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inspires Tony  
McKinney

## It's What's Inside

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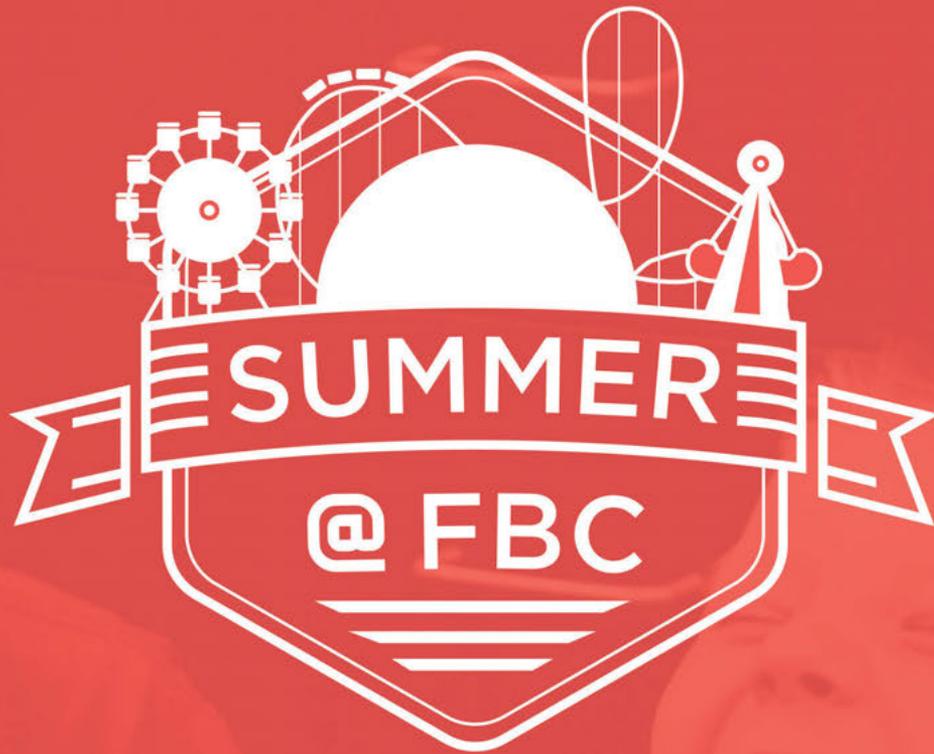
## ON THE COVER

*TU-N-A-CAN is the name of the McKinneys' camper that has led to adventure and friendship.*

**Photo by**  
Hannah Chartrand.

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# EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

Angel Morris  
MidlothianNOW Editor  
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*Hello, Midlothian!*

As a former teacher, I can't help but think of all the students getting ready to graduate this time of year. I once read, "There's no one as old as a high school senior or as young as a college freshman." Having taught high school seniors, I know how true those words ring.

In your senior year, you pretty much know everything about your corner of the globe. You're atop your bubble, ready to break out and explore the great beyond. You've maneuvered through puberty, peer relationships and, possibly, passed the SAT. The world is your oyster as you set off to college, try new jobs or perhaps travel to see what life outside your hometown has to offer. You are ready!

Whatever your next destination, you quickly discover you're the low man on the totem pole again. You spend half your time trying to find where you're supposed to be and the other half wishing you'd paid attention in high school. Fear not! The next years pass just as quickly as your high school years — perhaps quicker — and before you know it, you're a wise, old senior again. In this issue, we meet folks — from fresh-faced to seasoned — who show the joy in continuing to grow and explore at every stage.

Thankfully, we're never too young or too old to try new things!

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# Teardrops of

*Growing up, Tony McKinney enjoyed family campouts, but it was upon his grandfather's passing that his interest in the hobby was rekindled. "When my grandfather died, I discovered old Popular Mechanics magazines among his things. One of them featured a teardrop camper, and it caught my eye," Tony remembered. "I got online and found the history of the camper intriguing and decided I wanted one."*

Tony is not alone in his interest, as teardrop trailers have experienced a surge in popularity over the last few years. Everything from T-shirts to home decor features the campers in their unique teardrop shape. The trailers evolved in the 1930s, becoming all the rage after World War II and the Depression when families had more disposable income and wanted to travel.

With a nod to the teardrop's heyday, Tony chose to build his first trailer with repurposed materials. "Original campers were built with surplus materials from the war. I'm really interested in recycling and being green, and I



— By Angel Morris

# Joy

knew I could figure out a way to do that with this project,” he said.

In the custom cabinetry business for 26 years, Tony is no stranger to quality construction. He has a natural talent for building things and was not afraid to tackle a teardrop trailer. “After seeing what they cost new I said, ‘I can build that.’ I based mine on a 1994 jet ski trailer, then got the aluminum from a Dallas sign shop. I also found many parts I needed from Craigslist,” Tony noted.

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“I looked on Pinterest and then ran with it!”

Made from 90-percent repurposed material, the trailer they named “TU-N-A-CAN,” even features an 1865 steamer trunk inside as a battery and storage box. “When we go camping, people always want to look inside our trailer,” Tony’s wife of 29 years, Christina, said. “One woman got upset that we would use an antique steamer trunk for storage until she saw how nicely we’d done it.”



“Depending on one’s skill set, others could build a teardrop trailer given the right tools,” Tony said. A skill saw, table saw and jigsaw, along with a speed square, drills, level and a hammer would be minimum necessities. “You need some general



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carpentry experience. After that, you'd just need to be creative," Tony suggested.

"The sky's the limit on the design," Christina added. "The shapes, the sizes, the amenities are all up to you."

In the four years since Tony finished their trailer, the couple has taken six to 10 camping trips a year and joined two teardrop-specific groups, Texas Vintage Trailer Club and Southwest Teardrop and Vintage Trailer. "We've made friends in these groups that we take annual trips with, too," Christina said. "It's fun to be with the groups to see their creativity and get ideas."

The McKinnays already have plans for their next trailer. "We will make it bigger — a 5-by-8 instead of 4-by-8 footprint," Tony said. "We'll add a kitchen galley on back and probably a skylight. I'd like it to be like the old Woodie Wagon body style, stained and sealed."

Tony knows his second camper will be easier to build than the first, in part because he has developed a community of trailer enthusiasts online by forming the Creative Teardrop and Vintage Campers



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Facebook page. "When I first researched on other sites, I found people didn't want to share their 'secrets.' I wanted to start a group where people could get their questions answered," Tony said of his now 3,000-plus member social media site. "Now anyone can talk to builders from around the world!"

And, anyone can see Tony's handiwork for themselves. "Tons of people want to buy our camper. I've turned down at least a half dozen really good offers," Tony said. "But I'll probably donate it to my daughter one day. I'd like to keep it in the family."

Passing on their love of camping to their children, Aleta, 21, and Ian, 23, is important to the McKinneys. "We both camped with our families as kids, and we think the peace and tranquility it offers is priceless. It's a great tradition and a way to just refresh your mind," Tony said.

The McKinneys also enjoy kayaking while camping, and Tony has found a way to make a little money with another hobby. "I'm beginning to sell my handmade lamps made of telephone glass insulator pipes with Edison bulbs," he said. The lamps will be online and at Annice Antiques Inc. in Duncanville.



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Much of Tony's free time will still focus on camper reconstruction, with his sights currently set on his 1964 Mobile Scout Camper. Similar to the teardrop trailer, these campers were sold by Mobile Scout Manufacturing Corporation in the late 1950s and '60s. "This is really the look that's so popular right now," Tony noted.

With one camper build under his belt, a global online support system and dozens of camping buddies to call on, Tony has every confidence his second old-school trailer will be even better than his first. The McKinneys look forward to loading it up and heading to their favorite camping spot, Inks Lake State Park in Burnet, Texas. "It's on the Colorado River. It's hilly — just a great place to camp and kayak," Christina said. "It is our favorite. It's just really fun."

Ultimately, having fun is what the adventure is about for Tony and Christina. "You know, I took woodworking at Sunset High School, and I have loved doing things with my hands ever since," Tony recalled. "Building these trailers and camping is better than any medicine. It's therapy. It is really where I get my joy." **NOW**



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— By Zachary R. Urquhart

# IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE

## AT HOME WITH SHAWN AND MARTHA ADAMS

*Houses are not built equally. Some are large — some are small. Some employ an open, airy concept, while others have walls separating one room neatly from another. While seeing beauty in a house can be subjective, some are so lovely that their charm is undeniable. After months of beautifying work and ongoing decorative touches, Shawn and Martha Adams have made the perfect home for their family.*

Shawn grew up in Dallas and graduated from R.L. Turner High School in Carrollton. “After school, I did the teenager-figuring-out-what-I-wanted-to-do thing,” he explained. Shawn spent more than a decade working his way up the ladder at Choice Hotels, with some extra stops along the way. “My parents opened a gun store when we were growing up, so my brother-in-law and I had a shop for a while, but going from managing the hotel to running the store got to be too much,” he added.

Martha grew up in Oak Cliff and went to school to be a medical assistant, but her training led her down an unexpected path. “I went into an interview to be a nurse at Anne Frank Elementary in Dallas, but they changed the requirements that summer,” she detailed. “So instead, they offered me a position as a teaching assistant. I spent 14 years in that role and have been in data control for two years now.”





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Just over a decade ago, Shawn and Martha met online, but not through a dating site. “Do you remember Myspace?” he asked jokingly. “We met there, and nothing was supposed to happen. But then something happened, and here we are!” They were married in 2011 and lived in Addison for several years before deciding to move to Midlothian.

Martha already had a son when she met Shawn. “There was a 10-year-old boy at Anne Frank, and I had a connection to him. Jesse was a foster child, and I adopted him,” she recounted. Shawn had an immediate connection to Martha’s son, which was part of what made her fall in love. Shawn and Martha have a younger son, Andy, who is finishing



fourth grade and loves football. “He goes with me each day, but by middle school we’ll have him in Midlothian schools, so he can be with his local football league teammates.”

After years in North Dallas, Shawn and Martha were ready for a new home. “We really looked everywhere,” Shawn said. “My family has some land in Wills Point we thought about. We had an offer on a new house in Waxahachie.” After a lengthy search, they were almost ready to give up, but they wanted a house in Midlothian. “Martha’s family had pretty much all moved down here, and her dad told us before he passed away that he

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wanted us to be here close to all of them. He really inspired me to make it happen,” Shawn said.

They finally found the perfect house in Midlothian, or at least it was almost perfect. “There was a lot of work to do, actually, but we liked it,” Martha admitted. The problem was the owners already had a full cash offer. “We wrote a letter talking about wanting to get into Midlothian to get our family with the rest of my family, and they took our offer!” she continued. “We had been looking for so long, we were really at the point that if we didn’t get this house, we might have given up trying to get into Midlothian.”

Now that they had the house, they had to get to work. “We redid the floors throughout, with hardwood in the living areas and tile in the kitchen and bathrooms,” Shawn described. After closing in May 2016, they spent several months getting everything ready. “My family helped me, and we did it all ourselves,” Shawn beamed.

Shawn’s hard work mixes with Martha’s decorating style, and the result is a great look throughout the house. The living room has beautiful wood floors and Martha’s impressive cross wall. “Yeah, you could say I collect them,” she laughed about the massive grouping. In the hallways and common areas throughout the house, there are family photos and medals from the boys’ accomplishments.

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Shawn and Martha have paired crosses throughout with rustic metal and wood and Texas-themed pieces in every room.

“When I redid the master bathroom, I added light fixtures with stars to tie in that Southern theme,” Shawn said. While most of the house shows off their balance of style and hard work, the bathrooms are where Shawn put in the most labor. “In our bathroom, there was this tiny shower in the front corner, so I took that out and replaced the tub with a large walk-in shower,” he stated. The most impressive sample of Shawn’s work, though, is a structure he built, wired and finished in the backyard — Martha’s hobby house.

“I make wreaths,” Martha explained. Inside the climate-controlled cabin, there is a cornucopia of ribbons, garlands and masses of wreath-making supplies. “We thought about having something smaller, but Shawn wanted me to have plenty of room to work,” she said. Martha sells some wreaths around the holidays, but it is as much recreation as it is a side job.

From meeting online to almost giving up on finding a place in Midlothian, Shawn and Martha have spent more than a decade building a life and a home together. They took what appeared to be an unassuming house on the outside and made it a suburban beauty that supports the old adage: “It’s what’s on the inside that counts.” **NOW**

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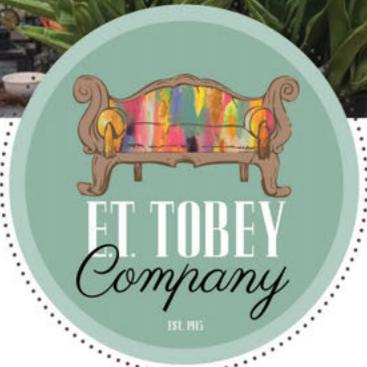
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- Donations will be accepted beginning at 5:00 a.m. Saturday, May 19TH.
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Community service hours are available for students who help at the Rummage Sale.



# Taco the Town

— By Angel Morris

When Braden Lawhead heard about a local art contest, he decided to push himself. The Midlothian Heritage High School student had been taking art classes since first grade and was inspired by this latest opportunity. Opening a new location in Midlothian, Fuzzy's Tacos looked to students for original art.

"I typically do darker drawings without color because I feel they present a feeling of strength. But the drawing for Fuzzy's mural popped into my head and was very different from my usual work," Braden explained, describing his brightly colored custom mural.

MHHS art teacher Jeremy Eggleston presented students with the chance to design for the restaurant, and Braden's work rose to the top. Select Art III/IV students brought Braden's design to life, painting logos of both local high schools, as well as images representing Midlothian fire and police departments along with the restaurant's history.

"I knew [this contest] could be something cool, so

I took advantage of it. I put serious meaning into the design, with the goal of representing a partnership between Fuzzy's, the community and the heroes that serve Midlothian," Braden explained. "I appreciate the students that spent a lot of time finishing that mural, and I think it turned out very well."

Students who painted the mural were Jordyn Baxter, Andrea Borondy, Shaun Brunick, Joe Hines, Hanna Kratsman and Ofelia Wallen. Now patrons can enjoy their craftsmanship of Braden's design that portrays Fuzzy's spirit. Braden's original sketch will be framed and displayed at the restaurant, as well.

"My favorite art pieces I've created in recent years were probably the newer *Star Wars* stippling drawings I did because of the darker pen and ink markings. There is also another art piece I'm proud of. I call it *Dystopia*, and it is the embodiment of fear and strength with a darker atmosphere than any of my other drawings," Braden said.

Braden's art expands beyond traditional drawing, however. "This past year or two, I've done a lot of pixel art for a modification of the videogame, *Minecraft*. I use that game as a basis to learning the JAVA [computer design] language because it's so easily modifiable," Braden

said. "I discovered this interest when I was 13-14 years old, and I have been creating several modifications over the years with my newest being the *Augmented Void*."

His modification — or "mod" — adds new decorative pixel creatures, weapons and building blocks, along with custom artificial intelligence wandering the *Minecraft* world. In its first three months online, Braden's mod had more than 12,000 downloads by users interested in his creation.

"I worked with a team to develop this, but we all went off on different projects, so my plan is to save enough money to hire developers," Braden noted. "If I can grow a fan base, I might be inspired to master computer science and videogame design in college."

Beyond art and technology, Braden is also interested in biology for a personal reason. "My mom died of cancer in 2007, and that changed my family's life," he said. "Now I'm curious to know about the science of stopping cancer from taking more lives."

Besides his mom and dad, Braden also credits Mr. Eggleston as an inspiration. "I love his class and plan to continue in it each year of high school," he said. Braden is also involved in his church's Leadership Training for Christ, performing Scripture readings and dramatic skits, and he participated in mission works through an inner-city vacation Bible camp. The Fuzzy's mural was another chance to serve.

"I live in Waxahachie and go to school in Midlothian, so I love both communities. It was a privilege to do something for them, and I discovered it's meaningful to give back," Braden said. Getting to visit the restaurant to see his work on a regular basis is just an extra perk. "I like seafood and many other foods," Braden said, "but I love the tacos at Fuzzy's!" **NOW**

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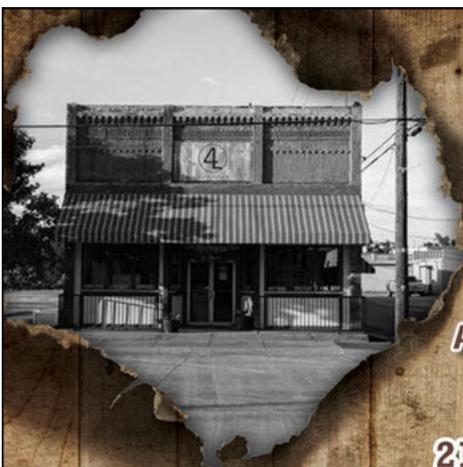
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# Seeds of LOVE



— By Derek Jones

*The large garden in Linda Miley's backyard is black with freshly tilled soil. Soon, with the help of her husband, Stephen, and many volunteers, the garden will be twice the size and brimming with fresh fruits and vegetables. Linda looked at the tilled dirt and explained, "Everything to make Help to Heal, Sharing Christ's Love a reality has come together in such a miraculous way. For example, the soil and mulch to make this garden grow was all donated by Organix Composting, a company in Hutchins, and the railroad ties to form the garden were donated, as well. In a few months, there will be dozens of volunteers harvesting the fresh produce to give to those who are in need."*



Linda's efforts are all part of a nonprofit organization — Help to Heal — she started last year. "I have always been in advertising, but I realized last year that I was burned out. That's when I realized I could use my gifts and passions to help others, especially senior citizens."

With an idea in her heart, Linda began going through the necessary steps to gain nonprofit status. "At first, everyone told me that I would have to settle for a third or fourth choice as a name for the organization," Linda shared. "However, my first choice of Help to Heal was available, and I knew I was on the right track." In a matter of months, Linda had a name, vision, board members and a large service project in the works.

With Christmas approaching, Linda knew she and her team had to act fast. "My heart is broken to think of all the seniors who have no one to spend time with," Linda said. In eight-and-a-half weeks, Help to Heal organized churches, schools and local businesses to donate gifts to seniors in need. "In the end, we were able to deliver Christmas gifts and gift cards to 709 seniors," Linda shared. So much was





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accomplished in such a short time, and Linda is only getting started. This Christmas, she expects to greatly exceed last year's totals.

One of Linda's passions is gardening. In 2017, through Help to Heal, she began giving away all the produce grown in her garden. "I like giving things away," she said. "It just seemed natural to give the vegetables and fruit to others."

Her husband, Stephen, laughed as he explained their relationship. "I just turn the soil. She is the one who does all the planting and caring for the garden."

Linda's vision, however, does not stop with giving away what is grown. "When we begin harvesting, I am going to bring seniors and young families together and have the seniors teach families how to can food," she explained. "Our seniors have so much knowledge of things which are becoming a lost art. I want this younger generation to realize the value of the senior community. Also, we can learn so much from single parents and veterans and, in turn, help them in their times of need."

The dedication of the new, larger garden honors Linda's mother-in-law, Bonnie Miley, who is in hospice in a nursing home in Mississippi. "She is passionate about gardening," Linda shared. "I had a sign made in her name to present to my husband

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and his children. Bonnie loved gardening so much, and Stephen helps me with it so much I thought it would be a nice surprise for him and his children.”

Help to Heal’s mission statement explains the group is “... raising funds, promoting initiatives and connecting people and businesses to serve those who need them most ...” particularly seniors, single parents and those who do not qualify for government assistance. “I have a gift



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Linda Miley, second from right, poses with the board of Help to Heal.

of being able to connect people to resources because of all my years in advertising,” Linda said. “I simply want to connect people in need with those who can help.”

As to whether Linda will be successful in seeing her vision continue to grow, Stephen said, “She won’t stop because she can’t stop.” Indeed, last year was a successful first year for Help to Heal, and Linda believes more can be accomplished in 2018. “Part of my vision is helping people realize there are seniors in need all around us. Many don’t have family who live by them, but that does not mean they should be ignored,” she said. “We all have a responsibility to care for those in need around us.” **NOW**

*Editor’s Note: For information on how to volunteer with Help to Heal, Sharing Christ’s Love, visit [www.belptohelptx.org](http://www.belptohelptx.org).*

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## *In the Kitchen With*

### KYLIE TOWNS AND LOLA WHORTON

— By Lindsay L. Allen



Kylie Towns and Lola Whorton (13) are a mother/daughter duo that can outcook the best of them. With Kylie's Louisiana roots, which influence her cooking, and Lola's baking, the two can prepare both flavorful and beautiful dishes between them. "One of us starts dinner, and the other finishes. I know Lola would rather be trying out cake decorating techniques, but she is always more than happy to help make dinner for our family," Kylie said.

Many of the recipes the two make come from Kylie's grandmother's recipe box. Lola loves to use baking as one way to express her artistic side, in addition to drawing and painting, while Kylie loves to cook food that pairs well with the season and weather. **NOW**

### Spicy Sausage Pasta

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 lb. smoked sausage
- 1 1/2 cups onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 10-oz. can Ro-Tel Tomatoes and Green Chillies, mild
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 8 oz. penne pasta
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1/3 cup scallions, thinly sliced

1. Add olive oil to an oven-safe skillet; heat over medium-high heat until just smoking.

- Add sausage and onions; cook until lightly browned, about 4 minutes.
- 2. Add garlic; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- 3. Add broth, tomatoes, cream, pasta, salt and pepper; stir. Bring to a boil. Cover skillet; reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until pasta is tender, about 15 minutes.
- 4. Remove skillet from heat; stir in 1/2 cup cheese. Top with remaining cheese; sprinkle with scallions.
- 5. Broil until cheese is melted, spotty brown and bubbly.

### Cheesy Chicken Spaghetti

- 24 oz. spaghetti
- 1 Tbsp. butter

- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup green onions, chopped
- 1 rotisserie chicken, chopped
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 16 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (divided use)
- 16 oz. pepper jack cheese, shredded (divided use)

1. Cook spaghetti according to package instructions; set aside.
2. Add butter, celery and onions to a skillet; cook until soft.
3. Add spaghetti, chopped chicken, celery and onion mixture, soups and 3/4 of the cheeses to a large bowl; combine.
4. Put the spaghetti mixture into a casserole dish; bake for 25 minutes at 375 F.
5. Top with remaining cheese; cook for an additional 10 minutes.

### Quick Chicken Enchilada Casserole

- 16 oz. sour cream
- 1 10.5-oz. can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 2 Tbsp. salsa verde

- 12 corn tortillas (divided use)**
- 2 cups chicken, chopped**
- 2 cups Mexican cheese**
- 1 jalapeño, sliced, or to taste**

- 1.** Mix sour cream, chicken soup, whipping cream and salsa verde in a large bowl. Add a little of the mixture to a 9x13-inch casserole dish (enough to cover the bottom).
- 2.** Spread 6 tortillas on top of the layer of sauce on the bottom of the dish. Add another layer of sauce on top of the tortillas.
- 3.** Spread chopped chicken next. Add another layer of sauce. Add the last 6 tortillas.
- 4.** Cover with the remaining sauce; top with cheese and jalapeño slices. Bake at 350 F for 20-25 minutes.

### Cucumber Snack Bites

- 1-3 cucumbers, cut in 1/2-inch thick slices**
- Lemon salt, to taste**
- Pepper seasoning, to taste**

- 1.** Lay enough cucumber slices on a platter to cover the platter; sprinkle with seasonings.

### Blackberry Crumble

- 1 qt. blackberries, slightly mashed**
- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla bean paste**
- 1/2 heaping cup oats**
- 1/2 heaping cup flour**
- 1/2 cup brown sugar**
- 2 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 stick butter (divided use)**
- Ice cream (optional)**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 F. Mix blackberries with the sugar and vanilla bean paste. Allow to macerate while prepping the crumble topping.
- 2.** In the bowl of a food processor (you can also do this by hand), add oats, flour, brown sugar and cinnamon. Add 3/4 stick of butter cut into chunks; pulse until small pea-size crumbles form.
- 3.** Butter a shallow baking dish. Add berries to the bottom and top with crumble topping. Add the remaining butter; cut into small chunks, to the top.
- 4.** Bake for 35-40 minutes. Topping will appear to still be loose, but it will firm up when cool.
- 5.** Serve warm, on its own or with a scoop of ice cream.

**To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit [www.nowmagazines.com](http://www.nowmagazines.com).**



BusinessNOW

# TX Black Belt Academy (TXBBA)

— By Angel Morris

## TX Black Belt Academy (TXBBA)

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[www.TXBBA-Midlothian.com](http://www.TXBBA-Midlothian.com)

Facebook: TXBBA - Midlothian

**Hours:** Monday-Thursday: 3:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Whether you're searching for a fun way to get fit or an activity to develop confidence and mental focus, TX Black Belt Academy has the class for you. Martial arts is an increasingly popular way to maintain health, in fact, and owner Wade Buie believes his dojo has something for everyone.

"From ultra-shy to confident athletes, from those who want to learn self-defense to those who may need anger management, we've got all walks of life in our classes," Wade

said. "I see martial arts benefit every person who walks through our doors."

Serving the Midlothian community for 14 years, TXBBA has also expanded to neighboring cities. "We added locations in Burleson, Cedar Hill, Cleburne, Fort Worth, Frisco and soon-to-be Waxahachie, all specializing in character development and family-friendly martial arts classes," Wade explained.

Martial arts can benefit any age group, and TXBBA offers specialized classes in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, kickboxing/mixed martial arts, adult martial arts and kids karate.

"People face all kinds of challenges, and carving out time for yourself is tough. That's why we want to offer both a good workout and an opportunity to better yourself mentally," Wade noted. "This is not something you just do seasonally either. It becomes a lifestyle."

TXBBA has specifically designed classes to battle common issues such as weight, inflexibility, lack of motivation and

confidence. “We help people reach new levels of health and happiness, from weight loss and muscle strength to simply getting out of the house and doing something good for themselves for a change,” Wade said.

Younger patrons not only benefit from the physical activity of kid-focused classes, but also find purpose. “We consistently see our kids gain self-esteem in a short amount of time. They learn they can succeed at something new and have more courage because of the training karate provides,” Wade explained. “A once quiet, shy kid is standing tall and answering questions with ease — not to mention having a desire to be respectful, because that is what karate is all about.”

TXBBA hosts children’s summer camps that can benefit ADD/ADHD students, special needs children and those with social anxiety, according to Wade. “Parents can be confident that our team members provide a safe place for everyone to feel accepted, where participants experience personal growth while getting exercise and avoiding summer boredom,” Wade said.

Through the years, Wade’s wife, Roxie, and their two children have played roles in the dojo, which follows the motto, “Adding Value to Lives,” and participates in community health initiatives, Manna House food drives and board-breaking challenges for charity. TXBBA has trial offers for newcomers to see what martial arts is about and even offers birthday party programs for youth.

“It hasn’t always been easy, but today I’m so glad I can do what I love for a living. My heart is in this community, and I’m happy to work with the school district or organizations that could benefit from our classes,” Wade said.

“This is where my heart is, and I will help tailor a program to anyone’s needs,” Wade said. “I want to make an impact in the community and, hopefully, make a difference in people’s lives!” **NOW**

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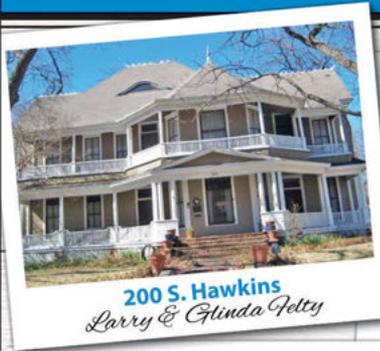
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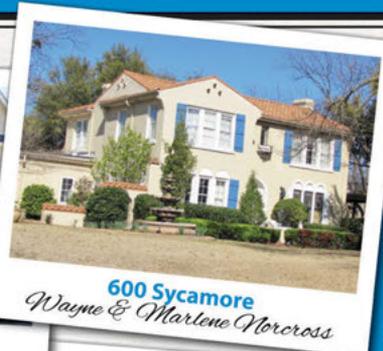
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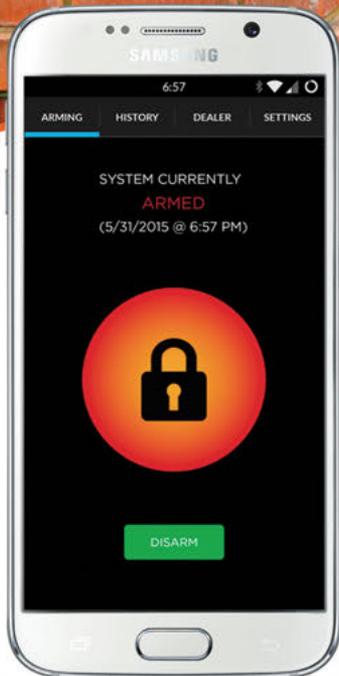
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## TravelNOW Awakening in Charleston

— By Amanda Hollinger

A rich and colorful painting by acclaimed artist and South Carolina Lowcountry native Jonathan Green depicts a vibrant sunrise spreading across a tidal creek and marsh grass that is Charleston's iconic landscape. Entitled *Awakening in Charleston*, the painting captures more than the fiery beauty of sunrise. It also evokes the spirit of awakening Charleston experiences as it tells its story to the world — not just the postcard-ready version of cobblestone streets and historic plantations, but also the realities of enslaved people whose skills and labor built Charleston. Once a sleepy coastal port, today Charleston draws visitors to discover a vibrant, modern city examining its roots and teeming with high-tech job growth, a vibrant arts and culture scene and an award-winning culinary destination.

Charleston boasts more than its share of award-winning “get-your-reservation-in-advance” dining experiences but

also entices with off-the-radar offerings. Felix, a hip and modern French café at the north end of the King Street Historic District, tempts visitors with small, savory plates of lobster deviled eggs and crab croquettes with crispy okra. For a quieter, more sophisticated dining experience, reserve your spot at the James Beard award-winning restaurant, FIG. Chef Mike Lata's cuisine is a simple, yet innovative, approach to Lowcountry food, such as baked golden tilefish with spring shallots. For something casual, yet no less mouthwatering, venture to the diverse North Central neighborhood. Strap on your appetite for James Beard-nominated Chef Rodney Scott's legendary whole hog BBQ or sit outside at Leon's Oyster Shop and dine on charred oysters and spicy fried chicken.

After getting your fill, explore downtown Charleston by foot. Founded in 1670, Charleston offers unparalleled

opportunities to experience history. At the Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon, completed in 1771, walk the same floors where George Washington was received, and learn about the site's tragic role in the history of the slave trade.

While downtown, take a walk down historic Broad Street — slowly — so as not to miss the reasons why this street is ranked one of the nation's "Great Streets" by the American Planning Association. Bluestone sidewalks, gas streetlights and palmetto trees frame structures dating back to 1715. Near Broad Street, you will find The Gibbes Museum of Art, home to the foremost collection of American art that incorporates Charleston. The collection includes something for everyone, from 18th century portrait miniatures to modern sculptor Patrick Dougherty's twig and branch structure (a kid favorite).

Visitors are likely to encounter one of Charleston's many popular festivals, such as Charleston Wine + Food, Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, Charleston Fashion Week, Festival of Houses and Gardens or, if you're lucky enough to visit during the 18-day period beginning Memorial Day weekend, Spoleto Festival USA. Every year since 1977, the festival has transformed Charleston, filling its historic venues with opera, symphonic music, theater, dance, chamber music and jazz from across the globe.

No visit to downtown Charleston would be complete without a visit to the Battery, the southernmost tip of the historic district and the Charleston peninsula. This promenade provides sweeping views of Charleston Harbor, Fort Sumter, the convergence of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Awakening couldn't be more romantic. **NOW**

For more information or to plan your visit to Charleston, visit [www.explorecharleston.com](http://www.explorecharleston.com). Photos courtesy of [ExploreCharleston.com](http://ExploreCharleston.com).

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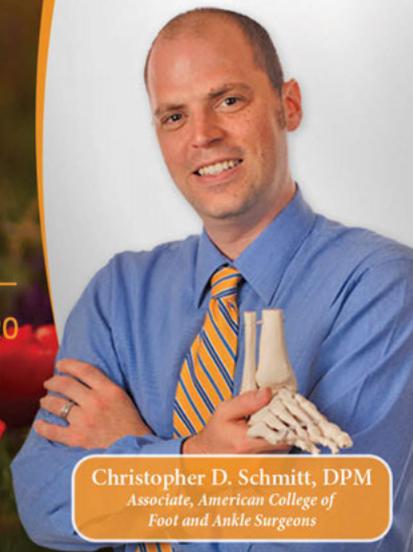
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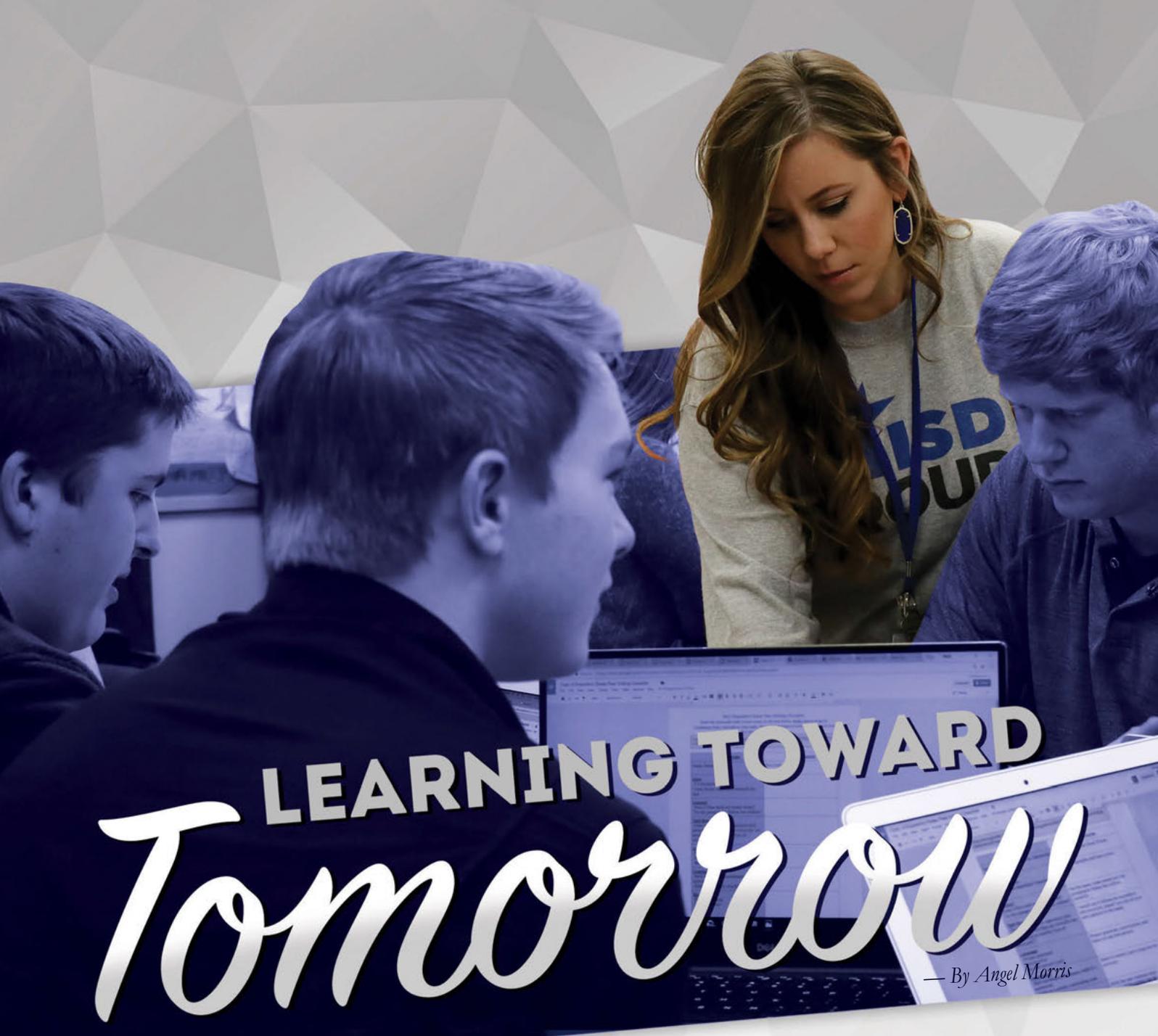
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# LEARNING TOWARD *Tomorrow*

— By Angel Morris



*Gone are the days when students were confined to a classroom, limited to paper and pen — at least if Meagan Hoyt has anything to say about it. A local graduate and current Dual Credit English IV instructor at Midlothian High School, Meagan hopes to play an integral role in preparing students for their future.*

“Our students can personalize their learning, accessing resources beyond what the teacher alone can provide, and find their niche. Whether it’s researching through online databases, using iMovie to make engaging products, creating Google



Sites for online portfolios or businesses or simply practicing digital citizenship, all students have grown tremendously in just a few months,” Meagan noted. “Since going 1:1, I have observed educators streamlining their workflow and finding more efficient tools to plan for and teach students in creative, relevant ways.”

Earning a bachelor’s in English with a minor in music from Sam Houston State University, Meagan wanted to teach but graduated when educator jobs were scarce. She worked in a variety of fields while earning a master’s degree in creative

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writing before landing her dream job at MHS. “Teaching jobs were still hard to come by in 2012, so I’m eternally thankful to Dr. Hemmle for giving me a chance,” Meagan said. “Because of my love for education and MISD, I also serve as a district new teacher mentor, Apple Vanguard Cohort member, and I’m an aspiring administrator and principal intern.”

MISD’s M\*Powered Vanguard Group includes teachers, leaders and support personnel dedicated to the promotion of integrating technology in classrooms. Participants increase

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their knowledge around Apple OS X and iOS operating systems, as well as Apple creativity and productivity applications, in order to go forward as models and resources for not only their campus or department, but also for the entire district.

Participating in these various roles allows Meagan to assist students and teachers. “I want to see students personalize their own learning experience using ever-advancing digital tools in a way that is meaningful for them, and prepares them for post-secondary success. Getting students excited for college and their careers elates me,” she said. “This also means I want teachers to feel empowered with the resources MISD has designed for deeper level curriculum, which will ultimately benefit students.”

Meagan also emphasizes the importance of combining technology with community service. “I don’t think many students realize the power their devices hold and how greatly they can impact their community and the world. I want to see students engage in meaningful collaboration — not just with classmates, but other schools in the district and worldwide. By building partnerships,

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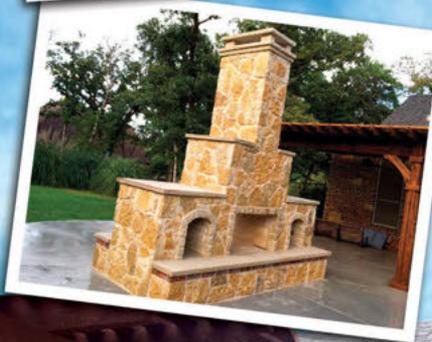
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I know firsthand that some of these connections can benefit students and the community for a lifetime,” Meagan said.

With cutting-edge technology at their fingertips, students often find traditional education concepts — like grades, attendance and seating charts — archaic, according to Meagan. “I want students to build rigor and grit to fully understand their new digital learning tools and find passions that motivate them to succeed. It could be learning to code, starting a blog about biofuel alternatives or mastering a new instrument using GarageBand. I want them to take charge and become social entrepreneurs.”

Being an educator fulfills Meagan’s own desire to give back. “I thrive on building relationships but also working toward the greater good. I am a dreamer and a lifelong learner, and teaching is the only job where I feel I am making a difference,” she admitted. “There is a new challenge every day and a chance for me to try and show others love, encouragement and help them believe that they can accomplish anything.”

Raising young sons, Landon and Eli, with husband, Robert, Meagan is also proud of her six-year marriage and the life they’ve



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created together. They began dating in college 10 years ago and have been together ever since. “We don’t go on lavish vacations or have much down time at this point in our lives, but we believe that if we work hard now, we will hopefully provide a legacy of sacrificial love, dedication and hard work to our boys,” Meagan said.

With three sisters who attended MISD schools and one who is currently an MISD middle schooler, Meagan is also serious about continuing MISD’s legacy of quality education. She is excited that the classroom is “no longer a place where the teacher is the all-knowing center of the universe,” she said. “We can learn as much from students as they learn from us. When this new relationship between teachers and students is accepted during our exploration of pedagogy and technology, we can truly be in this learning thing together!”

Happy to see students being treated as stakeholders in their own education, Meagan appreciates the level of recognition implemented for students and staff. “I’ve felt more supported, valued and heard as an educator with each passing year, and increasingly see the district overcoming the challenges of planning, funding and executing ways to meet today’s students’ unique needs,” she said. “It’s a boom of growth and transition that I’m thrilled to be part of, and I’m so thankful to work for MISD!” **NOW**

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*Suzanne Roberts showcases clothing at Daddy's Money Boutique and Gift Shoppe.*

## Zoomed In: Addison Gabrysch and Hailey Tessem

By Angel Morris

In keeping with Texas spring tradition, Addison Gabrysch and Hailey Tessem have their photo taken in this year's batch of the state flower outside their grandfather's automotive shop in Midlothian. What's unique about this field of bluebonnets is the distinctly different-colored blooms sprinkled in with the traditional stems. "The maroon flowers are a special variety called the Alamo Fire," Jeff Buckley, the girls' granddad said. "I pull the seeds, save them in the refrigerator and spread them each year to increase the number of maroon ones we have out front."

The girls aren't aware their grandparents' bluebonnet field is anything out of the ordinary, however. "I just like Mimi and Momo's pretty flowers," Addison said.



*Entrepreneur Dawson Gill sells homemade buttons at Midlothian Marketplace.*



*The new librarian at A.H. Meadows Public Library, Terry Moore, is welcomed by Bill Hattendorf, with the Parks and Recreation Department.*



*Tarleton State University students prepare to handle chores at local seniors' homes and at the Senior Activity Center on a Community Service Day.*



Chick-fil-A owners John and Jocelyn Millender and employees Sarah, Elizabeth and Dewey greet new customers.



The Midlothian High School boys powerlifting team includes four members who advanced to state.



Several Midlothian kindergartners of Ovilla Christian School enjoy the Dallas Zoo with their teacher, Mrs. Litke.



Representatives of Lafarge Holcim provide funds for three picnic tables made of recycled plastic at Paws for Reflection Ranch.

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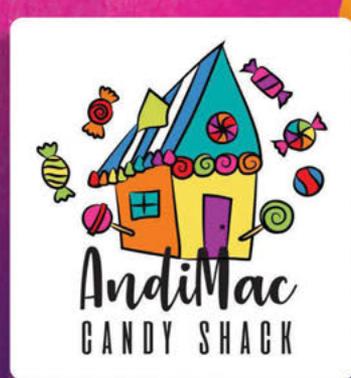
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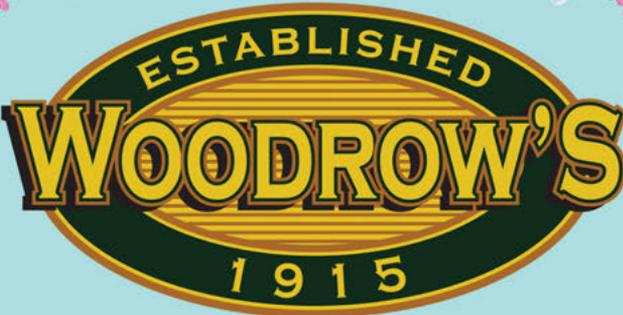


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# Calendar

## 1 — 30

Bricks 4 Kids Summer Camp  
Registration: STEM-based, five-day camps in Ellis County for ages 6-12. Early register at [www.bricks4kidz.com/texas-elliscounty](http://www.bricks4kidz.com/texas-elliscounty).

## 3

Day of Prayer: Noon, Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St. For more information, contact Manna House at (972) 775-1800.



## 4

Jazz Under the Stars: 7:00-9:00 p.m., Back Alley Plaza, 152 Plaza Dr. Midlothian ISD outdoor concert. Message [Keith\\_davis@misd.gs](mailto:Keith_davis@misd.gs) for more details.

## 4 — 6

*My Fair Lady*: **May 4-5**, 7:30 p.m.; **May 6**, 2:30 p.m., Chautauqua Auditorium, Getzendaner Park, 400 S. Grand Ave., Waxahachie. Tickets at [www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com](http://www.waxahachiecommunitytheatre.com) or Midlothian office of Jerry Ellis, DDS.

## 5

SxS Ultimate Showdown: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., TexPlex Park, 881 Miller Rd. UTV racing by various skill levels for cash prizes. Register at [www.texplexpark.com](http://www.texplexpark.com).

## 5, 12, 19

Reading, Math, STAAR Test Comprehension Classes: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Teachers Who Tutor,

3323 Ovilla Rd. Call (972) 515-8883 for details.

## 5, 12, 19, 26

Midlothian Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Heritage Park, 234 N. 8th St. Message [flowersbyroberta@att.net](mailto:flowersbyroberta@att.net) for more information.

## 12

8th Street Dance: 7:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m., downtown at 8th Street. Community street dance featuring Le Freak Band. Details at [www.midlothian.tx.us/8thstreetdance](http://www.midlothian.tx.us/8thstreetdance).

## 17

Midlothian Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament: 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Tangle Ridge Golf Course, 818 Tangle Ridge Dr., Grand Prairie. Register at [www.midlothianchamber.org](http://www.midlothianchamber.org).

## 19

Heroes of Midlothian Foundation 5K: 8:30 a.m., 1800 S. 14th St. Learn more at [www.heroesofmidlothian.org](http://www.heroesofmidlothian.org).

Wildflower Nature Walk: 9:00 a.m. Mockingbird Park, 1361 Onward Rd.



## 21

The Writers' Circle: 6:00 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. For more information, contact Sarah at [writerscirclemidlo@gmail.com](mailto:writerscirclemidlo@gmail.com).

## 25 — 27

National Polka Festival: visit [NationalPolkaFestival.com](http://NationalPolkaFestival.com) for full event details.



June

## 2

Annual Pancake Breakfast Fly-in: 8:00-11:00 a.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport. Classic airplanes and fighters, helicopter and vintage airplane rides, fly-overs, Midlothian Classic Wheels, Gold Wing Road Riders, live music, children's activities and more. Breakfast: \$6 for adults/children 8 and above; \$3 under 8. For more details, call (972) 923-0080 or visit [www.mid-wayregional.com](http://www.mid-wayregional.com).

Ongoing:

JOY of Midlothian Service Efforts: More than 100 student volunteers available for serving the community. Email [JOYofMidlothian@gmail.com](mailto:JOYofMidlothian@gmail.com) for information.

Mondays

Celebrate Recovery meeting: 7:00-9:00 p.m., The Lighthouse Church, 1400 N. 9th St. For more details, email [jason@dfwlighthouse.org](mailto:jason@dfwlighthouse.org).

Second and Fourth Mondays Rag-Tag Readers Book Club: 10:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. For more information, call Sandy at (972) 775-3417.

First Tuesdays  
Midlothian Area Historical Society

meeting: 7:00 p.m., Community Room of CNB, 310 N. 9th St. For more details, contact Edwin Bateman at (972) 743-2379.

First and Third Tuesdays  
Bluegrass Jam Session: 7:00 p.m., Lighthouse Coffee Bar, 1404 N. 9th St. Everyone's invited to join in - bring your instrument or simply relax and enjoy.

Wednesdays  
DivorceCare: 6:30-8:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 800 S. 9th St. DivorceCare for Kids ages 5-12 meets at the same time. Care for younger children available. For more information, call (972) 775-3993.

Second and Fourth Wednesdays  
Senior Dance at Western Kountry Klub: 7:00-9:30 p.m., Western

Kountry Klub, 5728 Lake View Rd. Adults age 45 and older welcome. \$5 cash admission. Call (817) 800-4585 or visit [www.westernkountryklub.com](http://www.westernkountryklub.com).

Thursdays  
Scrabble Club: 10:30 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. For more information, call (972) 775-3417.



Midway Composite Squadron of Civil Air Patrol/US Air Force auxiliary: 6:45-9:00 p.m., Mid-Way Regional Airport, 131 Airport Dr. Cadets ages

12-18 and Senior Members 18 plus. Visit [www.gocivilairpatrol.com](http://www.gocivilairpatrol.com).

Fridays  
Preschool Storytime: 11:00 a.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Story, craft and snack provided. For more information, call (972) 775-3417.

Third Saturdays  
Midlothian Opry Country Music Show: Midlothian Civic Center, 224 S. 11th St. Old country and gospel music. \$5 admission. Call Davonnia at (214) 676-1706 or go to Facebook Midlothian Opry for tickets and show times.

*Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to [angel.morris@nowmagazines.com](mailto:angel.morris@nowmagazines.com).*

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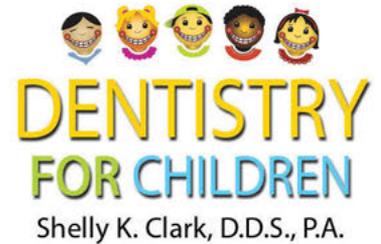
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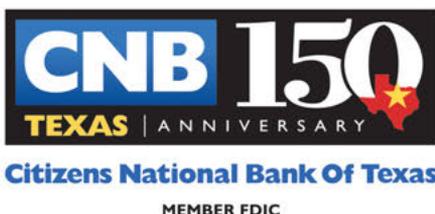
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# Changing Hats

— By Virginia Riddle

The many hats Crystal Harris wore during her years spent in Midlothian have been changing with the seasons of life that she and her husband, Bobby, and their children have been experiencing since they moved from Midlothian to Nashville, Tennessee, in 2012. “My official title is ‘Mom,’” Crystal said. “I love being a mother first and foremost. The challenges, joy and practicing of patience that I have raising these tiny humans never ceases to amaze me.”

A self-proclaimed “true Texas native” born and raised in Cleburne, Crystal is not only a stay-at-home mom to four children — Ariyel (12), Bella (8), Elijah (7) and Selah (5) — but she helps take care of the family’s two dogs and one cat, is a substitute teacher, a writer and public speaker and runs a women/girls’ conference called Revive. The writing of a book has been on her to-do list, too. “Writing a book has presented so many challenges and growing pains. However, I’m so excited to be almost through!” Crystal said.

While living for five years in Midlothian, Bobby

and Crystal were best known for their work as youth ministers at The Lighthouse and at its coffee bar. “We got to know the community well,” Crystal recalled. “Open mic nights were a favorite time.” Crystal was attending college as a theater major and, fluent in sign language, was involved in the deaf community. However, it was her Tutu for 2 business that was featured in a July 2011 *MidlothianNOW Magazine* article.

Every time Crystal made a tutu for a customer, she made a second one to go to a little girl who had suffered abuse. During her time spent in Midlothian, Crystal also enjoyed attending Alex Allred’s kickboxing classes. “She’s a mentor. She taught me how truly strong I was and gave me a deeper love for fitness,” Crystal stated.

The future holds a new hat for Crystal to wear. She and her family will be moving once again, this time to Denver, Colorado, to “plant” a church. “I’m hopefully going to have my book published by then, relaunch my tutu business and expand the Revive conferences,” she noted.

Bobby and Crystal return to Midlothian occasionally to visit relatives and their church family. “The Lighthouse is always a part of coming home,” she said. She advises families and children to go outside and play and get to know their neighbors. “Midlothian is beautiful, and its residents care a lot about the city.” **NOW**

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