on page 11.



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Do You Have a Story or a Photo?

We welcome information regarding topics of interest for future publications. If you have a story or photos that in some way depicts living or visiting in the Four States area and would be of interest to our readers, we want to hear from you. Call 903-792-2262 or write: Editorial Department, *Four States Living Magazine*, 4104 Summerhill Square, Texarkana, Texas 75503. Comments are also welcome at our e-mail address: info@fourstatesliving.com

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THE WAY I SEE IT ...

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Robin Rogers, Ed.D.

Every year, I look at the people selected for this issue and read through their stories. I only know two people on this year's list. There were almost 300 people nominated, so if your person wasn't selected this year, please try again! As I get older, the honorees seem to get younger, and I reflect on where the time goes.

Looking back, I realize now that I didn't know much at 20, although I thought I did. During my twenties, I discovered the wonder and true love that comes with parenting, having Ellen and Emily. At 30, I was still growing the magazine, falling down regularly, but somehow managing to get back up and keep going. Looking back at age 30, I was pretty confident that I had the tiger by the tail, but I still had lots to learn.

During my thirties, I participated in every aspect of our community that I could, occasionally sacrificing time with family to "give back." Even after a precious surprise ("It's a boy!") came into my life at age 31, I kept pedaling as fast as I could. "You need me to sit in a dunking booth? Okay. Bake cookies for 500? I don't cook, but sure! You need me to help raise a million dollars? Let's go!" I couldn't say no, which tended to be a terrible problem for me and my mental health. So, I stayed flustered, busy, and a bit crazy, while constantly looking behind me, hoping nobody would catch up. By the time I hit 40, I reached the breaking point. If someone asked me what my greatest accomplishment in life was, I could answer quickly, "my children." Yet, my

actions didn't always match my words. At 40, I vowed to make a correction in course and to put family first, which meant limiting my volunteerism to very select projects. I also realized I needed to keep learning. I decided to work to live, not live to work anymore. Living by that paradigm for the last 13 years has brought me a tremendous amount of peace.

Rearview mirrors tell us so much. How I would have, could have, and should have done things differently in so many instances. If only this or that had been different. I shake my head and roll my eyes at a past version of myself. "What was I thinking?" I'll mentally berate. "Why on Earth did I do that?"

Then I look at myself in the mirror. The past is gone. Dwelling on "what if" is wasted energy. Aging is good, and the wisdom we acquire throughout the journey reveals itself more each year. Today, I am more forgiving of my own mistakes and the mistakes of others than ever before.

I hope this year's honorees accomplish "balance" better than I did in my earlier years. If you recognize any of the 40 people featured in these pages, thank them for the contributions they are making to our community; giving back takes time, energy, and commitment.

While I was proofreading this issue (and on a whim), I decided to answer the same questions we sent to the honorees. I hope you enjoy, and as always, thanks for reading *FSLM*. 🐾

ROBIN ANNE ROGERS, Ed.D.

AGE: 40+ | OWNER & PUBLISHER
AT *FOUR STATES LIVING MAGAZINE*

WHO ARE YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS? IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN, PLEASE GIVE THEIR AGES.

Ellen Orr (29); Emily Orr (28); Briley Court (22)

WHERE WERE YOU BORN AND RAISED? IF NOT IN TEXARKANA, HOW AND WHEN DID YOU COME TO CALL TEXARKANA HOME?

Texarkana, USA

WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION (PAID OR UNPAID)? WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO?

I am the publisher of *Four States Living Magazine*. I also teach in the ed leadership doctoral program at Texas A&M-Texarkana.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT? OR, SHARE A MOMENT RELATED TO YOUR OCCUPATION THAT MAKES YOU MOST PROUD.

I am proud that *Four States Living Magazine* is celebrating 30 years in business this year. I have been associated with the magazine for 28 years, and I have owned it for 25.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT?

Earning a doctorate from The University of Texas at Austin with three kids and a full time job in Texarkana was my greatest achievement. Without my mom, who took care of my children while I was in Austin every week, it wouldn't have been possible.

IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, EVENTS, OR GROUPS, PLEASE SHARE THOSE HERE.

I've worked and volunteered on just about every board or committee in town over the years. Currently, I'm excited to be working on the TXK150 Grand Finale, a December show at the Perot Theatre, presenting 150 years of Texarkana history in conjunction with the Texarkana Symphony Orchestra. I'm also headed to the South of France this month with a girlfriend and the United Way of Greater Texarkana!

WHAT IS THE GREATEST OBSTACLE OR CHALLENGE YOU'VE FACED, PERSONALLY AND/OR PROFESSIONALLY? HOW DID YOU SURVIVE OR OVERCOME IT?

Heartbreak. Both personally and professionally, that word describes my greatest obstacles. Surviving anything that hurts your heart takes time.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME/WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

If my kids will let me, I spend my free time with them. I play spades every Wednesday night. I love to float in rivers during the summers and build fires in the winter. I make up silly songs every day and sing them off-key. Estate sales and thrifting are my jam. And, my prized possession is my lawnmower; mowing is uninterrupted bliss.

FUN FACTS

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

You won't find me before 11 a.m. because I am sleeping.

WHAT TELEVISION SERIES ARE YOU WATCHING CURRENTLY?

I watch *Good Morning America* everyday, usually winding down at bedtime. Over the summer, I binged *The Durrells in Corfu* and *All Creatures Great & Small*; I highly recommend both series for all ages.

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

"If you worry about the nickels and dimes, the dollars will take care of themselves." —Charles T. Court

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- **CORNERSTONE RESIDENT, DOTTIE EARL** (pictured right) with
CORNERSTONE RESIDENT, BETTY JO HAYES (pictured left)

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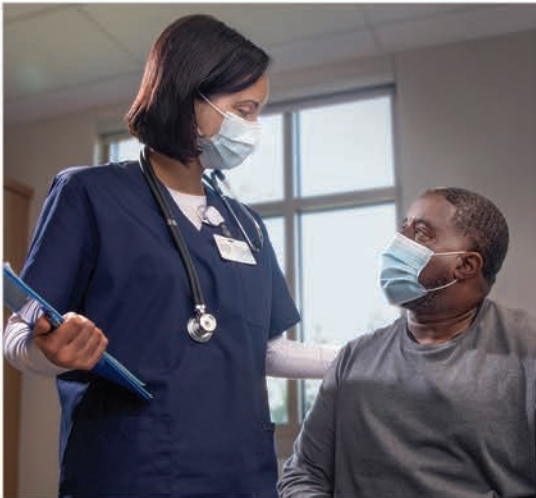
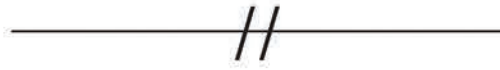
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ERMIAS ABEBE, MD

AGE: 40 | ORTHOPEDIC FOOT AND ANKLE SURGEON
AT CHRISTUS TRINITY CLINIC



Dr. Ermias Abebe, orthopedic foot and ankle surgeon, has only lived in Texarkana since late 2019. In that short time, he and his wife, Dr. Loren Robinson, have made a huge difference in the Ark-La-Tex.

Originally from Ethiopia, Ermias was exposed to healthcare disparities as a child and knew from an early age that he wanted to play a role in addressing those disparities. The Ethiopian Civil War, which raged from 1974 to 1991, killed 1.4 million people. Ermias witnessed severe limb injuries that resulted in life-altering disability. He came to understand that he was meant to help “fix and rebuild” people with such injuries, he said.

Ermias immigrated to Virginia with his family when he was in high school. “My parents, Shawel Abebe and Abeba Tesfai, sacrificed a great deal to give my sister and I a better life in the United States,” he said. “[Moving to the U.S.] was a very humbling process in which we had to begin new lives in a completely different world.”

Ermias earned his medical degree from Duke University and completed his orthopedic residency at the University of Pittsburgh. He completed his fellowship in foot and ankle surgery at Baylor Scott & White Health in Dallas.

“Less than 700 people each year complete training and become orthopedic surgeons in the United States,” he said. “As a person who immigrated here in high school, reflecting on the statistical difficulty of being in this select group and knowing what my parents had to sacrifice for me to achieve this goal makes this one of my proudest accomplishments.”

In 2019, Ermias moved to Texarkana with his wife, Loren, and their eldest child (Addis, now 4). They have since had a second child, Adane (2). “The community welcomed us, and now we call Texarkana home,” he reflected.

Ermias practices as an orthopedic foot and ankle surgeon at CHRISTUS Trinity Clinic. He also regularly mentors medical students and residents interested in orthopedic surgery. Loren, too, works at CHRISTUS, as the chief medical officer and vice president of medical affairs. Loren, Ermias says, is his greatest inspiration.

“She works tirelessly to improve patient experience and hospital processes to ensure our hospital provides excellent and compassionate care,” he said. “She strives to improve the workplace for all healthcare workers so they can deliver great care.” 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

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HALEIGH ALEXANDER

AGE: 30 | COMMUNITY MARKETER
AT HEALTHCARE EXPRESS

“My job allows me to be my true self,” said Haileigh Alexander, a community marketer for HealthCARE Express. “I am a bit of a social butterfly, and I love meeting people and making connections. With HealthCARE Express, I get to do just that, while educating the community about what we do.”

Haleigh is a native of Texarkana. When she was 18, her stepmother, LaRhonda, died unexpectedly. “She was one of the most influential people in my life. Learning how to navigate life without her and her advice was hard,” Haleigh reflected. “I remember asking myself, ‘What would make LaRhonda most proud of you?’ and that is how I would make most of my decisions—and still do.”

Haleigh graduated from Southern Arkansas University in 2015, where she was on the university’s rodeo team as a barrel racer. Her long-time involvement in rodeo sports has imbued her with a passion for the humane treatment of horses.

“We bought my college rodeo horse from a little old lady named Rosalie,” she recalled. “She taught me so much about horses. She taught me that they are more than just a performance animal. They depend on us for everything because they can’t do it for themselves. They deserve lots of affection and respect.”

Upon graduating from SAU, Haleigh returned to her hometown. She is a member of the Junior League of Texarkana and the Greater Texarkana Young Professionals. She serves as an ambassador for the Chamber of Commerce, the secretary of the Keep Texarkana Beautiful committee, and a board member of the Texarkana Healthcare Marketing Professionals. She is on the committees for the Kids Run the Line Too race and Temple Memorial’s Dancing with the Stars event.

Whether she’s on-the-clock, volunteering, or socializing, Haleigh loves being recognized as a member of the HealthCARE Express team. “It makes me really proud when I am out and about in the community and people tell me how great their experience was at HealthCARE Express,” she said. “I love seeing everyone’s hard work come to light.” 🌟

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I have broken my left arm three times!





THOMAS "TJ" ANDERSON

AGE: 40 | DIVISION CHIEF
AT RED RIVER ARMY DEPOT

After graduating from Liberty-Eylau High School, Thomas "TJ" Anderson left the Reserves and enlisted in the Army. After three years of active duty, he transferred back to the Reserves and got a job at Red River Army Depot.

"I still wanted to do something that would allow me to continue serving my country. I couldn't think of a better way than to work for Red River Army Depot," he explained. "This job allows me to support the United States military in a different role."

TJ was motivated to leave active duty by a desire to settle his family in the safe, loving community where he himself grew up. Along with his wife, Barbara, of 21 years, TJ has three daughters: Jaycie (20), Lily (16), and Brylie (12). TJ has served on the Redwater ISD school board for the past nine years. "I look forward to continuing to serve the Redwater community as a member of the school board for as long as the community will allow," he said.

Formerly, TJ coached his oldest daughters' softball teams in the Redwater Youth Sports Association. "Now, I get to sit and watch my youngest's softball games from the stands as a spectator," he said.

TJ spends the majority of his free time supporting his daughters. Last fall, on the way to visit Jaycie at college (Ouachita Baptist University), he experienced a serious medical event.

"My wife noticed I was acting strange, so she convinced me to pull over so she could drive. In a short time span, she pieced together my symptoms and suspected a stroke," he recalled.

Doctors determined that TJ had in fact suffered a stroke, brought on by polycystic kidney disease, which causes high blood pressure.

"If it wasn't for my wife picking up on the symptoms and getting me to the hospital as quick as she did, the outcome of the whole situation could have been a lot worse," he said.

TJ credits the Army and Barbara with his successes in life. "[In the Army] I was taught valuable lessons that I try my best to follow: selfless service, loyalty, honor, and respect, just to name a few," he said. "And I would not be able to do what I do without the loving support from my wife Barbara. If it wasn't for all of her support and sacrifices throughout our 21 years of marriage, I wouldn't be where I am today." 🇺🇸

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

I always remember hearing my [late] grandfather [Art Amaral] telling me to give 110% in everything I do, and to always be kind to one another, even if the other person isn't being kind to you. You never know if someone else is having a day worse than you.

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JAKIE ARELLANO

AGE: 24 | COMMUNITY MARKETER

AT AGE MANAGEMENT AND AESTHETICS BY HEALTHCARE EXPRESS



In her role as community marketer for Age Management and Aesthetics by HealthCARE Express, Jakie Arellano gets “to connect with a wide range of people from different backgrounds and walks of life,” she said.

One of her primary responsibilities is hosting events where she can connect with Texarkans and give back to the community. While Jakie has organized numerous events, one in particular stands out to her as particularly meaningful.

“I organized a fall market to promote the Children’s Advocacy Center, which is dedicated to protecting children and making a positive effect in the community. It was one of my proudest professional moments,” she said.

Jakie, who is a native of Aguascalientes, Mexico, has lived all over the United States, but she has called Texarkana home since 2016, when she enrolled at Texas A&M–Texarkana as a first-generation college student.

“[As a student] I had to put in a lot of effort, study hard, and persevere to get over the obstacles I had to face both academically and financially,” she said. “I experienced tremendous personal growth, and as a first-generation graduate, I now have the opportunity to serve as an example for my two younger siblings, who are currently following in my footsteps and enrolling in college.”

Tragically, Jakie lost her older sister, 18-year-old Ana, in a vehicular accident. Jakie was only 16.

“Our family was heartbroken by the horrific event that caused it, but we overcame it and are now blessed with some wonderful memories that we can share and use to remind ourselves of her every day,” Jakie reflected. “Intense and complicated feelings like grief, sadness, anger, guilt, and even numbness can be brought on by the loss of a family member, but I’ve learnt to conquer them, developed as a result, and now love life and my family even more as a result.”

Jakie’s parents, she said, “are not just my greatest inspiration but also my greatest supporters. They have such unwavering faith in my ability to succeed that they truly believe I can achieve anything I set my mind to.”

Currently, Jakie has set her mind to building relationships in order to improve the lives of those around her.

“I love the opportunity to teach people about new things and educate them about the various services offered by the medical spa,” she explained. “It brings me joy to see individuals discover new treatments and services that may benefit their well-being and enhance their self-care routines.” 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I adore snowboarding! I know you might not think of me as a “snowboarder” at first glance. I can’t say I’m the best or even that good, but I enjoy the sport and the adrenaline rush it provides.

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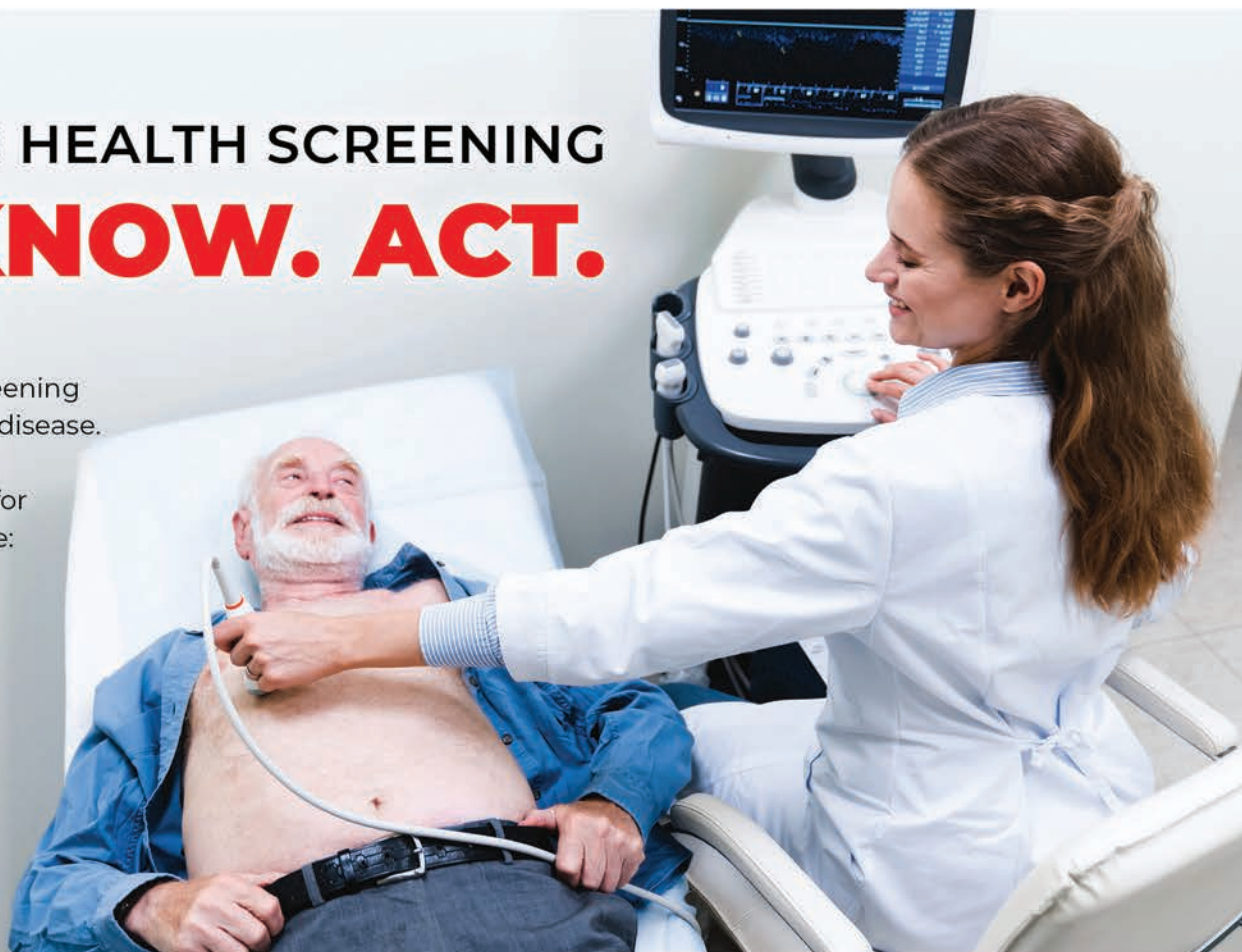
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BRIANNA BAIRD

AGE: 24 | TREASURY MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST AT STATE BANK

Texarkana transplant Brianna Baird was worried about moving to a new city after college. “Being a ‘people person,’ moving to a one-bedroom apartment in a town where I really didn’t know anybody was not easy for my extroverted self,” she reflected. However, she now understands that this challenge was a blessing in disguise. “It ended up being a blessing in the long run because it gave me an extra incentive to get involved around town and helped me meet all of the amazing people I know today,” she said.

Brianna grew up in Avery, Texas, and completed her bachelor’s degree at Stephen F. Austin’s Rusche College of Business, where she was a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, the business honor society. She was selected as the college’s sole representative at the Global Leadership Summit in Chicago. Attending the conference as SFA’s delegate was “a huge push out of my comfort zone,” she said, “but it ended up being very exciting and fulfilling.” In fact, she describes the honor as her greatest personal accomplishment.

After graduation, she began working at State Bank, where she is a treasury management specialist. “The outpouring of support, guidance, encouragement, and teamwork I’ve experienced since joining the State Bank team is truly incredible,” she enthused. “I couldn’t be more proud to be a part of the vibrant and inclusive work culture at my company.”

In addition to the State Bank team, Brianna is also a team player within numerous community groups. She is an active member of the Greater Texarkana Young Professionals and currently serves on the event planning and Destination Downtown committees. She has been a member of the Junior League of Texarkana since 2021 and serves as the league’s public relations co-chair. She is also a 2023 graduate of Leadership Texarkana. 🌟

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I love to two-step and line dance!



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ARNETTA BRADFORD

AGE: 38 | OWNER AT HEBREWS 11:1 COFFEE SHOP



Arnetta Bradford has lived in Hempstead County since she was five. In 2019, she noticed that a beloved aspect of her community had slowly dwindled over the course of her life—and she wanted to do something about it.

“One day I looked around, and I began to ask myself, ‘What does my community need, and how can I help?’” she recalled. “Well, I immediately looked back to my younger life and remembered how everyone had time for each other: they stopped, talked, sat on the porch, and learned about one another. I knew I had to create a space and atmosphere that was welcoming and inviting, to encourage people to get back to relationships, get back to friendships, get back to being there for one another.”

In November 2019, Hebrews 11:1 Coffee Shop opened its doors in downtown Hope, “with nothing but faith and God,” Arnetta said. “No financial assistance, no loans, no investors. Just faith in God.”

Though many frequent the shop for its coffees, teas, baked fares, and meals, Arnetta insists that the mission of Hebrews 11:1 is about more than physical sustenance.

“Coffee just happens to be a good conversation piece,” she said. “I say it all the time: we are more than just coffee. I’m here for anyone and everyone who walks through those doors—to pray with, listen to, and encourage . . . and of course I will feed you.”

Arnetta is a regional development manager for the Program of Academic Exchange (PAX), a non-profit organization that provides global exchange opportunities to students from over 70 different countries. She also serves as the secretary on the board for the Hope Chamber of Commerce, is a board member of Our Hope Downtown Network, and was recently appointed to the Black History Commission of Arkansas by the governor’s office.

Along with her husband, Chad, Arnetta has two children: daughter Paige, who was stillborn in 2006, and son Aaryn, who is 16. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

“You live by the choices you make.”
– the late Otha Hill Sr., pastor

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HUNTER BURLESON

AGE: 23 | BANKER AT BODCAW BANK

In December 2022, Hunter Burleson received Bodcaw Bank’s Customer Service Excellence Award, which is determined by employee votes. This is no surprise, as Hunter works every day to support his clients.

“It makes me proud to see our customers grow and achieve things they work for and set their mind to,” Hunter said. He was drawn to Bodcaw because it is “a community bank and allows me to build relationships within the community and help with the economic growth within the community,” he explained.

Born and raised in New Boston, Hunter moved to Texarkana in 2019. It is here that he has chosen to raise his two children, Layla Jo (3) and Ledger Blake (2). They motivate him to contribute to the welfare of the area.

“Becoming a father has really made me grow inside and outside of my profession,” he reflected. “Not a time of the day that they do not keep me motivated.”

As a volunteer, Hunter coaches his daughter’s t-ball team. He is also a member of the Greater Texarkana Young Professionals.

Being a young father and full-time banker is hard at times, but Hunter is glad for the challenge. “My children and Bodcaw Bank have really been the most formative things in my life,” he said. “I have had great peers and love the place I work, which makes it so much easier [to maintain] work/life balance.”

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WATCHING ON TELEVISION?

I am currently re-watching “The Office,” which I have watched probably 100 times.





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JIM BYNUM, MBA

AGE: 32 | ACCREDITATION COORDINATOR FOR THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AT LSU-SHREVEPORT

T Tyler native Jim Bynum moved to Texarkana in 2019 to work at Texas A&M–Texarkana. At TAMU–T, he served not only as the campus’ graduate program specialist but also as an adjunct instructor in the business department.

“As an instructor, I am most proud of being able to witness when my students understand the material that we are covering and are able to apply it,” Jim said. “I’m grateful for also having the chance to be a mentor as well as an instructor. I never imagined that one day I would have former students requesting I write them letters of recommendation, inviting me to their weddings, introducing me to their parents/family, or coming by my office just to say hello.”

After two years at A&M, Jim moved to Shreveport to accept an administrative position at Louisiana State University–Shreveport. He is currently LSUS’ accreditation coordinator for the College of Business.

Jim, who holds an MBA and a Master of Science in marketing, was inspired by his mother to pursue a career in higher education. “I majored in different subjects through college, but the education field is what always made sense. When I started working at A&M–Texarkana, everything clicked, and I knew this was the career field I belonged in,” he reflected.

Sadly, Jim’s mother passed away in April 2023. “Grief is an interesting emotion,” he reflected. “I don’t think you ever truly get over the loss, but you learn to live with the piece missing from your life.”

Whether teaching from the front of a lecture hall or pulling strings behind the scenes, Jim is glad to have found his niche in higher ed.

“I enjoy my career in higher education because I am able to actively help those who seek to continue their education,” he said. “I’ve once heard that education is what helps change the world.” 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

A lot of people don’t know that my birthday is on December 25th—yes, Christmas Day.

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CODY CLARK

AGE: 38 | SAFETY PROFESSIONAL
AT COOPER TIRE AND RUBBER CO.

Cody Clark has spent his entire adult life serving others. He spent 13 years in the Arkansas Army National Guard. After retiring from the military, he became a safety professional at Cooper Tire as well as a volunteer firefighter with the Genoa Volunteer Fire Department. Throughout it all, he also pursued higher education and has grown a family of four.

Cody, who was born in Mount Pleasant and raised in the small town of Bodcaw, Arkansas, was given the opportunity to travel all over the world with the National Guard.

“My 13-year career in the Arkansas Army National Guard carried me not only around the country but around the world, too,” he said. “I experienced so much that has, to this day, allowed me to not worry about the things that are out of our control and to embrace the joys of the ordinary.”

Cody’s employment at Cooper is what brought him to live in Texarkana. The job of safety professional is, he said, “a selfless service profession that allows me to make a difference in my people’s lives by ensuring workplace safety.”

In his free time, Cody spends time with his family—wife, Lindsey; and daughters, Lily (4) and Rose (seven months). He also shoots rifles and pistols at the range, plays golf, and, of course, volunteers as a firefighter.

One might think that Cody’s greatest challenges would be in the military, at work, or even as a volunteer firefighter. However, he says that the toughest obstacle he has yet faced was completing his undergraduate studies. “My journey started with my first class in 2004 and ended this August. Between military training and deployments, along with life, it has been nothing short of one obstacle after another,” he said. “However, now that it is over, I will forever be thankful for those that pushed me and the fact that I never gave up and completed my goal.” 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

When I was eight years old, I was involved in an accidental shooting by my sister who was 10 at the time. I was hit just under the heart and had minor damage to my liver. The bullet was from a 25-caliber pistol and is still lodged in my lower back to this day.



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ADAM COBB

AGE: 38 | PARTNER AT GATEWAY FURNITURE AND APPLIANCE
OWNER AT COBB LAND MANAGEMENT



Ashtown native Adam Cobb returned to the Ark-La-Tex in 2009 after chasing his dream of playing professional baseball.

After graduating from Louisiana Tech University, Adam was drafted by the Texas Rangers and subsequently played minor league ball in Scottsdale, Arizona, and Bakersfield, California. When that chapter ended, his uncle invited him to return to the Ark-La-Tex and work for the family business, Gateway Furniture and Appliance, established in 1960 by Stuart Cobb and Sam Cobb (Adam’s grandfather).

After working his way up for ten years, Adam stepped into an ownership role in 2020. “During the pandemic, I became the boss of 14 men and women, some of whom have been employed here longer than myself,” he said. “They keep this business running on automatic to help this community. I couldn’t do it without them. Our business exploded at that time with record numbers in sales. We fought hard and made it through even stronger.”

2020 was a challenging year for Adam personally as well as professionally. In December 2019, his mother, Toni Cobb, died. “Being forced to absorb that during the hardest times of my life and my career took a toll. I continue to live my life to make her proud.”

Adam’s entire life revolves around family. Besides running Gateway with partner Rex Cobb, Adam also owns Cobb Land Management, which he runs alongside his nephew, Blake (who Adam describes as “the heartbeat” of the company). Every moment not spent working is with wife Lacey, son Brady (8), and daughter Claire (4). Adam loves coaching Brady in baseball and cheering for Claire at her dance and gymnastics performances. “I love being a dad,” Adam said. “It’s my most rewarding accomplishment.”

While his family and business inspire the most pride in Adam, he admits that his athletic accomplishments are also very important to him. “I’ve always been a sports guy,” he said. In 2021, Ashtown High School retired his baseball number at the inaugural Legends Day event. “This was a very humbling and awesome experience for me,” he reflected. 🏆

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I’m ambidextrous.

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COLLINS COCKERELL

AGE: 28 | DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR
AT ALZHEIMER'S ALLIANCE TRI-STATE AREA

Texarkana native Collins Cockerell loves serving the community that raised her. As the development coordinator for the Alzheimer's Alliance Tri-State Area, she is responsible for marketing, grant writing, managing the nonprofit's websites, organizing support-group counseling, and planning the Twice as Fine Texarkana Wine Festival.

The most fulfilling part of her job, Collins says, is the work she does with Our Place Day Respite Center. Our Place provides daytime care for people with Alzheimer's, allowing caregivers relief from the demands of dementia. She also finds it rewarding to be a part of "the best event in Texarkana, the Twice as Fine Texarkana Wine Festival," she said. "We have an amazing committee that cares so much about this organization."

Outside of work, Collins is involved with the Pleasant Grove Education Foundation, Junior League of Texarkana, and Leadership Texarkana. She also serves on the Runnin' WJ Ranch Board of Directors.

The greatest obstacle she has ever faced, she says, is planning her wedding during the pandemic. "After long hours of planning, COVID won and we had a ceremony with close family only," she said. On the flip side, she regards marrying her husband, Nick, as her "greatest personal achievement." "Each day I strive to be the best wife, daughter, friend, and Christian example that I can be," she said. "Faith, family, and friends are the most important things in life."

In her free time, Collins enjoys helping friends and family with interior design and decoration. "I enjoy helping others make their home exactly what they want it to be," she said. Additionally, she likes planning parties and escaping to Dallas for weekend getaways. 📍



WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

"Always vote for yourself. If you don't, how do you expect anyone else to?"

– Charla Harris, PGTV teacher



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JENNIFER CUNNINGHAM

AGE: 35 | DIRECTOR OF STUDENT RELATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS HOPE-TEXARKANA
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WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

My current boss, Leigh Quillin - Dean of Enrollment at UAHT is probably the most supportive boss, role model, and advocate I've ever had the pleasure of spending (almost) every day with. As someone who takes pride in their work, I can be prone to become concerned when I'm unsure if a project or initiative will work out as we planned. The few times this has happened, she'll say these words: "You worry because you care." The first time she said this to me I almost cried. What a beautiful perspective! It's okay to care—more people probably should.

Jennifer Cunningham is a creative problem-solver. In her role as director of student relations at UAHT, she is tasked with all things recruitment and enrollment. "It's an honor to have such a rewarding job that assists in providing quality education and technical training at an affordable price for any student looking for a competitive advantage in their career or future," she said.

When she joined the UAHT staff in 2018, she had the chance to bring a big idea to life—an annual recruitment event in the form of a football game: Hope High School versus Arkansas High School, the college's two main feeder schools. The UAHT Battle of the Red River Bridge, Jennifer's brainchild, was born and has continued every fall since.

COVID presented more opportunities for innovation, and Jennifer seized them. "Several offices worked together to compose and contrive a virtual 'Registration Night Live' event to assist UAHT students with enrollment and registration questions, needs, and resources," she explained. "Because of that event, in 2021, I was awarded an International Communicator Award of Excellence."

Jennifer's creativity and determination are fueled by her late father.

"I lost my father to ALS in 2020—the same year I got married and the same year the entire world suffered loss and experienced uncertainty for the future," she said. "ALS may have taken my father's physical ability, but his purpose and passion live on. By composing the music for our wedding using Eyegazer technology, he showed me that your circumstances don't define your ability. Now, whenever I'm stuck on an anxious thought, I'm inspired to find creative solutions to keep going and accomplish the goal."

Jennifer accomplished one of her goals earlier this year when she was crowned Mrs. International Arkansas. She describes the experience as "a dream fulfilled." She uses her platform to benefit people with ALS.

A native of Nashville, Arkansas, Jennifer spent years developing her performance skills as an improv performer at Magic Springs Theme and Water Park. She even developed a curriculum series called "Improv to Improve." "[It] teaches a comedic approach to soft skills, customer service, and emotional intelligence," she explained.

Jennifer's love of performance is not limited to comedy. In 2018, she represented Team USA during the World Championship of Performing Arts in Long Beach. She won three silver medals in vocal performance with instrumental accompaniment. And, last year, she performed in TexRep's production of "9 to 5."

Jennifer serves on the Leadership Texarkana Board, as the United Way of Hempstead County Gala Entertainment Chair, on the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership—Arkansas Planning Committee, on the ALS Association of Arkansas—Central Arkansas Walk to Defeat ALS Planning Committee, and with ArkACRAO (Arkansas Association of College Registrars & Admissions Offices). In 2022 she was awarded the SACRAO (Southern Association of College Registrars & Admissions Offices) President's Award for Outstanding Professional Presentation. 🇺🇸



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EMILY CURRY

AGE: 25 | IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATOR III AT JACK HENRY & ASSOC.

Though Emily Curry was raised in De Kalb and Hooks, Texas, she has long been an active member of the Texarkana community, having worked in the city for many years in the finance industry. However, when she and husband, Colby, decided to move to Texarkana last year, she knew she wanted to be even more involved in the community than ever before.

In 2022, Emily graduated from Leadership Texarkana. Executive Director Ruth Ellen Whitt said something that changed the course of Emily's life: "If not us, then who?"

"Such a simple sentence was very impactful to me because she was right: if not for the leaders who step up to make things happen, how would they get done? What would become of our community?" Emily recalled. "Ruth Ellen's charisma and love for our community transcended what I thought Texarkana was. From that day on, I knew if I was able to, I would always be an active participant in our community and a cheerleader for the things Texarkana has to offer."

So, while working for Jack Henry (a financial software company) and raising her two-year-old son, Nolan, Emily also serves three local organizations. Putting her banking background to use, she is the treasurer for Partnership for the Pathway, Keep Texarkana Beautiful (City of Texarkana, Texas), and the Be Like CJ Foundation. For Be Like CJ, she is also an executive committee member and the chair of the finance committee.

Earlier this year, Emily decided to embark on another journey—earning a bachelor's degree. "I want my son to understand the importance of education, and I want to be an example of how obstacles are just temporary barriers, not definitive to your future," she said.

Emily's greatest "obstacle" in life has been the death of her father four years ago. "He always taught me to work hard and never give up just because things get tough," she said. "Because of the life lessons he ingrained in me, I was able to keep going after he passed away."

On top of her father's legacy of resilience, Emily also wants to pass down her love of travel to her son. "I love to travel and experience new places. I hope to instill my free spiritedness that appreciates other cultures and lifestyles into my son," she said. 🌟

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

"It's better to have it and not need it than not have it and need it." —James Bramlett, referring to a college degree

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TIFFANY GODWIN, JD

AGE: 40 | TRANSACTIONAL ATTORNEY
AT GODWIN LAING PLLC

Lawyer Tiffany Godwin describes herself as “a big nerd.” “I have always loved to read and write,” she said, “and I get to do that pretty much every day. I also get to help people find creative solutions to issues that affect their lives and businesses, and, hopefully, provide them some peace of mind.”

After completing law school with highest honors at the University of Arkansas, Tiffany moved to Texarkana in 2015 to join Capshaw Green, PLLC. “I learned so much from Tina [Green] and Don [Capshaw], and I know I am a much better attorney for having been mentored by them,” she said. Thanks to the influence of Don, Tiffany joined the local Kiwanis Club in 2016 and has been a member of the “Kiwanis family” ever since. She has served in various roles and is currently a board member for the organization.

In 2021, Tiffany and fellow attorney Nikki Laing founded their own law firm. Tiffany sees this as her greatest professional achievement. “It was something that neither of us had planned on doing,” Tiffany explained, “and, when we started, I was going through a lot personally. I was terrified of adding anything else to the mix.”

The personal challenges Tiffany alluded to were beyond what any person should have to endure.

On the last day of 2019, while pregnant with her second child, Joshua, Tiffany learned that her husband, Daniel, had multiple myeloma, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. They relocated to Little Rock for weeks at a time for his treatment, all while working remotely and taking care of their three-year-old daughter, Pearl. Tiffany’s pregnancy was considered high-risk due to her age, but she had been given no reason to expect complications. “Then life threw us those horrible curve balls,” she recalled.

After Daniel’s first round of chemotherapy, he traveled with Tiffany to Dallas for an ultrasound that displayed excess fluid on her in-utero baby’s brain, indicative of a congenital brain defect. Shortly after, COVID-19 hit the U.S., and Daniel and Tiffany each had to endure their medical appointments alone. “Going in monthly for ultrasounds to continue to hear that your baby’s condition has not improved is gut wrenching, but doing it alone was even worse,” Tiffany said.

When Joshua was born, the doctors discovered that almost none of his brain tissue had developed; he was operating with little more than a brain stem. Doctors prepared the Godwins for a devastating future, but they took Joshua home, where he was loved unconditionally for 14 months.

In July 2021, Daniel and Joshua both caught RSV. Daniel, whose immune system was shot from chemotherapy, was admitted to the ER, while Joshua was airlifted to Little Rock. Both cleared the virus, but after two weeks at Arkansas Children’s, it became clear that Joshua would never be able to breathe on his own again. When they returned home, the hospice team was waiting.

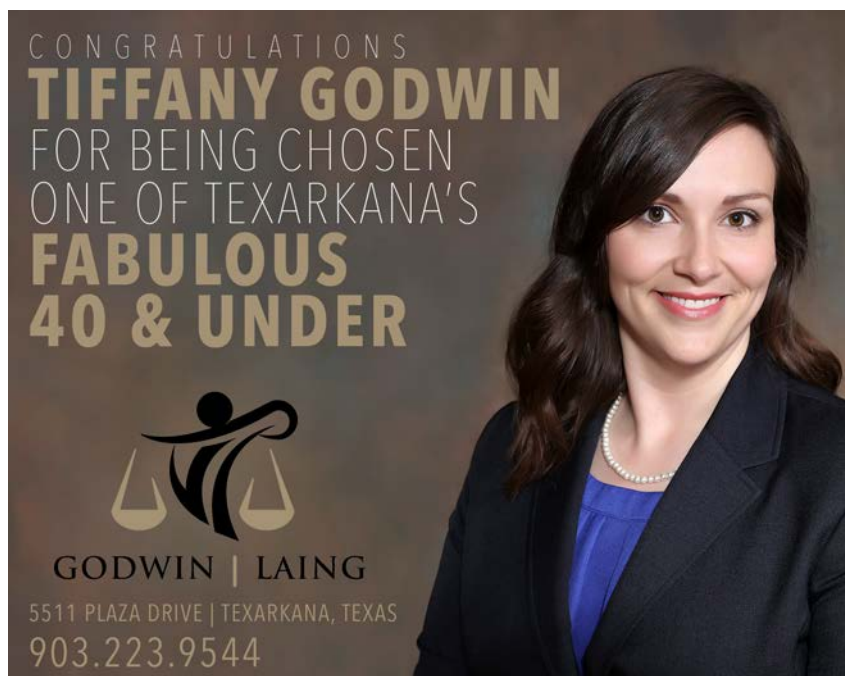
“His dad and I were able to hold and rock him until he took his last breath,” Tiffany said. “His short time on Earth was filled with lots of doctors’ visits, surgeries, and pain, but it was also filled with a ton of love and laughter and joy. Those little moments of joy and love kept us going through all those hard times.”

Tiffany’s daughter is now six. “She’s our little Pearl that shines even when the seas get dark and rough,” she said. Unfortunately, another stormy day at sea has arrived. In August, the Godwins learned that Daniel’s cancer has returned. While the news is devastating, the family has faith in their ability to overcome.

“I have no doubt that it is going to be a hard road, but we have been down hard roads before,” Tiffany said. “We’ll listen to his doctors, we’ll endure the tough stuff, we’ll give each other grace, and we will savor those moments of joy in between. I know that there is nothing that the three of us can’t get through.”

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

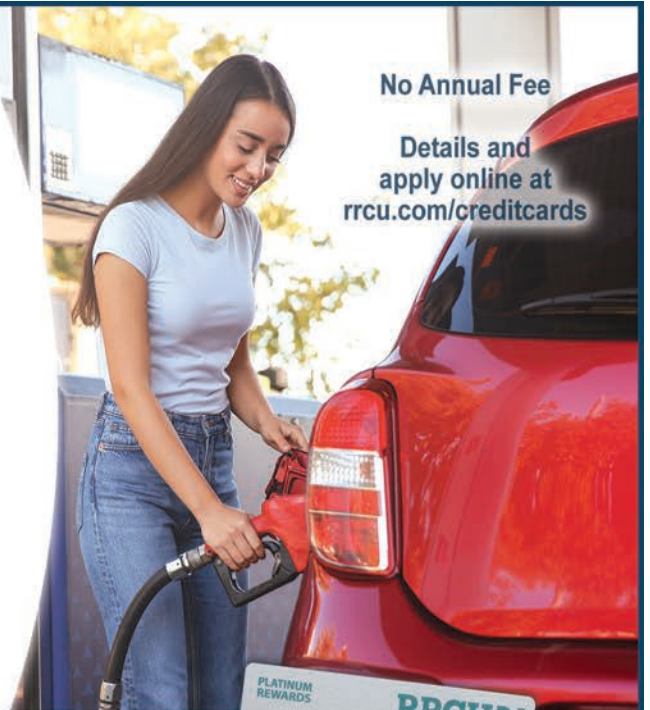
My first bartending job (back in college) was at this little bar and grill at the Lion’s Den Golf Club in my hometown (Dardanelle, Arkansas) owned by the golfer John Daly. I can confirm that what you see is what you get with him! He’s also a great tipper.



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JOHN DAVID GOINS, CPA, MBA

AGE: 29 | CHIEF ACCOUNTING OFFICER AT GOINS PLASTIC SOURCE, INC.,
AND PLASCO DESIGNS OF ARKANSAS, INC.



“Choosing to return to Texarkana and work with my family has been one of the easiest and most fulfilling choices I have ever had to make,” said John David Goins. His parents, DeAnn and Reggie Goins, founded Goins Plastic Source in 1999. Today, John David serves the company as the chief accounting officer, alongside his parents and brothers.

“My brothers and I came on board with GPS right around the same time, and we have been fortunate enough to see a lot of growth take place over the last five years,” John David said. “Working alongside my family has made me more than an accountant. I am now a job creator, land developer, financial investor, and anything else I am needed to be from day to day. I get to bring innovation and growth to the American manufacturing industry, and I get to do it all in the community and states that raised me.”

John David graduated from the University of Mississippi in 2017. He then became a Christian missionary through the organization Adventures in Missions. He embarked on a journey called the World Race, which takes participants to 11 countries in 11 months. After one year of evangelizing, he led a group for a second year. Over the two-year period, he visited 23 countries.

“When we traveled from country to country, we would do it as the people would. This meant taking third-class train cars, crossing borders on foot, traveling by cargo ships across seas,” he said. “I was able to truly immerse myself in hundreds of cultures and subcultures. That time of my life has given me an extremely unique perspective on the world and has fueled my passion for loving God and loving others, which I will continue to carry with me through life.”

After his stint proselytizing, John David returned home to study for the CPA exam, which he passed in October 2020. A year later, he began pursuing an MBA from the University of Arkansas. In August 2023, he completed the program and attained not only an MBA but also a graduate certificate in entrepreneurship. “I believe that this experience uniquely equipped me to further pursue my personal passion of connecting financial statements to a mission,” he said.

John David is a 2021 graduate of Leadership Texarkana, and he now serves the organization as a board member and volunteer. He is also a board member of the Caddo Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. 🇺🇸

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU CURRENTLY READING?

I am currently reading *Unbreakable: Building and Leading Resilient Teams* by Adam Stoverink and Bradley Kirkman. It is a must-read for any current or aspiring business leader!

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JUANITA HARRIS

AGE: 35 | TEACHER AT HARMONY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY,
FOUNDER AND CEO OF TEACHERS SUPPORT TEACHERS



“I do what I do,” said T ASD educator Juanita Harris, “because I believe teaching is one of the reasons I was born.” She has devoted 13 years of her life to “the profession that makes all other professions possible,” she said.

Juanita’s pedagogical excellence is reflected in the many honors she has received. In 2013, Kappa Delta Pi granted her the Early Career Award. In 2017, she earned the Bessie B. Moore Economics Educator Award from Economics Arkansas. Also in 2017, she was named the Union Elementary Campus Teacher of the Year. The following year, she was named Teacher of the Year for the entire Texarkana Arkansas School District. In 2019, she was a regional finalist for the state-level Teacher of the Year award and was recognized by Asa Hutchinson at the Governor’s Mansion in Little Rock. In 2021, she received the Civic Award from the Arkansas Education Association; in 2022, the AEA named her Teacher of the Year.

“I truly believe that before my parents met, I was on God’s mind, and being an educator was one of the things he wanted me to do,” Juanita said. “I am grateful for the opportunity to help my students grow and learn. More than what we teach, our students remember how we make them feel.”

While Juanita’s love for education is palpable, it does not inoculate her against the challenges of the profession.

“One of the most common misconceptions about teaching is that, because we carry it well, it’s not heavy,” she said. “Nine years after I entered the profession, I believe God allowed me to experience a unique set of challenges for two reasons: he knew he could trust me with trouble, and he knew I would make pearls. Pain teaches things that pleasant never could. I told [my sister Genita that] educators needed a support group. She told me I should start one, and I told her that I believed that I would.”

In 2019, Juanita founded Teachers Support Teachers, a benefit corporation whose mission is to “encourage the hearts that shape the minds.”

“It is our desire to take Teacher Appreciation Day from an annual event to a monthly moment and, in doing so, boost the morale of educators and ultimately increase teacher retention,” she explained. TST pays for teachers to have group therapy sessions with a licensed therapist, hosts celebrations, and sends teachers to get pedicures. They hold novice teacher appreciation dinners and school supply buffets. Every March, they throw a fundraising gala, which, along with sponsorships and donations, funds their operation; members do not pay dues.

Juanita is a senior fellow with Teach Plus Arkansas. She is a member of the One Million Teachers of Color Campaign as well as the Arkansas Education Association, the latter of which she serves at the state level on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee. She is also a member of Christ Nations Church. In 2021, she self-published a devotional book: *I Talk to God About You: 40 Days of Prayer for My Future Husband*. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

“If you do right, it will follow you. If you do wrong, it will catch up with you.”

—Genester Rhymes, grandmother

WILLIAM HARRIS

AGE: 34 | PRINCIPAL
AT RED LICK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Will Harris has worked in education his entire adult life, but he never thought he would be a principal. “However, I ended up finding more and more that, to make a stronger and lasting impact, in both the lives of teachers and students, pursuing a principalship was needed,” he said.

After a few years of teaching, Will became the career and technical education coordinator for the Hot Springs School District. After one year in this leadership role, he transitioned to the Arkansas Department of Career Education as a program advisor. This job enabled him to update state curriculum standards and provide assistance to Arkansas schools. Soon after, he became the career and technical education coordinator for the Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative in Hope, Arkansas; in this position, he worked with nine districts in the region, assisting them with procuring federal funding and ensuring that appropriate spending protocols were in place.

In July of 2017, Will stepped across the stateline and was hired as an assistant principal at Texas High School. “For six years, I had the opportunity to work with literally thousands of students and hundreds of community members,” he said.

In April 2023, he was hired for the job of principal at Red Lick Middle School.

Will is currently an educational doctoral candidate, having passed his written and oral comprehensive exams in August 2023. He began Texas A&M University–Commerce’s educational administration program in 2021. The journey “has been exhausting but illuminating,” he said.

Will and his wife, Hiliary, are raising two children: William (14) and Emmalyn (5). A 2023 Leadership Texarkana graduate, Will now serves on the board of directors for the organization. He and his family are actively involved in the Christian Warriors Church.

“We have an amazing family, loving children, and a strong family of believers around us,” Will said. “In all honesty, knowing that these relationships exist, and exist through our faith in God, is the most humbling personal achievement I could ever hope to attain.” 🙏



WHAT BOOK ARE YOU CURRENTLY READING?

I am currently re-reading Brené Brown’s *Dare to Lead*. It is a running joke among friends that I am obsessed with Brené Brown, quote her work frequently, and will even send memes and quote graphics in group messages just to see what sort of sarcastic responses I will get because “I love Brené Brown.”

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MARY LAURA HASTINGS, DMD

AGE: 37 | ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON
AT OMS OF NORTHEAST TEXAS



Dr. Mary Laura Hastings is not one to take the easy path. She pursued the education- and training-intensive career of oral surgeon because she enjoys helping people and wanted a job that would keep her sharp.

“It’s been so rewarding to improve patients’ oral health and quality of life,” she said. “I also enjoy the challenging nature of the field and the continued learning [required].”

A native of Mobile, Alabama, Mary Laura earned her bachelor’s from Auburn University and her dental degree from the University of Alabama School of Dentistry.

Mary Laura practices with OMS of Northeast Texas, though she currently resides with her husband (also a practicing oral surgeon) in Shreveport, where she completed her oral and maxillofacial surgery residency in 2018. For the past five years, she has commuted to Texarkana for work. “I knew immediately that this was a special place to work and am honored to have worked here since 2018,” she said.

During her residency, she participated in a multi-day surgical conference in Jabalpur, India. While there, she treated “numerous patients who otherwise may not have been able to receive treatment,” she said. Mary Laura describes this as one of the highlights of her training.

In her free time, Mary Laura can be found playing tennis, traveling, cooking, fishing, walking her dog, and spending time with friends and family. 🐾

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

At one point I considered pursuing a career in photography and fashion. I even had a darkroom in my childhood home that my parents built for me.

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BRANDON HIGGINS, MBA

AGE: 37 | REGISTRAR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT
AT TEXARKANA COLLEGE

As a first-generation college graduate himself, Brandon Higgins is passionate about helping other first-generation students succeed at Texarkana College.

Brandon has worked in higher education for 13 years—the last ten of those at Texarkana College.

“I have developed a passion for educating the population in this area and helping them gain traction toward their goals,” he said. Whether he’s helping “a fresh high school graduate or a single parent trying to improve their circumstances for themselves and their kids,” Brandon said, he finds fulfillment in supporting people on their higher education journeys. In particular, he enjoys helping students in whom he sees himself.

“As a first-generation college student myself, I love seeing other first-generation students building the foundation for themselves and their family members to have the life they want,” he said.

Brandon stands on the shoulders of his parents. “They sacrificed a lot of time, money, and energy to ensure I had what I needed to get an education,” he said. “Most importantly, they instilled key values in me that helped shape who I am today.”

Along with his wife, Anne, Brandon tries to instill those same key values in his own children, Julia (9) and James (6).

Recently, the Higgins family suffered a great tragedy, losing their unborn child to trisomy 18 (also called Edwards syndrome), a severe genetic condition. “I don’t know that one ever truly overcomes something like that, but faith in Jesus and the belief that our son is now whole in the presence of our Lord brings comfort and strength in dire straits,” Brandon said.

Brandon is a member of City Church. In his free time, he can be found at the ballfields as a volunteer youth softball and t-ball coach. 📍



WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

My first major in college was nursing. I can't handle smells, so that didn't work out. I married a nurse instead.



Congratulations BRANDON HIGGINS Registrar & Executive Director of Enrollment on your selection as one of the FSLM's Fabulous 40 & Under!

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JACOB HILL, JD

AGE: 29 | PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR BOWIE COUNTY

Jacob Hill has been passionate about criminal law since he was a teenager.

“When I was sixteen, I began volunteering with Teen Court. It was my first experience with the legal system, and it was incredibly formative in solidifying my interest in criminal law as well as what the judicial system can do to help the community,” he said.

After graduating from Rhodes College with a Bachelor of Arts in political science and government, he married and moved to Little Rock to pursue a law degree from the University of Arkansas. While the first year of law school is notoriously tough, Jacob faced additional challenges.

“Beyond adjusting to the workload schooling entailed, my wife [Haley Rushing-Hill] and I also faced the death of a friend and familial hardships,” he said. “We had not even been married for six months, but I was only able to handle it all thanks to the love and support of Haley and my family.”

Jacob earned his JD in 2020. He and Haley intended to move to New York City once Jacob had his law degree, but COVID interfered.

“We initially intended to stay a year in Texarkana with family and then move once the pandemic passed, but we fell in love with being back home near both of our families,” Jacob explained.

Since returning to his hometown, Jacob has become president of Main Street Texarkana. He also serves as the vice president of the Texas Young Lawyers Association. He practiced civil law at Norton & Wood for three years before recently moving to the public defenders’ office.

“While [Norton & Wood] were fantastic employers, my legal passion has always been in criminal law,” he said. “I was also motivated to help give a voice to a large population who struggle to have their voice heard.” He now represents clients with misdemeanor charges.

Jacob has fortunately discovered that he fits in his new role as well as he had hoped. He finds immense fulfillment in representing his clients.

“One of my clients was a young woman who had given birth while waiting for her misdemeanor charge to be heard in court,” he said. “Her child unfortunately faced medical complications and was rushed to Little Rock. My proudest moment came from working with the district attorney and the judge to expedite her proceeding.”

This case might have been particularly close to Jacob’s heart, since, in late August of this year, Haley gave birth to the couple’s first child: Andrew Leon Hill. They are raising their baby in the town that raised them.

“It may not have been in our plan, but I am so happy to have ended up in Texarkana,” Jacob reflected. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I am currently designing my own board game!

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CAROL PETTIT HOUSE

AGE: 38 | PRACTICE MANAGER AT CHRISTUS TRINITY CLINIC SURGERY ASSOCIATES

During the workday, Carol House serves as a certified medical office manager—a job she executes exceptionally well. But throughout the Hooks community where she lives, Carol is best known as a volunteer coach.

Carol attended Southern Arkansas University on a full athletic scholarship. As a freshman, her father was diagnosed with cancer. “Watching him battle this horrible disease while going to college full-time and working two jobs really was a difficult time for me,” she said.

Sadly, Carol’s dad died six days before she became her family’s first college graduate. “Although he didn’t get to see me graduate, I know that he was proud of me and all of my hard work,” she said. “This drive to make my family proud still motivates me daily.”

Since returning to the Ark-La-Tex, Carol has volunteered with the Hooks Youth Sports Association, coaching volleyball, basketball, and softball. “Coaching to me isn’t just about winning,” she said. “Teaching these young ladies about hard work, effort, attitude, commitment, dedication, sportsmanship, leadership, and being a good teammate and friend is really why I do what I do.”

Though coaching is certainly Carol’s passion, she is not a person who lives for the weekend; she thrives at her job with CHRISTUS Trinity Clinic Surgery Associates. In fact, in July 2023, she received the Rising Star Award.

“This award is given to a manager in northeast Texas who is most likely to succeed in a higher leadership role within the organization,” Carol explained. “This is so special to me because it was voted on by my peers and selected by HR and administration. Being with CHRISTUS only since January 2021, I am honored to be recognized for my hard work and that I have gained the respect of my peers.”

Carol is driven by a desire to make the world a better place—which makes her a great fit at CHRISTUS. “I love our mission, to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ,” she said. “I really feel we make a positive impact on this community and improve the quality of life for the people in it.”

Carol has one daughter, Sutton (10). Carol cites her own mother, Donita Allen, as her greatest inspiration in parenting and life. “She raised seven children during difficult times,” she said. “[My mother] has always been the most hardworking person, supportive, loving, and honest. I hope that I am that great of a mother to my daughter.” 🌟

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

I saw a quote years ago that said, “Be who you needed when you were younger.” That has always resonated with me.





CORY HOUSE

AGE: 32 | EXECUTIVE CHEF INSTRUCTOR
AT TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL

Few teachers can say they have been awarded Teacher of the Year even once. Culinary educator Cory House has received that honor three times. As an instructor at Texas High, he won the award on the campus level in 2017 and again in 2023. This past year, he was also named Secondary Teacher of the Year across the entire district.

“Teaching is not just a profession for me; it’s a calling that brings me immeasurable fulfillment and gratitude,” Cory said. “I am committed to nurturing [my students’] creativity, developing their skills, and helping them discover their true potential in both the culinary world and their broader futures.”

Under Cory’s leadership, the Texas High culinary program has expanded from one course to a four-year academy. Since 2018, he annually takes students to compete in culinary competitions (excepting 2021). They have advanced to the state level each year and have swept the region twice. At the state competition in Corpus Christi last spring, all three of Texas High’s student competitors placed in the top-10 student chefs statewide.

Last school year, THS launched their student-operated food truck, establishing a partnership with the Texarkana Convention Center/Hilton Garden Inn.

Cory’s work is inspired by both of his grandfathers. The late Billy House, former New Boston fire chief, was “a passionate cook,” Cory said. “His love for cooking was contagious. Witnessing his creativity and enthusiasm in the kitchen inspired me to pursue my own culinary journey.”

Cory looks to his maternal grandfather, 93-year-old Billy Joyner, to be reminded of the value of education. “Despite his upbringing on a sharecropping farm in Annona, Texas, Papa understood the value of education and was determined to pursue it,” Cory said. “Not having transportation, he would wake up before dawn, walk the many miles to the nearest high school in Clarksville to attend classes, and then make the long trip home. His hard work and determination would pay off as he eventually graduated high school and moved away to the city of Dallas to pursue a degree in business. He worked tirelessly to build success for his family so they could show others what hard work and a humble heart could do.”

Cory has been married to his wife, Kelli, for 11 years. They have two children: Knox (8) and Adelynn (8). “Balancing [parenthood] and being a chef driven to create the premier high school culinary education program in Texas has presented its challenges,” Cory said. While he’s had to make sacrifices, “the fulfillment of witnessing aspiring young chefs grow in this culinary program has made every effort worthwhile,” he said. 🇺🇸

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU CURRENTLY READING?

Leaders Eat Last by Simon Sinek.



AYDEN HOWARD

AGE: 14 | ORGANIZER OF THE ANNUAL JUNETEENTH PARADE

Ninth grader Ayden Howard has already made a name for himself as a community leader. In 2021, at age 12, he set out to host Texarkana's first-ever Juneteenth parade. The annual downtown event has grown each year, thanks largely to Ayden's passion and continued leadership.

Ayden's go-getter personality comes from his mother, Andrea Smith, the owner of Resilience Gym; she is his greatest source of support and inspiration. Ayden has developed his leadership skills through his participation in The Scholars, a local nonprofit devoted to providing entrepreneurship education to local youth ages 9 to 16. Ayden is also a member of the National Junior Honor Society and the Early College Academy. He annually participates in the Big Event, a national neighborhood cleanup day.

Ayden's community service in the Ark-La-Tex earned him special mayoral recognition from both Mayor Bob Bruggeman of Texarkana, Texas, and Mayor Allen Brown of Texarkana, Arkansas.

Though Ayden is now an impressive and practiced orator, public speaking did not come naturally to him. One of his most significant struggles, he said, was overcoming a "difficulty in sufficiently articulating [his thoughts]," he said. This insecurity was heightened by a feeling of being underestimated on the basis of his age and race. "These issues somewhat haunted me in my younger days and played a role in depriving me of self-love and self-esteem," he said.

Through reading and practicing, Ayden developed public speaking skills that serve him well every day. As for being prejudged based on his youth and heritage: "I was able to accept this but not mentally succumb to the fact that people will forever underestimate me," he said. "This taught me to always possess self-motivation, just in case I'm 'not good enough' for others."

Ayden's greatest source of pride is his spot on the A-honor roll, which he's held his entire academic career thus far. For their academic guidance and mentorship, he is especially grateful to three of his teachers: Christiane Irvin, Justin Hunter, and Yolanda Smith. "They have truly impacted me in a way I can never encapsulate," he said.

As Ayden embarks on his high school career, he remains dedicated to his calling. "I do what I do simply because I feel like God has blessed myself with such talents, and I have an obligation to utilize them," he explained. "My primary goal in life is to serve others and use my euphonious voice to help others and bring attention to certain issues." 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

My impact and efforts surpass that of the Texarkana region. I have done work in Las Vegas, Kansas City, and Dallas.



KAYLA JONES

AGE: 33 | LOAN OFFICER
AT TEXAR



Kayla Jones is a mortgage loan officer at TEXAR Federal Credit Union—a role she thinks is particularly special.

“Helping families achieve their goals of buying their first home or their dream home brings me joy,” she said. “It is a pleasure to get to work with people in my community during an important time in their lives.”

Kayla and her family of three (husband, Ben, and three-year-old daughter, Cora) know firsthand the value of having a safe, comfortable place to live. In 2022, a tornado damaged their home in Simms, Texas. Though the weather event was scary and costly, Kayla expressed gratitude for her family’s physical safety, as well as the support their community offered.

“Having our family, friends, and neighbors rally together to help us was incredible to see,” she said.”

Kayla, who volunteers at community events regularly alongside her TEXAR colleagues, loves being a member of a team—a trait she developed as a young person playing softball. “[Playing softball] allowed me to learn teamwork and tenacity, which I still use today,” she said.

Kayla and her family are members at Spring Lake Baptist Church, where Kayla teaches the three- and four-year-old class. For fun, she and Ben travel domestically, taking long road trips when schedules allow. 🏠

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

We have goats, [who are] mostly named after '90s pop stars, and too many chickens to count.



MEGAN KUMPE

AGE: 34 | BRANCH ADMINISTRATION MANAGER,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AT FARMERS BANK & TRUST

Megan Kumpe epitomizes “work your way up.” While attending Southern Arkansas University in 2008, she started working at Farmers Bank & Trust as a part-time teller. Over the last 15 years, she has been promoted through the ranks: lead teller, retail banker, branch manager, and branch administrator, before finally landing in her current position as a branch administration manager and senior vice president.

“I oversee branch operations and retail staff for all 34 locations of Farmers Bank & Trust,” she explained. “I enjoy leading such a large group of people. Managing people can be challenging, and that’s what I love about it. I’m faced with obstacles regularly, but I use knowledge from previous experience to help decide how to handle the situation.”

Megan has faced challenges not only at work but also at home. In September 2020, her son, Kade (now 9), was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Then, in August 2022, her husband, Brandon, underwent a kidney and pancreas transplant, after only a few weeks on the transplant list.

“These events have most definitely caused our family to make many adjustments to our lifestyle,” Megan said. “Through all the struggles, I’ve realized how blessed I truly am and don’t worry about the small stuff. My faith is stronger, and I turn to family and friends for help when things get tough.”

Just as she relies on others for help, Megan prides herself on supporting those around her, both in her personal life and at work.

“I believe that each day I’m presented with an opportunity to have a positive influence on those around me. I find success in helping my people accomplish their goals,” she said.

Looking back on the rungs she has climbed, Megan feels pride in how far she’s come. “I never dreamed I would achieve this kind of success,” she said. “I believe my story is proof that hard work and dedication pays off.”



WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

Growing up, I showed cows and was an active member of the Magnolia High School FFA chapter, where I served as the president my junior and senior years.

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CASSIDY LAVENDER

AGE: 35 | OWNER OF LAVENDER THORNE



Cassidy Lavender is the owner of Lavender Thorne, a company that produces personal care and cleaning products. Their product line is sold in all 50 states and several countries, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. Marketed as all-natural and with Christian-inspired product names, Lavender Thorne's tinctures, rollers, syrups, and other products have a strong following throughout the Ark-La-Tex.

Spreading Christianity is the primary mission of Lavender Thorne, and of Cassidy Lavender herself. "I love people and want the best for them inside and out. I'm able to speak life into everyone who walks through Lavender Thorne's doors or orders online," she said. "We add scriptures to all of our labels and listen to worship music while making the products. The amount of testimonies we have heard from using the products or just from reading the scriptures over themselves—it's enough to change your life."

A native of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, at age seven, Cassidy and her parents moved to Texarkana to be near their extended family. Cassidy's maternal relatives owned Bridal Castle, and this, she says, is where she got her entrepreneurial skills. She attended Pleasant Grove until high school, when she transferred to Texas High.

Cassidy and her husband, Price (whom she describes as the most influential person in her life), have three school-aged sons. Cassidy's father lives with them as well, making a household of six with "too much testosterone under one roof," Cassidy laughed, "but never a dull moment." They are members of Church Upside Down, where Price is a co-pastor. Cassidy is also involved with the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce, Haven Homes, For the Sake of One, Texarkana Down Syndrome Society, Friends for a Cause, Woman Owned TXK, Arise Women's Ministry, Mistletoe Market, and the Texarkana Wine Festival.

Lavender Thorne is a woman-owned and -operated business, which "isn't always rainbows and butterflies," she said. "We are all like sisters, and there are challenges we face weekly, but I wouldn't change it for the world."

Running her company in Texarkana has also come with its own set of hurdles—and gifts. "A small town isn't always the easiest to open a business," Cassidy said. "The people who support you the most aren't your best friends you grew up with; they are strangers who become customers who become your biggest cheerleaders and turn into the greatest friends." 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I'm half Japanese. My maiden name is Kawawa. I don't favor any side of my family, so it's hard to tell unless you know me or my otosan (dad).

CHASE LIVINGSTON

AGE: 32 | OWNER, TRAINER AT TEXARKANA PHYS. ED

Gym owner Chase Livingston sees himself as more than a personal trainer. “I like to think of myself as people’s ‘trainer for life,’” he said. “I don’t just want people to be physically fit, but also mentally, emotionally and spiritually fit. I’m like a fitness trainer, life coach, and spiritual mentor all wrapped into one.”

Chase’s gym, Texarkana Phys. Ed (TXK PE), opened in March 2023, though his entrepreneurial journey began in 2020, when he started training clients in his home garage. Running TXK PE has been a huge challenge.

“Running memberships, acquiring trainers and instructors, navigating marketing and advertising, and also managing my own schedule of clients can be overwhelming,” he said. Launching any fitness business is challenging, but Chase is determined to make TXK PE something special. “We don’t just want to be another gym, but one that stands out, makes fitness challenging and fun, and ultimately gets you results,” he said.

Entrepreneurship seemed out of reach to Chase for many years, as he struggled to finish college and find stability. “I had dropped out of college twice, wrecked my credit, lived out of my car, and was fired from my job,” he recalled. “However, I decided that once again, I would pick myself off the ground and go back to college, and this time I would succeed. I made the dean’s list multiple semesters in a row, received scholarships, took summer classes, worked a full-time job, and also bettered my health by going to the gym daily.” In 2018, he earned a BFA from Texas State University.

In addition to owning the gym, Chase and his wife, Hailey, run the non-profit High Powered. “High Powered was created to educate, energize, and empower the community through fitness, faith, and fulfillment,” Chase said. “We have a big vision for what we want to do with our organization, but right now we are just focused on creating a free, family-based community event that gets our community fired up to live a healthy, fulfilled life.”

Chase also gives back to the community by running the All Abilities fitness program, in conjunction with friend Whitney Allen. All Abilities is designed for people with disabilities who are interested in fitness training. “This is one of the most rewarding things I get to do with my time,” he said.

A member of Church on the Rock, Chase also serves as a youth leader and on the prayer team. He is currently writing a book about how fitness principles also apply to growing stronger mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He and Hailey have a three-year-old son named Arrow Stone. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

Because of my theater background and being directed by Michael Cooper for countless shows, I have learned how to tap dance. I’m not great by any means, but it’s a talent I thought I would never have!



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KAYCEE LOMAX

AGE: 29 | DIRECTOR OF VIRTUAL BRANCH AND OUTBOUND MARKETING
AT RED RIVER CREDIT UNION



Kaycee Lomax began her career at Red River Credit Union when she was only 17. As a Texas High School student, she became a student teller. “I didn’t know much about money or finances, but I knew how to count down a drawer,” she said. Since her teenage years—through marriage, three degrees, one baby, and one baby on the way—she has remained at the credit union.

“Helping people with their finances gives me joy,” she said. “I love to help someone consolidate a few loans or save money on interest. It’s a lot of fun.”

Kaycee has occupied many roles at RRCU and currently serves as the director of virtual branch and outbound marketing. In the virtual branch department, she has seen firsthand “how the future of banking is having access online,” she said. Her role in the outbound marketing department, meanwhile, allows her to help both members and nonmembers refinance their auto loans. “Many people don’t realize the rate they were given at the time of purchase and are happy to hear we can assist them with a lower rate and a lower payment, right here in their hometown,” she said.

Over her 12 years at Red River, Kaycee has benefited from her colleagues’ belief in her. “I would say my greatest occupational achievement is knowing that my team here at RRCU has enough confidence in me to allow me to continue to grow here,” she reflected. “I am a head-down go-getter. I have always been willing to go the extra mile, and although this can be exhausting, it’s been rewarding.”

While determination and grit come naturally to Kaycee, public speaking does not. Fortunately, through taking a speech course at Texarkana College, she has learned to communicate through her anxiety. “Learning to control my incredibly fast-talking speed and to breathe helped me with my confidence while speaking in front of or with groups of people,” she said. “Without this, I don’t believe I’d be where I am today.”

Kaycee is a member of the Credit Union Young Professionals and the Greater Texarkana Young Professionals. She and husband, Terence, have a two-year-old son, Asher, and they are currently expecting.

Kaycee’s pregnancy has not been easy: she carried identical twins for 17 weeks before losing Baby A. Twin-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) occurs in about 15% of twin pregnancies and often requires corrective surgery in-utero. Tragically, Baby A did not survive the surgery. “This has been a milestone we weren’t prepared for but has taught us a lot about leaning on one another in hard times,” Kaycee reflected.

In their free time, Kaycee and Terence ride bikes, workout, and play with Asher. “We love watching him grow,” she said. 🐾

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I’m a terrible cook. I always have been. I have to call my sister to make sure I have the stove at the right temperature 90% of the time on super simple dishes. I do know 350 degrees for 11/12 minutes for cookies, though!

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KAYCEE LOMAX

Director of Virtual and
Outbound Marketing

Red River Credit Union is excited for Kaycee to be selected as one of the **FSLM Fabulous 40 and Under** group for 2023. Thank you for all you do, Kaycee!



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CALEB MALONEY

AGE: 39 | PROGRAM COORDINATOR
AT MISSION TEXARKANA

“I do what I do because of my faith,” said Caleb Maloney, the program coordinator at Mission Texarkana. “I am given opportunities to love my neighbors every day, while working with likeminded people who love the Lord and our clients. I couldn’t imagine working anywhere else.”

Mission Texarkana is a Christian nonprofit that ministers and provides food, supplies, vocational training, and housing assistance to disadvantaged people in the Texarkana area.

“It’s a privilege to be a part of what we are doing here,” Caleb said. “Whether it’s the meals we serve, the housing we help them obtain, or the supplies we hand out, I get to see people’s needs being met. I especially love our job training programs. This has allowed me to work side-by-side with our clients as they gain work experience, learn new skills, and earn a paycheck.”

Caleb, who describes himself as “kind of obsessed with coffee,” is particularly passionate about their coffee-selling arm, which teaches people how to roast, package, and sell high-quality coffee beans. The coffee can be bought online or in-person at the Texarkana Farmers’ Market, seasonal events like Mistletoe Market, and at other pop-up locations throughout the year. The proceeds go directly to the people creating the product.

Prior to his current position, Caleb worked as an HVAC instructor at Texarkana College. Anxiety almost kept him from joining Mission Texarkana.

“Anxiety has interfered with many parts of my life. It has kept me from going after jobs, promotions, and other professional goals,” he said. “I still struggle with it to this day. In fact, I almost didn’t apply for the job I have now because of it. I can’t tell you how I overcame it because I don’t believe I have. When I struggle with anxiety, I remember that I am not in control. When my faith is in the Lord and not myself, it is hard to be anxious about anything.”

Caleb and his wife, Ashley, are expecting their first child in November. Becoming a father has encouraged Caleb “to be a better man,” he said. “It has made me want to be the kind of man that I want my son to be.”

Caleb is on the board of the Texarkana Homeless Coalition and the Cadence Bank Community Advisory Council. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I have played guitar for over 20 years, but I rarely listen to music. If you see me with my earbuds in, 90% of the time it’s an audiobook or a podcast.

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MELISSA MANNING

AGE: 37 | ART TEACHER AT PLEASANT GROVE HIGH SCHOOL,
DANCE TEACHER AT ALL RHYTHM DANCE ALLEY

Teacher Melissa Manning knows firsthand the impact of educators in the lives of young people. As a child and teenager living in poverty, and at times experiencing homelessness, she derived strength and comfort from the art and dance teachers in her life.

Melissa was raised by her grandmother, as her mother's mental illness precluded her from having custody. Her family experienced generational poverty. At 16, she found herself living with her older sister, who was a single mom, and then friends, and then on her own. "During high school, not many people knew I was considered homeless at times," she said. "I survived that time being blessed by many different people."

One place that Melissa found stability and support was in the dance studio. "As a young child growing up with grandparents, money was tight. I had begged my grandmother to let me take dance, and she finally caved," Melissa said. "Linda Bell's dance academy is where I fell in love with dance, felt welcome by others, and made lots of lifelong friends."

Another safe space was the Pleasant Grove art department. "I had outstanding art educators who allowed me to really discover who I was through art," Melissa reflected. "[Art teacher] Nicole Brisco helped me realize I had the gift of teaching and is still encouraging me today as I work alongside her."

Inspired by her own dance and art teachers, Melissa set out to follow in their footsteps. After becoming a first-generation college graduate, she embarked on her career as an educator.

"Dance and art have always been passions of mine, and along the way I had some amazing teachers who showed me how you can make a lifelong impact on others," she said. "Making connections with students and helping them to develop into kind, thoughtful, contributing community members is what I am all about."

Personally, Melissa is most proud of breaking the cycle of generational poverty and, along with her husband, Craig, raising her three children: Jett (11), Estella (8), and Willow (5).

"I am proud of the fact that I can give my children the home life I always yearned for and have been able to be an involved mother," she said. "I am grateful to not have turned into a predictable statistic, and I have not done it alone. [Craig] is my partner in this crazy life we have with our three kids, who we like to call the 'Manning Mess.'"

Melissa is a member of the Texas Art Educators Association, the National Art Educators Association, and the National Dance Education Organization. She has worked with ARDA to fundraise for Randy Sams' Outreach Shelter, CASA, and the Texarkana Animal League. 🐾

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I was Grover, the mascot for PG, my senior year.

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EMILY MARKLE, DDS

AGE: 30 | DENTIST
AT LIPPIAN FAMILY DENTISTRY

Emily Markle has wanted to be a dentist since she was seven years old. “That dream became a reality after a lot of hard work in 2019,” she said. “I love what I do because it’s like [the marriage of] art and science, and I get to help people all day long. I work at Lippian Family Dentistry; we have the absolute best team.”

An alumna of Redwater Independent School District, Emily attended Southern Arkansas University for her undergraduate studies before attending The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Dentistry. In 2019, she was awarded the Outstanding Woman Student Dentist award from the Texas Association of Women Dentists. She cites dental school as her greatest challenge in life.

“You don’t understand until you have gone through a professional school just how grueling it is,” she said. “There were so many hours studying, managing patients, and just so much mental stress involved.”

Fortunately, Emily had strong role models in her parents. “My mom put herself through college for her bachelor’s in nursing while working full time and raising four kids,” Emily said. “She and my dad always pushed us to be the best we could be because they knew we had potential. Without their support, I know I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Though she felt certain dentistry was the career for her, she received the confirmation she needed during her studies, after making a set of dentures for a patient who had gone without teeth for years. “Seeing this patient light up when she got her smile back assured me that I was doing what God called me to do,” Emily said. “I still have the letter of appreciation that she wrote me.”

Emily is married to her high school sweetheart, Josh. They are raising an 18-month-old son named Hudson.

Emily is an active member of the Junior League of Texarkana. She is a co-chair for Packs for a Purpose, a project that provides basic necessities for children entering foster care. She is also a member of the American Dental Association, the Texas Dental Association, and the Academy of General Dentistry. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

“You have your whole life to work. Enjoy every moment. Take the trip. The memories are worth it.” —my parents



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JAKOB MARTIN

AGE: 22 | SKILLED TRADES SEARCH SPECIALIST
AT EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS



Many people and businesses in the Ark-La-Tex have turned to Express Employment Professionals when looking to hire or be hired. 22-year-old Jakob Martin loves serving his hometown through connecting employers and workers. In his role as a skilled trades search specialist, he helps companies recruit CDL drivers, welders, machinists, mechanics, and more.

“I enjoy working at Express because of the impact you get to have on your community by helping people bring an income to their family and supplying the qualified personnel to help businesses succeed and be prosperous for our great community,” he said.

Jakob graduated from Trinity Christian School in 2019. In 2020, he joined his father, owner Joey Martin, at Express Employment Professionals’ Texarkana location.

“To have the opportunity to help an individual succeed in their career or advancement is very rewarding,” he said. And, on the other end of the process, “obtaining the trust from our client companies to search for the talent they need to be successful is very rewarding as well.”

Jakob is an ambassador for the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce. He also sits on the board of the Greater Texarkana Young Professionals. “Serving with local organizations that work toward making Texarkana the greatest place it can be has been very gratifying,” he said.

In his free time, Jakob plays basketball, hunts, and fishes. 🏹

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

“Treat everyone as if they have a sign around their neck that says, ‘Make me feel important.’ Can you imagine how the world would be if everyone had that mindset?” –Jim Quillen, mentor

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HALEY MAYFIELD, LMSW

AGE: 35 | SOCIAL WORKER
AT SUMMIT COMMUNITY CARE

Social worker Haley Mayfield entered the field because she herself benefited from the guidance and support of social workers. At age 13, her father was fatally injured in a rodeo event. She received therapy at Southwest Arkansas Mental Health and Counseling from a provider named Randy White.

“Mr. White had a huge impact on my life and provided me with the tools and confidence that I needed to get through such a hard time,” Haley said. “Throughout the years, I have been asked who had the greatest impact on my life, and I always come back to him. Because of his positive influence in my childhood, I decided that I too wanted to help others in the same way and decided to pursue a career in social work.”

Haley, who is a licensed master social worker, is in the process of earning her clinical license. She works at Summit Community Care, which services beneficiaries of Arkansas Medicaid. She previously worked for the Arkansas Department of Children and Family Services as a case manager.

“No matter the role that I serve in, I am deeply passionate about ensuring that families across the state of Arkansas have access to resources and services,” she said. “Being able to watch a family reunited, seeing an individual become independent in their community and gain a sense of independence, or learning that a therapist has had a breakthrough with a client who has been resistant to treatment—all of these things make me proud to be a social worker.”

In her current role, Haley gets to train other professionals on trauma-informed approaches and sustainable discharge plans. She recently received an Award of Excellence from Summit.

An alumna of Arkansas Tech University, Haley received a harrowing medical diagnosis during her undergraduate studies. Experiencing debilitating migraines and numbness in her extremities, she ended up in the ER, where she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

“At that point, I wasn’t even sure if I was going to be able to finish college, or what quality of life I would have after receiving this diagnosis at the age of 25,” she recalled. “However, with the encouragement of my husband and the support of family and friends, I graduated with my bachelor’s with honors and continued to pursue my master’s.”

Haley has been married for 15 years. She and her husband have a 12-year-old son named Cannon. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Haley helped coordinate home-delivered meals to Arkansans in need. 🍲

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YULI McGEE

AGE: 27 | HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
AT MAYO MANUFACTURING CORPORATION



Yuli McGee never intended to pursue a career in human resources. While pursuing a master's degree in healthcare administration in 2018, she was hired at Mayo Manufacturing as the HR assistant. She came to realize, however, that her temporary gig was the beginning of a career. "The longer I worked at Mayo, the more I realized this is where I need to be," she said.

As a human resources professional, Yuli serves a wide variety of people, guiding them through different chapters in their careers and supporting them as they grow and change. "I have the opportunity to meet so many people and watch their lives transform. It's so rewarding to be a constant in someone's life," she said. And, as a bilingual administrator, Yuli has "the special opportunity to represent the Hispanic community as well and magnify their voice that could possibly go unheard," she explained.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, Yuli was faced with her greatest professional challenge yet. "A global pandemic was uncharted territory, and our policies and practices had to be altered to fit the new, ever-changing parameters," she said. Mayo had to furlough over 200 people. As HR manager, Yuli submitted a group unemployment claim and assisted with individual claims to ensure that all of the furloughed employees were provided with unemployment benefits. Mayo soon pivoted and began producing masks and gowns for first responders, which allowed them to put a small group of employees back to work. "Mayo knew that there was a great way to service our community when we weren't able to carry on with our usual business," Yuli said.

A first-generation college graduate, Yuli earned her bachelor's degree at Texas A&M–Texarkana. She even participated in the university's study abroad program, spending a semester in Paris, France. She was the first person in her immediate family to travel outside the U.S. "TAMU–T empowered me to be educated and cultured," she reflected.

Yuli is a 2021 graduate of Leadership Texarkana. In 2022, she earned her certification in human resources management. The Tri-State Society for Human Resource Management (Tri-State SHRM) proved invaluable in becoming certified. "Tri-State SHRM has a wonderful class every year that allows a group of HR professionals to participate in a class and group study for the certification exam," Yuli explained. She currently serves Tri-State SHRM as president. She is also on the board of directors for Opportunities, Inc.

Along with her husband, Cody, Yuli loves to travel. This year so far, they have visited Amsterdam, Bruges, Marrakesh, and the British Virgin Islands. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

"Be open to a world where you may not understand or agree with the person next to you, but have a drink with them anyways." —Anthony Bourdain. (Obviously Anthony Bourdain did not give me this advice directly, as he was super famous, but it's advice that has stuck with me since I read it.)

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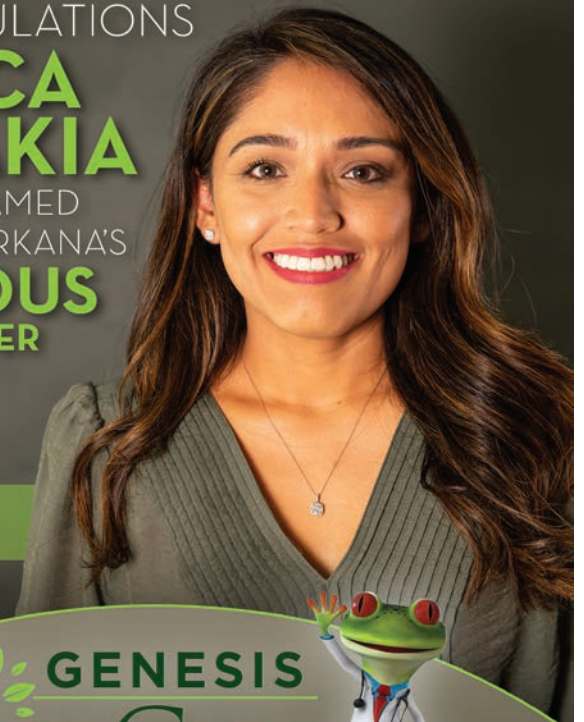


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JESSICA MALCA-PASTAKIA, FNP-BC

AGE: 37 | FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER

AT GENESIS PRIMECARE ELLINGTON MEMORIAL CLINIC



Jessica Malca-Pastakia's life path has not been easy. Born in Venezuela to Peruvian parents, she and her family moved to Prescott, Arkansas, when Jessica was only 13. She spoke no English.

"Imagine moving to a new country, community—practically a new life—without being able to communicate, to understand others or to be understood," she explained. "I spent countless hours reading my English school books and using my dictionary to translate from English to Spanish and vice versa."

Jessica persevered and, after graduating high school, moved to Texarkana to pursue training to be a licensed practical nurse at Texarkana College. "English is a hard language to learn, but adding medical terms was even more challenging," she said. Fortunately, with the support of friends, family, classmates, and instructors, she prevailed.

Since becoming a licensed practical nurse, Jessica has earned an associate's and a bachelor's degree in nursing, become an RN, and even earned a master's degree in nursing. She is now a dual board-certified family nurse practitioner.

Healthcare work is Jessica's calling. "I grew up going with my parents to their doctors appointments as their Spanish-English interpreter and saw firsthand the importance of providing compassionate and personalized care," she said. "My maternal grandmother was a nurse all of her life in Lima, Peru, and she would share stories of the care she provided to her patients until Alzheimer's took a toll on her memory. I do what I do to serve my community and help fill in the gaps in healthcare, primarily in the rural community."

Jessica helped an Atlanta hospital earn the prestigious Magnet recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). This is the highest international distinction a hospital can receive for nursing care. Jessica's hospital was singled out for filling the communication gap experienced by non-English-speaking patients. In 2022, Jessica herself was recognized by the ANCC as a Structural Empowerment Role Model nurse.

Jessica is also passionate about helping survivors of domestic violence, as she herself has been a victim. Today, however, she is proud to return home every day after work to her family of five: husband, Bhavin; and three children, Javan (15), Zane (7), and Samuel (2).

"My greatest occupational achievement is when I go home to my family knowing I was able to listen attentively, diagnose, treat, and heal one patient at a time," she said. "Gratitude is sometimes an unspoken reward."

Jessica is a board member for the Atlanta Education Foundation. She volunteers with Race for the Cure and Fearfully and Wonderfully Made. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I love basketball and played all four years in high school. Was I good? I'll leave that to your imagination!



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LAUREN PILGREEN

AGE: 39 | PRINCIPAL AT MARTHA AND JOSH MORRISS MATHEMATICS & ENGINEERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lauren Pilgreen, principal at Morriss Elementary, began her career in education as a science teacher.

“Originally I became a teacher because I wanted to share my love of science with everyone,” she said. “My fifth grade science teacher, Ms. Harrell, was the first teacher to believe in me and recognize my talents in the field of science. This was the same year I was kicked out of the ‘high’ or the gifted math class. She taught me how to find the genius in every student.”

Though she loved being in the classroom, Lauren felt pulled to work in administration “in order to help teachers become better equipped instructionally,” she said. She previously served TISD as the coordinator for the gifted and talented and advanced academics programs, the assistant principal for the Ross Perot STEM Academy at Texas High, and also a math and science curriculum coach. She stepped into her role at Morriss in 2022.

“My current position is my dream job, where I get to see students and teachers lead and love learning,” she said.

Lauren cites moving from secondary education to an elementary context as her greatest professional challenge, though a rewarding one. “Learning the differences in needs and styles of the stakeholders has allowed me to grow professionally, specifically in my communication skills,” she reflected. “This would not have been possible without the support of TISD and Morriss leaders.”

Lauren, a native of Illinois, met her husband, Brian, on a hunting trip in Stuttgart, Arkansas.

“He was my duck guide for three days,” she said. “We talked on the phone and flew back and forth from Texarkana to St. Louis for one and a half years until I finally moved.”

Moving to Texarkana from Illinois was a challenge for Lauren. “Learning a new language, culturally acceptable behavior, laws and regulations—it was basically like moving to a foreign country at first!” she said. “Luckily, I have many friends that I also consider to be ‘transplants’ to Texarkana who have lived here longer than me, and they taught me valuable information quickly.”

Lauren is a 2019 graduate of Leadership Texarkana and a former three-year board member. Her daughter, Emerson (7), is a student at Morriss. “It has been a dream to serve as principal at the campus my daughter attends,” Lauren said. “Getting to have that quality time with her is something I will forever cherish.” 🇺🇸

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I was the host of a hunting show on The Outdoor Channel for almost eight years.



KRISTINA RIVAS-JONES

AGE: 39 | COUNTY COORDINATOR
OF THE 100 FAMILIES INITIATIVE

The 100 Families Initiative is a community-led initiative designed to help families in crisis stabilize by using existing community resources. Using proven methodology, this collaborative approach helps increase income, employment and retention, housing stability, food security, health, and educational attainment. It decreases incarceration and recidivism, poverty, and child abuse and neglect.

Kristina Rivas-Jones leads this initiative in the Texarkana area.

“The 100 Families Initiative is incredibly personal to me because I know exactly what can happen when a community steps in. I am [one] generation removed from poverty and have made it my life’s mission to be a good steward of the gifts I have been given, while working toward creative solutions for complex problems,” she wrote.

Kristina stepped into this role—and into the nonprofit world in general—less than two years ago.

“I am not a risk taker by nature, and it was definitely scary leaving behind the occupational safety net I was in prior, but I could not be happier with my decision,” she said. “The work that I am privileged to do each day has given me the opportunity to meet phenomenal people in our community and establish relationships with those that I may have never had the chance to meet otherwise.”

Kristina is currently writing about the 100 Families Initiative for her master’s thesis. She is pursuing an MS in human development and family studies from Stephen F. Austin State University. Her research focuses on “understanding the impact and sustainability of collective impact and the collaborative case management model,” she explained. “I’m definitely a nerdy researcher, and I love getting to learn new things and deepen my understanding of the human condition.”

Kristina is married to Parker Jones, a teacher and coach at Liberty-Eylau. Their two children, Sawyer (9) and Sutton (3), attend LE. “I am a huge supporter of the Liberty-Eylau community and school district,” Kristina said. “It gives me a sense of pride to be considered part of the Eylau, even though I did not grow up there.”

Kristina is a co-founder of Ground Floor Collective, which she describes as “a non-profit organization that unites and empowers communities by leveraging the resources and knowledge needed to address complex problems.”

WHAT IS SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

Growing up I was very shy, and the thought of having to speak in public was mortifying. Now, I jump at the chance to speak in front of groups of eager listeners.



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MADELINE CAMPBELL ROBBINS

AGE: 29 | REALTOR AT CENTURY 21 ALL POINTS REALTY



Madeline Campbell Robbins is following in her mother's footsteps as she begins her real estate career with a bang. Licensed in Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana, she was named Rookie of the Year in 2022 at Century 21 All Points Realty.

Growing up, Madeline did not realize the challenges of real estate. Her mother, Stephanie Campbell-Bolt, is a veteran realtor, and she, along with Madeline's realtor aunts, "made working in real estate appear effortless," Madeline said. "But no matter if you are helping a client purchase a home, a business, or piece of land, you are generally dealing with their largest investment. So it's not an effortless or incomplex career. It requires special attention to detail and pristine communication, as well as problem-solving skills."

Fortunately, Madeline faces the challenges of the job with her mother and mentor by her side: the two comprise the "Homes With Heart Team."

"My mother has been a huge influence in my life," Madeline said. "She was a single mother for a significant period of time, and her strength and persistence are her most admirable attributes that I hope to emulate as I continue to grow as a woman."

Madeline attends First United Methodist Church. She is a member of the Junior League of Texarkana and is co-chairing this year's Mistletoe Market. She sits on the advisory board of the Alzheimer's Alliance Tri-State Area and is the vice president of Gateway Garden Club. She also serves on the Texas Association of Realtors' (TAR) Public Policy Infrastructure Committee.

Earlier this year, she campaigned for Sarah Huckabee Sanders' gubernatorial campaign.

Madeline moved to Texarkana three years ago with her husband, Stephen. It was not an easy transition. "Starting a new chapter in a city I am not from initially presented some challenges," she reflected. "With my business and in my personal life, I had to start at square one. Although I'm currently in the rebuilding phase of my life, the people of Texarkana have welcomed me with arms wide open." 🏠

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU CURRENTLY READING?

Social Chemistry: Decoding the Patterns of Human Connection by Marissa King.

RUSSELL SPARKS

AGE: 36 | PRESIDENT AT HIGHTECH SIGNS

Russell Sparks began working at Hightech Signs in December 2014, but he didn't relocate from his hometown of Nashville, Arkansas, to Texarkana until January 2016. "After making the one-hour commute (one way) for a year, it was time to make the move!" he said.

Hightech Signs, which has been a thriving Texarkana business for over 25 years, has only continued to grow and prosper under Russell's leadership. His greatest professional accomplishment so far has been "being able to take ownership of an existing, well-established company and working to not only contribute to its legacy but also continue to grow and make an impact on our community," he said.

Russell has been developing his business skills since he was a child. "One of the best life events for me was starting to work at my family's convenience store in the seventh grade," he reflected. "I learned responsibility, grit, the joy of a job well done, and most importantly how to work with people. I have carried these lessons throughout life and now into my own company and family."

Alongside his wife, Jessica, Russell is raising two sons: Jackson (8) and Hunter (6). Being a role model for his sons is Russell's top priority.

"There is nothing better than watching my boys grow up into what I know are going to be strong men, community members, and leaders of tomorrow," he said. "We all lead by example; make sure you are setting the best one for your kids, family, and community. You never know who is watching."

Last year, Russell set out to show his sons that "through hard work, they can overcome any obstacle," he said. He completed a 24-hour Crucible, a grueling physical and mental training event that requires fitness of body and mind. "It was the hardest, best thing I've ever done," he said.

Russell is a coach for his kids' baseball teams, the current president of the Texas Sign Association, a past president of Oaklawn Rotary Club, a board member of the Chamber of Commerce, and a GTYP member. 🇺🇸

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU CURRENTLY READING?

Ego is the Enemy by Ryan Holiday and *Find your Yellow Tux* by Jesse Cole.



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KEISHA WILLINGHAM

AGE: 39 | REALTOR AT KEY CONNECT REALTY GROUP

Keisha Willingham was destined to be a realtor and entrepreneur. She has been a fighter since before she was born.

“When I was in my mother’s womb, the doctors told her that I wasn’t going to survive; they told her that the fibroid tumors were going to suffocate me,” Keisha said. “My mama told me that I used to fight those tumors by hitting and kicking them. I was basically born with a fight and determination to succeed.”

As a child, she displayed strong business sense, running lemonade stands and helping family members with garage sales. When she became a teen mother at 16, some assumed that Keisha’s entrepreneurial dreams had been dashed. They were wrong.

At 20, Keisha had her second child. Life was tough, but Keisha never gave up. “I kept pushing and had a strong desire to be successful and provide a good life for them,” she said. “I even researched on how to become a homeowner and purchased my first home two months after giving birth to my [second] baby girl. This motivated me to become a realtor and help others achieve their real estate goals as well.”

In order to provide for her family, Keisha spent many years working for other people—in sales, banking, administration, and government. Finally, in December 2019, she made her dream of being a licensed realtor come true. She launched her business, Key Connect Realty Group, in October 2020.

“I get to wake up every single day and operate in my purpose, my passion. I consider that a huge blessing,” Keisha said. “It doesn’t feel like work to me because I absolutely love what I do.”

In addition to real estate, Keisha also owns a bedding company—Luxurious Linen—which she has run for 16 years.

Keisha serves on the Texarkana Board of Realtors. She is the secretary of Prime Impact Solutions (an affordable-housing nonprofit) and an active member of the Community Advisory Board and Campus Leadership Team for Liberty-Eylau High School. She annually awards scholarships to LE graduates interested in becoming realtors themselves, and she mentors teen mothers.

Keisha holds a BAAS from TAMU–T. In 2021, she was honored by The Scholars at their annual Juneteenth Celebration. In 2022, she graduated from the Leadership Texarkana program. In 2023, she was awarded the Sudie Jones Community Service Award from the Ozan Inghram Iron Mountain Development Corporation. These accolades pale in comparison to what Keisha says is her greatest accomplishment.

“I raised my daughters to defy the odds and not become a statistic. They graduated at the top of their classes at Liberty-Eylau High School and weren’t mothers when they graduated. This is a personal achievement for me,” she said.

Keisha’s eldest, Kyana, holds a master’s degree and is a teacher in Houston. Her youngest, Bryana, is a sophomore at Sam Houston State University on a full-ride basketball scholarship. 🇺🇸

WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE THAT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

My Grandma Bea-Bea used to always tell me, “LaKeisha, never forget your roots and wings.” It didn’t make much sense to me then, but it makes perfect sense now that I am an adult. Never forget where home is and where you come from (your roots), and never forget to use your values, what you’ve been taught, and how you were raised (your wings) to fly away and reach new levels in life.

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Pace

& Sons, Inc.

At the end of the Korean War, newlyweds Frank W. and Martha Pace came to Texarkana with the same dream many of us have. They wanted to own their own business. With their dream in mind, Frank carefully saved the money he earned repairing and building screen doors, and insulating windows and doors for homeowners in town. In 1958, Pace Door Company opened its doors in the 2000 block of New Boston Road. Frank and Martha raised 3 boys, all of whom worked in the business into adulthood. In the early years, Pace Door Company carried the franchised Overhead Door product. Later on, they dropped the franchise in favor of other products and continued to grow into a mutli-brand company. Pace and Sons was later incorporated into Pace & Sons, Inc. dba Texarkana Overhead Door Company. After 20 years in business, the growing company decided to purchase a lot in the quickly developing area of north Texarkana located at

Summerhill Road and Moores Lane where they built a new and larger shop. Over the next 32 years the company expanded to include residential garage doors, hollow metal frame and door supply, commercial garage doors, rolling sheet doors, commercial rolling steel doors, and electric operators. They survived a devastating fire in 1982 and rebuilt on a larger lot across the street on Moores Lane. Their eldest son, F. Ronald Pace started hanging garage doors with his dad at the age of 12 after school, and continued to work with his dad and brothers at the business. He soon started his own fami-

ly with wife, Di Pace creating the 3rd generation for Pace & Sons. When Frank W. passed in 1996, Ron took over the management of Pace and Sons, Inc., dba Texarkana Overhead Door Company and became full owner in 2004. Ron and Di Pace moved the business to its current location, 7207 Alumax Rd., at the edge of the new Nash Business Park in 2010. Jon Adams, husband to Ron and Di's only daughter, Marti, joined the company the same year. Jon later took over as manager when Ron passed away in 2015. This year Pace and Sons, Inc. is proudly celebrating 65 years of serving the Ark-La-Tex, and remains the oldest privately owned door company in the area. Jon and Marti are continuing their family's dream by managing Pace & Sons, Inc. together while they raise the next generation. Today, the company provides brands CHI, Janus and Liftmaster to their customers and looks forward to continuing as Texarkana's choice door company.



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EXQUISITE INTERIORS

MOODY. RUSTIC. DARK.

photos by KATELYN PEEK

Willow Creek. The name suggests an abundance of trees with branches arching over a creek, and that is exactly what one will find when looking around the newest home built and designed by Kyle and Suzy Osburn.

Located just fifteen minutes from Broken Bow Lake, Willow Creek Cabin is a retreat for the Osburns, with room for ten to sleep and plenty to do during the daylight.

Suzy, a decorator who consistently has design projects in the works, has called this retreat “one of her babies.” Though they have built six cabins in Broken Bow together, Suzy and Kyle have sold five of them. “We are finally keeping this one,” she said. Willow Creek will be available for rent and for their family to enjoy as well.

Suzy has spent over a year thrifting antiques and art for the home. She explained, “[When I got ready to decorate] it was like Christmas morning, looking through everything I had collected. I joked with Kyle that if we ever sold the cabin, I’d have to remove all the antiques because I am emotionally attached to all of the treasures that I have found.”

Kyle is the builder, but he trusts Suzy to pick the surfaces and fixtures for the home. They work well as a team, and she credits Kyle for letting her choose what she loves. Willow Creek is a unique blend of the outdoors and the indoors, brought together.



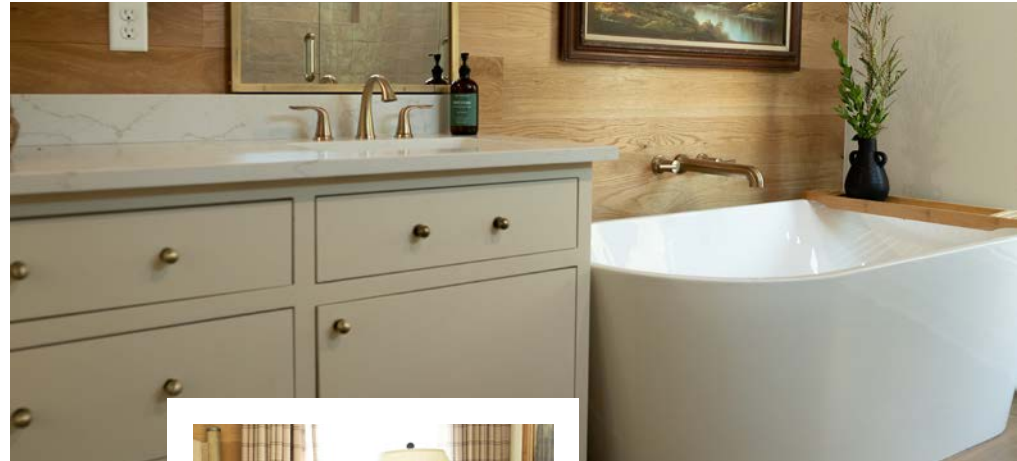
“I wanted it to have a moody, rustic, and dark cabin feel. I had it all in my brain from the beginning but chose the material selections throughout the build. I knew for sure I wanted dark cabinets, raw wood ceilings, and accent walls, stone on the main wall in the kitchen, and a solid dark green bunk room with a connected green plaid bathroom for all the forest vibes,” Suzy said.

The open kitchen and living area displays a mix of raw white oak ceilings, dark stained cabinets, and stone. This creates a beautiful, moody combination with the large window above the range, overlooking the creek in the background.

There is a downdraft range, so the kitchen did not require a vent hood, and the couple was able to do the picture window in front of the range. Using stone throughout was important for the Osburns to maintain the cabin feel.

A gorgeous stone sink is a feature in the powder bath downstairs; again, moody greens adorn the walls from floor to ceiling there, as well.

On the outside, kids will enjoy swings, wading through the bustling brook, and toasting marshmallows over the fabulous firepit. For a treat after a hike or on a cool winter's eve, a dip in the hot tub will surely delight guests.



Congratulations Madeline!

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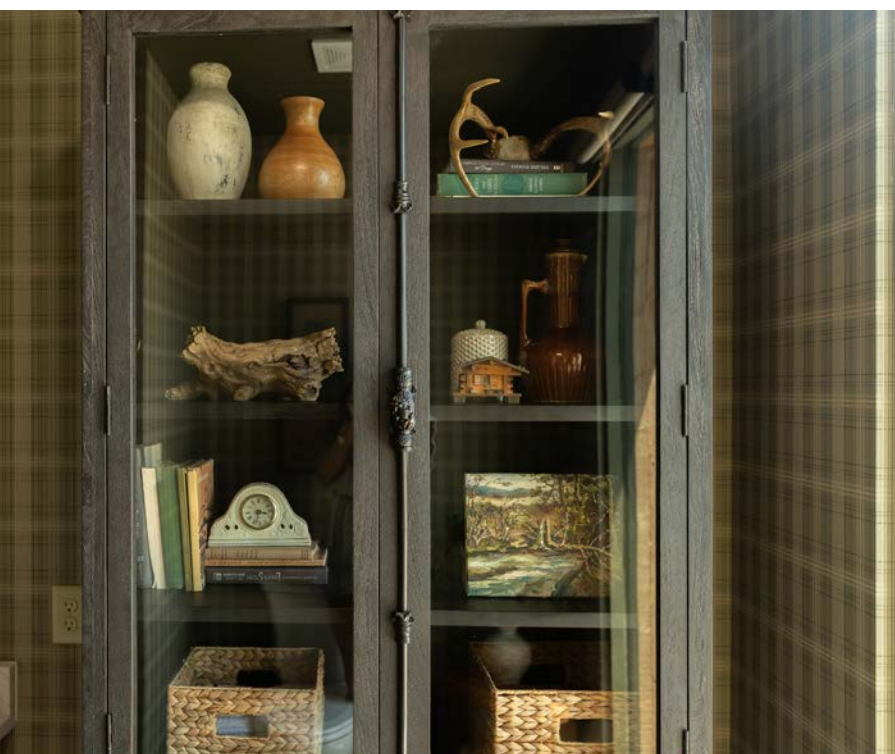
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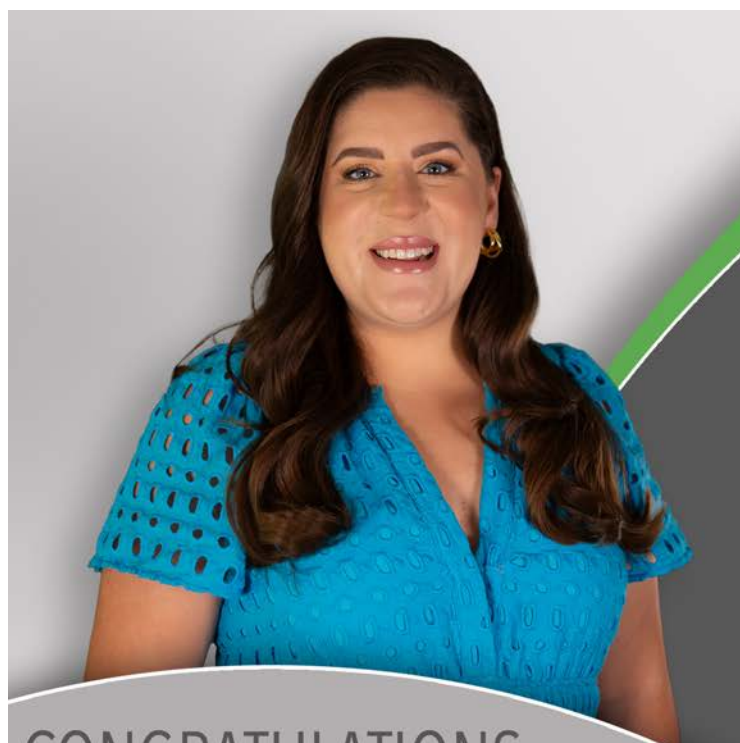


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Kyle and Suzy are pros at working together now. Unlike many couples who find stress in building together, the Osburns have found joy in doing what they both enjoy. “What I love about doing my own project is there is no pressure, and I can do whatever I want; thankfully, my husband trusts me!” Suzy said.

While this cabin is Kyle and Suzy’s personal cabin, they do rent it out on occasion. For more information, visit www.willowcreekbb.com. 📍



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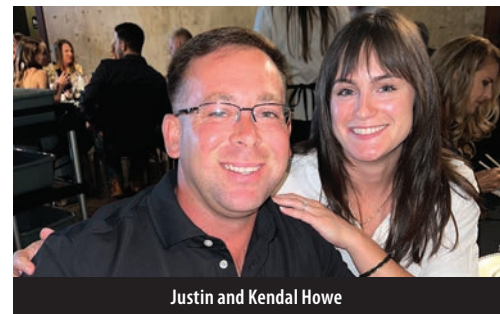
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Chef Jeff Loving, Aria May, Tihj lavalais, Leslie Knox, Nicoale Waters, and Amber Brown

SEPTEMBER 2023

SEPTEMBER 1

Design Downtown Regional Art Contest

This contest, held by the City of Texarkana, Texas, is open to all residents of Bowie, Cass, and Miller Counties. Submit artwork of a public space, street, or building in the downtown Texarkana Arts & Historic District. Winners will have their art displayed downtown, receive a grand prize, and have prints buried in the Sesquicentennial Time Capsule in December. For more information, visit www.texarkanatexas.gov/864/Design-Downtown-Regional-Art-Contest. The contest closes November 3rd.

SEPTEMBER 2

Watermelon Weigh-Off for the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth

The Old Washington Farmers' Market will host an official watermelon weigh-off site for the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth in Washington, Arkansas. The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth provides official venues for growers to weigh several varieties of fruit and vegetables, including watermelons, across the country. They then give prizes for the heaviest item of its type across the country. This official weigh-off event will be for watermelons only. For more information, contact Josh Williams at 870-703-8256 or joshuawilliams14@hotmail.com.

SEPTEMBER 8

78th Annual Four States Livestock Show

You won't want to miss the 78th Annual Four States Livestock Show, opening on September 8th! Stay up-to-date on everything to do with the livestock show through the Four States Fair website and Facebook page, or call the office at 870-773-2941. The show closes on September 17th.

SEPTEMBER 8

Food Truck Friday Lunch Break

Food Truck Fridays are back! Head downtown to the State Line courthouse for your lunch break. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., feast on a meal from Bre's Salad Hut, Big Slice's, or Geno's BBQ, and finish it off with dessert from the Cookie Lady.

SEPTEMBER 8

Downtown Live!

Watch artistry in action on Broad Street on the second Friday of each month, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Plus, enjoy food, drinks, and desserts at your favorite downtown restaurants.

SEPTEMBER 9

Sound of Muses Opera Cabaret: "Broken Standards"

TRAHC is proud to present The Muses Project Opera Cabaret: "Broken Standards" at 7 p.m. at The Regional Arts Center. With the Muses' signature style of excellence and artistry, this concert uniquely blends early Western European music paired with early 20th century American Jazz Standards. For more information about this performance, contact the Texarkana Regional Arts & Humanities Council at 903-792-8681 or rachelw@trahc.org.

SEPTEMBER 15

Diamonds for Doorways

This casino-night event, benefiting Habitat for Humanity of Texarkana, will be held at Silvermoon on Broad and start at 6:30 p.m. Beyond casino events, attendees can bid in the silent auction and enter the raffle to win a diamond necklace, courtesy of Crocker's Jewelers. The event ticket alone is \$50; event ticket plus raffle ticket is \$100. For more information and to buy tickets, contact 903-832-1746 or info@habitatatexarkana.org.

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SEPTEMBER 16

Gateway Farmers' Market's Fall Annual Tailgates & Tables

You don't want to miss this quintessential autumn event! From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., visitors can purchase from local farmers, boutiques, and other small businesses. Autumnal crafts, baked goods, canned goods, and USDA meat will be for sale. If you would like to participate as a vendor, reserve a stall ASAP by contacting Cindy at 903-824-0140, or message the market Facebook page.

SEPTEMBER 16

Eli Young Band

Texas Country fans will not want to miss this concert. The Eli Young Band—a true band of brothers who play their own instruments, write their own songs, and cling fast to their Texas roots—will be performing at the Perot Theatre at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale now and range in price from \$42 to \$75. Visit www.perottheatre.org for more information and to buy your tickets today.

SEPTEMBER 22

Food Truck Friday Date Night

Food Truck Fridays are back! Head downtown to the State Line courthouse for a date night with a special someone. From 6 to 9 p.m., treat your partner and yourself to a dinner from Shell Shocked Catering, Juanito's, or Sadie Smoked Meats.

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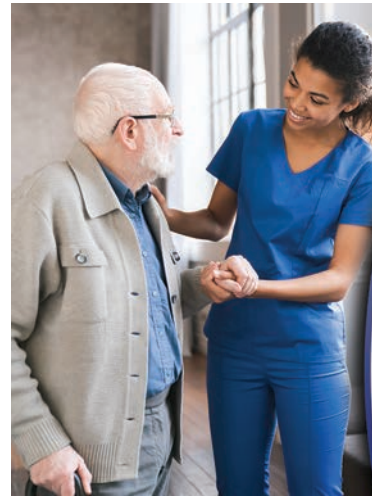


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TEXARKANA'S FOOD BANK FOR 30+ YEARS



PHOTO BY ERIC ETHRIDGE

SEPTEMBER 23

Centennial Day of Service, Millwood State Park
Celebrate 100 years of Arkansas State Parks by helping park staff keep Arkansas beautiful. This morning of service, from 9 a.m. to noon, will focus on trail maintenance. Millwood State Park is located at 1564 Highway 32 East in Ashdown, Arkansas. The meeting place for the day of service is the trailhead parking lot. If you have any further questions, please contact the park at 870-898-2800.

SEPTEMBER 30

15th Annual Tapas and Wine
Come enjoy a unique night of food, music, and a silent auction while supporting HandsOn Texarkana. Enjoy a grazing table by Grazed by Bluebirds before sitting down for a five-course meal, complete with wine pairings, by Verona Restaurant. The Moss Brothers will perform. Tickets are \$100 each, and seats are limited, so buy your tickets early. Private tables of eight and private pub tables for two are also available. To sponsor the event, donate auction items, or buy tickets, call 903-798-3211 or email handsonstk@aol.com

SEPTEMBER 30

Walk to End Alzheimer's
Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest fundraiser for Alzheimer's care, support, and research. While there is no fee to register for Walk, all participants are encouraged to raise critical funds that allow the Alzheimer's Association to provide 24/7 care and support and advance research toward methods of prevention, treatment, and, ultimately, a cure. The host of this event is not connected with Texarkana's local non-profit, Alzheimer's Alliance TriState. The walk will take place from 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. at Spring Lake Park.

SCENE ABOUT TOWN



TO CELEBRATE THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, A 20-PERSON CHORUS AND LOCAL COMPOSER MARC-ANDRÉ BOUGIE PREMIERED A LITURGICAL MASS THURSDAY, JUNE 29 AT SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH.



Miriam Taylor Bougie, Candace Taylor, His Excellency Bishop Joseph Strickland, and Mark-André Bougie



Samantha King and Dr. Wanda Northam



Brianna Rae Cayton, Jennifer Colton-Fowler, Lupe Singleton, and Lajuana Dibrel

ASK THE EXPERTS



DESIREE DEDE JEFFERSON
*Director of Marketing,
MRC Cornerstone Retirement Community*

Why choose Independent Senior living?

Independent living means that you have the perks of living independently while not having the additional worry of pesky chores. Choosing to live independently before a health need arises is an excellent plan for the future, not to mention an added sense of safety and security. By being proactive, you are securing your ability to make decisions regarding your future instead of others making these decisions on your behalf. Independent living allows you to do all the things that you want to do, like socialize with people that are in the same season of life, while the community takes care of the home and yard maintenance.

903-417-0326 | 4100 Moores Lane
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BRETT BRZESKI
*Investment Advisor,
Mustard Seed Wealth Management*

Should I contribute to a Roth or Traditional IRA?

There are several factors specific to each individual that must be considered. If a current tax deduction is beneficial, a Traditional IRA might be the best choice. Conversely, a Roth IRA provides no current tax relief, but qualified distributions down the road are TAX-FREE, including any earnings that have accumulated in the account. The right IRA choice could even vary from year to year depending on your circumstances. Specific qualifications, such as income limits, apply to each type of account. This is a perfect example of why it is important to have a financial planner and CPA who can work together to help you reach your financial goals.

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Megan Kumpe

Branch Administration Manager,
Senior Vice President

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for

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