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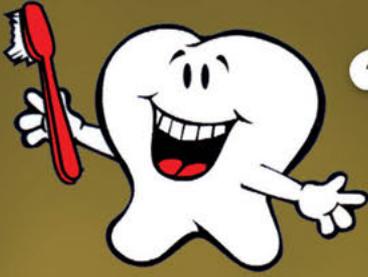


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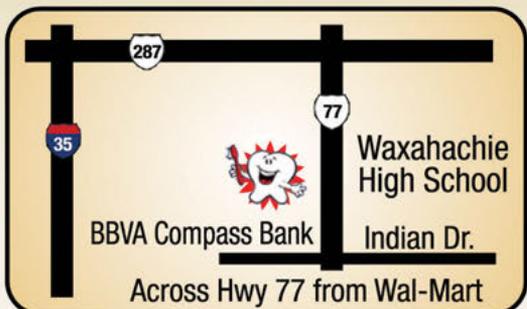
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ON THE COVER



All types of Indian Tribe pride is found at the WISD Spirit Store.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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## Editor's Note

*Welcome back to school!*

As I ponder the beginning of a new school year, I can't help but think about the cartoons I used to watch as a kid. I recall the laughs my brothers and I shared each morning as we watched the slapstick antics of *The Three Stooges*. Once home and after homework was complete, I'd "manually" turn the TV on to watch *Casper the Friendly Ghost* and *Felix the Cat*. I still recall feeling sorry for Casper. The

friendliness he showed, even to his mean fellow ghosts, was an example I'd like to think I continue to follow today.

My favorite character is still the lovable little character whose voice is so loud it can knock over trees and shatter mountains. He's named after his one-word vocabulary — VAVOOM! That one single word got him into trouble more times than not, but it also got he and Felix out of many tight situations. Wouldn't life be so much easier if we could just VAVOOM the mountains away? Seems simplistic, but we all know life is more than a 10-minute cartoon and a one-word vocabulary.

Here's to your cartoon character memories!

*Sandra*

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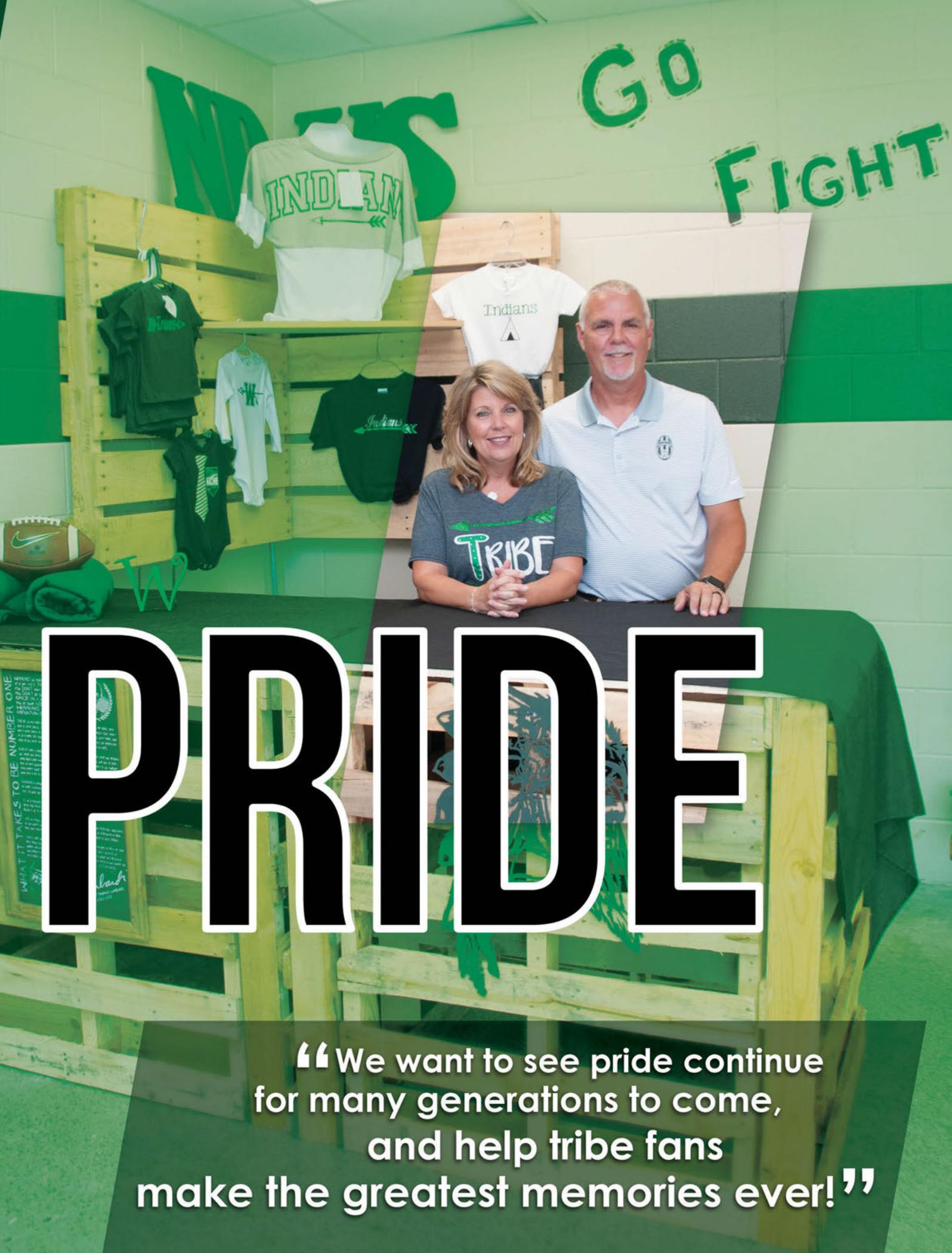
# Igniting

— By Debbie Durling

# INDIAN

*The incredible sound of the marching band, fans cheering while athletes push beyond the limits to certain victory, and memories created in the hearts and lives of students who fill the halls of Waxahachie schools all blend together into a beautiful package called “Indian Spirit.” Pride and dedication are exhibited by the Waxahachie ISD in all areas of achievement. Jimmy and Linda Redding fit right in, as they endeavor to fire up that spirit through the Indian Spirit Store and social media pages.*

In 2011, a newly renovated Lumpkins Stadium opened. Space had been added to house the Indian’s very own spirit store. Jimmy and Linda, being decorators at heart and Indian fans to the core, had a dream for the store. Many amazing volunteers have excelled at providing items for fans to purchase, and the Reddings wanted to carry on that tradition, as well as bring it to the next level. “There is a strong spirit in a tribe,” Linda said. “A strong sense of pride and tradition. The Spirit Store is here to carry on the tradition and



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pride. Wear it, show it, take pride in it and spread the spirit. Ask your neighbor, “Where is your flag?” We are all in the tribe, so show your pride! That is the message in my heart,” Linda added with passion. “I always want to show pride in this town, the schools, the athletic programs and in the students.” This passion is what has helped to make the spirit store what it is.

Today, Waxahachie Indian Spirit is celebrated with a whole new flare. Linda puts flags out on the rails in front of the store, located on the corner of the stadium facing Indian Drive. Her vision is to see these flags flown in every neighborhood and yard within the school district. “I remember driving through the town of Hutto, just outside of Austin, a few years ago. It seemed that every yard had a concrete hippo displayed to show their school spirit,” Linda recalled. “I could see where these people’s hearts were, and it inspired me to promote that same kind of dedication in Waxahachie. If we covered the city in flags, how impressive would that be?”

Behind the flags is a glass door that says, *Indian Spirit Store*, in fun celebratory font. Once inside the door, a world of design complements Indian spirit and pride. A modern, industrial look showcases slogan-filled merchandise. Wooden pallets are strategically placed on the walls. They provide a place to hang shirts and other memorabilia in a way where they can easily be seen from the center of the store. No longer do customers wade through the selection on round racks to see what is available.



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Two box-shaped display cases sit in the center of the store, which are also made from wooden pallets. Unique, decorative cedar shelving rests on the back wall to hold the folded merchandise assorted by size. Metal plumbing hardware is used in decorative ways to support the wooden pallets or to serve as extensions for places to hang the merchandise.

The mural on the back wall was painted by students of the WHS art department, and this fall, industrial lights will be strung across the store to finish the look. To add to the ambience, music from the WHS Indian Marching Band



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is played throughout the store. It's like walking into a store in a mall, but then it's not really. It's a beautiful addition to the grand Lumpkins Stadium. Linda and Jimmy have worked diligently to utilize the wall space, leaving lots of room for customers to mingle and shop.

Not only has the store been updated, but Jimmy and Linda have added events to encourage fans to come in. Last December, various football players portrayed Santa at the store. Kids from the area came to see Santa and left with an autographed picture of a football player, Charmer or cheerleader. They also set up a booth at the Christmas Market in the Civic Center to accommodate those wanting to get spirit wear as Christmas gifts. "Last year," Linda remembered, "Wal-Mart came to the store when they were getting ready for back to school and purchased four flags. When you entered their store, you could see the flags hanging. It was awesome!"

Everything done in the store was accomplished through dedicated volunteers, and 100-percent of the proceeds benefit Waxahachie students in some way. All the decorating, hours spent running the store, ordering the merchandise, etc., is all donated time. This is important to know because when buying Indian merchandise in locations other than at the Spirit Store, the proceeds may not benefit the students. One of her most faithful helpers is Katrina Stewart. She is a certified teacher



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and works at Clift Elementary as an intervention paraprofessional. This is her way to serve as a football mom.

The 2017-18 school year will be met with a huge push to drum up spirit among the students and community. The theme will be, "Are you showing your pride?" Bright and bold colors are being added, and flags are in high supply in hopes that putting them in the yards of the community will begin to catch on, until anyone visiting Waxahachie can quickly see that the residents are behind their school district all the way. "If we covered the city in flags, how impressive would that be to people who visit," she reiterated. "That is my goal for this year."

The store is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6:00-8:00 p.m., and Fridays, from 6:00-7:30 p.m., whether there's a game scheduled or not. But, when there is a game, those hours are extended to accommodate the fans until the game is over.

WISD is truly blessed to have quality volunteers throughout all the programs and schools. Jimmy and Linda are beautiful examples of the love and care that bring the extra pizzazz to the learning environment. When remodeling the store, she kept the Vince Lombardi plaque displayed. It features one of his famous quotes — *Winning is not a sometime thing; it is an all the time thing. You don't win once in a while; you don't do things right once in a while; you do them right all of the time.*

The Reddings have made a commitment to the spirit momentum in Waxahachie, and they take it seriously by adding hard work, diligent service and fresh ideas to make the Indian Spirit Store all that it can be. "We want to see pride continue for many generations to come," she admitted, "and help tribe fans make the greatest memories ever?" What are you waiting for? Go check it out. **NOW**



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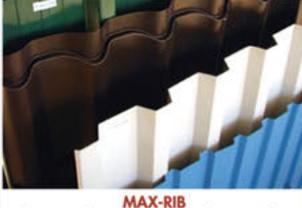
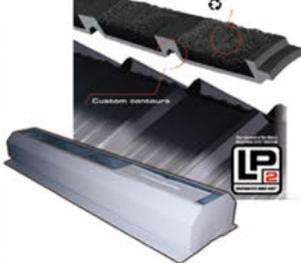
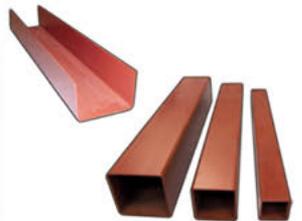
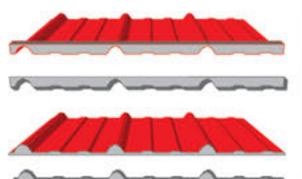
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# Claiming Their Identities

— By Carolyn Wills





For Larry and Nikeesia Ranson, any moment to help a child is a moment that matters. Always exuberant, these two know no strangers. Their hope is about faith, relationship, activities and a place where every child has choices and self-esteem. Their actions are about strength, commitment and hard work. What Larry and Nikeesia do for foster kids is vitally important, and, as they quickly added, they don't do it alone. "Our mission is to serve," Nikeesia said with a smile. "That's why God brought us together."

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every item of necessity and joy and, on the other hand, a place of self-affirming programs with names like SWAGG Bag, Art and Recreations, The Beauty in Me, The Man to Be, Prom Prep Day, Orphan Awareness and Holiday Support.

Its beginnings likely started even before Larry and Nikeesia met and fell in love, weathered Larry's six-year commitment to the United States Air Force, raised three sons and devoted countless resources to helping others. "We both grew up with mothers deeply rooted in the will to serve," Nikeesia shared.



Throughout their 25-year marriage, and largely as a result of Nikeesia's 17 years as an educator and school principal, she and Larry often had an opportunity to assist children, including providing their home as a temporary shelter. Five years ago, they were called to do more.

With sons Larry, Kameron and Nikolas, ages 18, 15 and 14 at the time, Larry and Nikeesia agreed it was time to become a foster family. "We applied for a group of siblings in hopes of alleviating some of the fears of separation that often occur with foster children," Nikeesia explained.

The day they welcomed three brothers, ages 12, 8 and 5, was a happy day at the Ransons' house. The

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combination of three brothers was familiar and seemed ideal for everyone. As it happened, though, there was more to know. “The boys were essentially nonverbal at first, and then the oldest began asking about their two sisters and two more brothers,” Larry said. Sure enough, Larry and Nikeesia would learn of four younger siblings who were also in foster care.

“We sprang into full-help mode,” she said with a grin. Not only did the four younger siblings eventually join their older brothers, but in 2014, and at a moment that definitely mattered, Larry and Nikeesia decided to adopt all seven children. “It hurt our hearts to think these kids might be separated again,” she shared. “They are our seven from heaven, and in the end, the decision to adopt wasn’t even a long conversation — but more of a realization.”

It was life-changing. Nikeesia transitioned from educational administrator to a stay-at-home mom. Larry focused on working from home as a telecommunications specialist. The office became a girl’s bedroom. The media room became the 12-year-old’s bedroom. “His own so he could be young again,” Nikeesia said with a smile. Life became filled with Hello Kitty toothbrushes and rubber duckies, meals served in phases, medical and dental issues, emergency room visits and, of course, trading the family car for a 12-seater van.

All of this and, yet, there was an overriding question. “We kept asking ourselves, ‘Once we adopt, then what?’” Nikeesia said. “We didn’t know how we would continue our mission to bless others.” As always, the answer

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was revealed in family prayer, as they considered some important questions: “What was God telling us to do? What did we want our kids to have? And, then,” Nikeesia shared, “we asked the children, ‘What do other foster kids need?’”

In that moment, SWAGG was born. “Foster children need our help,” Nikeesia said. “That’s the reality.” With their savings and lots of labor from Nikeesia’s parents and all of the Ransons’ family, friends and volunteers, Larry and Nikeesia created a place and a way for the community to take care of the community. Since Thanksgiving 2014, a leased, stand-alone building on Waxahachie’s Ovilla Road has served children from as many as nine counties.



Children entering foster care or a new home often have little or nothing of their own, and most arrive with their belongings in a trash bag. On top of that, they’re understandably frightened and confused. “At the SWAGG store, we serve one family at a time every 30 minutes,” Nikeesia explained. “By having their own time, there’s no shame. They can come in, relax, shop and try on clothes. It’s also a good time for foster parents to learn about and bond with their child.”

The store carries everything from hygiene items, medicine and cosmetic items to clothing, uniforms, diapers, shoes, socks, underwear, purses, jewelry, school supplies and SWAGG bags — duffel bags they get to fill with items they choose. The bags become theirs to keep through any transitions they may have. “We want children to have choices and opportunities to claim their own identity,” she added.

Misty Mitchell is a foster parent who visits monthly from Decatur. “I make the long drive to SWAGG because, in addition to getting help with physical items, I’m given invaluable advice, prayers and encouragement,” she said.

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Whitney Urquhart from Midlothian heard about SWAGG through Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services and her foster care community. "There really is no program like it near Midlothian or the south Dallas areas," she commented. "Not only did we shop for clothes, diapers and essentials during those first few months of a new child placement, but Mrs. Ranson was a wealth of knowledge and support."

"If it weren't for SWAGG, I don't know what we would do," Julie Gonzales, from Red Oak shared. "These are awesome people, and I thank God every day for bringing them into our lives."

Nikeesia's hope is for every county to have their own version of SWAGG, and they would be thrilled to share resources and experiences. "SWAGG relies on volunteers, partners, sponsors and everyone who donates time and items," she said. "We are so grateful. At this point, our prayer is to receive help with expenses and, ideally, a donated location."

"The minute our family stepped into the SWAGG home, we felt the love," Maria Miller from Waxahachie shared.

Larry and Nikeesia know that helping children matters. They live it, and, in awareness of the special challenges of children who are homeless or in foster care, they were moved to create this nonprofit organization to meet the needs. That's what SWAGG is all about. **NOW**

*Editor's Note: For more information, visit [www.swaggprograms.com](http://www.swaggprograms.com).*

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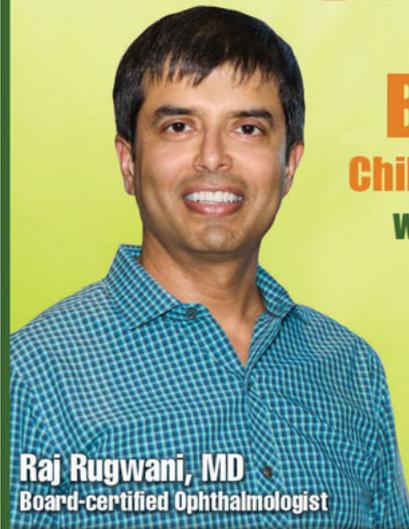


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— By Carolyn Wills



## AT HOME WITH RAUL AND



*Thanks to Mime, the Garcia home is “dressed” for all occasions. “We decorate our house for every holiday,” she said with a smile. Thanks to Raul, its exterior is a bright seasonal array of pink, red, orange, yellow, white and purple flowers, shades of greenery, well-kept lawns, crape myrtle and large old oak trees with outstretched limbs. Importantly, this mix of elegance, whimsy and sharing is really what makes this home so very special.*





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Into the foyer, an exquisite clock chimes the first hint of what lies ahead. Tall, glass- and cabinet-enclosed, it was discovered by Mime on a shoe-shopping trip. "I happened to see it and told my daughter, 'I have to have that,'" she said grinning. Today, it's a family treasure.

The foyer leads to an impressive and inviting living room, anchored on the right by a huge brick fireplace and to the left by custom built-ins and a view of the breakfast room. The elegantly furnished living room easily accommodates gatherings of family and friends. Along the way, the Garcias have added wide-planked, distressed wood floors and painted the walls a subtle gold. Against one wall, a gorgeous Victorian-style chest features a vase of hydrangeas, while

the built-in shelves display family photos, angel figurines and paper horses handmade by grandchildren.

At the center of their lives and home are their five grandsons and two granddaughters. Raul proudly explained that after graduating from Waxahachie High School and earning college degrees, all three of their children — Melinda, Jennifer and Marco — are successful, married and now have families. "Helping to better your kids is important," he shared. Not wanting their children to start life with student loans, the Garcias paid for their educations. "They will pass that on to their children," he said.

One room was especially attractive when Raul and Mime first saw their house years ago. Toward the rear of the home

and through the living room is a spacious playroom. Today, the playroom serves as the gathering place for grandchildren. With indoor/outdoor carpet; loads of light; a big screen TV; all kinds of toys; books; and a big round child's table complete with tiny stools, each labeled with a grandchild's name, it's the perfect eating, running, napping and all-around having fun place. "This is the room that really sold the home," Mime said. "We could see our kids



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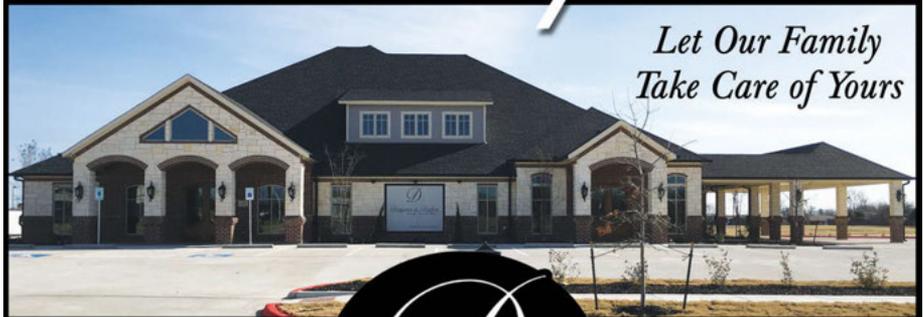
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playing here. Now, as Mimi and Peepaw, we're seeing our grandkids."

Three tall windows line the wall between the playroom and breakfast room, and above those windows is the inscription, *so many toys, so little time*. The quote, there when the Garcias moved in, continues to ring true.



The breakfast room, accented with ceramic roosters, chickens and guineas, is also especially delightful, partly because of its view into the playroom and as a place for gatherings. A ceramic rooster, affectionately known as "Papa Rooster," serves as a fun centerpiece to a great farmhouse table. Under the octagonal ceiling of white wood slats, the feeling is much like being in a gazebo. "The kitchen, breakfast area and playroom are my favorites," Mime shared. "I love to cook. Sometimes, we'll fill the playroom with card tables until it looks like a restaurant."

Open from the breakfast room is a beautiful kitchen with a light-colored tile floor, taupe stone backsplash, dark solid wood cabinets and island, granite counters, black appliances and walls painted a soft "strained gold." The kitchen enters to Raul's office where he enjoys collecting historical books, including old high school annuals. "Raul loves history," Mime said. "The barber shop he owns just celebrated its 100th anniversary, and in the time that he's had it, some of his 'first haircut' customers are grandfathers now."

French doors separate the office from an exquisite formal dining room, bordered on the opposite side by the foyer. The Duncan Phyfe dining table is topped by a crystal chandelier, and the room is complete with wainscoting and walls painted a soft green.

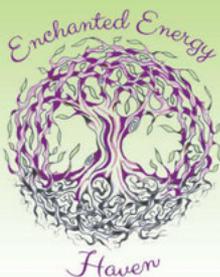
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Toward the right side of the house are the guest bedroom, decorated in a Victorian style; the grandkids' room with its much used and loved Jenny Lind baby bed; and the master bedroom. The master suite, spacious enough to accommodate a giant armoire and king-size bedroom set, also features an enormous bath and walk-in closet.

The exterior of the home is as striking as its interior. The large lot, centered on a cul-de-sac is bordered on one side by a creek. "Raul loves being outside," Mime shared. "He gets lost in his yardwork and the sounds of the children from the nearby park and daycare center."

Their amazing backyard features a new patio and outdoor kitchen added just last year. Raul's gardening talents can be seen in the striking display of plantings including knockout roses, cannas, lantanas, peppermint plants, gladiolas, succulents, sage and crape myrtles. "We also have a garden for the kids," he shared. While the two granddaughters, Olivia (aka Princess) and Grey Elliot (aka Little Diva), are too young to participate, the boys are all about their potatoes, cucumbers, carrots and squash.

Raul and Mime were married in 1967 in Waxahachie's St. Joseph Catholic Church where, today, they are still active. They have shared 50 years of marriage, three children and seven grandchildren, and both are blessed with an "eye for style." "We met through friends and then discovered we were both going to beauty school in Dallas," Mime smiled. Raul owns the White House Barber Shop on North Grand Avenue, while Mime styles hair at a local salon, A Cut Above at Country Lane.

They love to travel, typically taking four vacations a year. "Branson is our getaway," she said. They also love to celebrate. "We have a big Fourth of July party and a Christmas Eve Open House," she added. For over 10 years, she and 11 friends have gathered once a month at each other's homes to play canasta.

Between them, Raul and Mime have church friends, canasta friends, dancing friends (they love to country and western dance), game night friends and, of course, family. "We're a busy couple," she said with a grin. "Life is too short not to be, and we are so very blessed!" **NOW**

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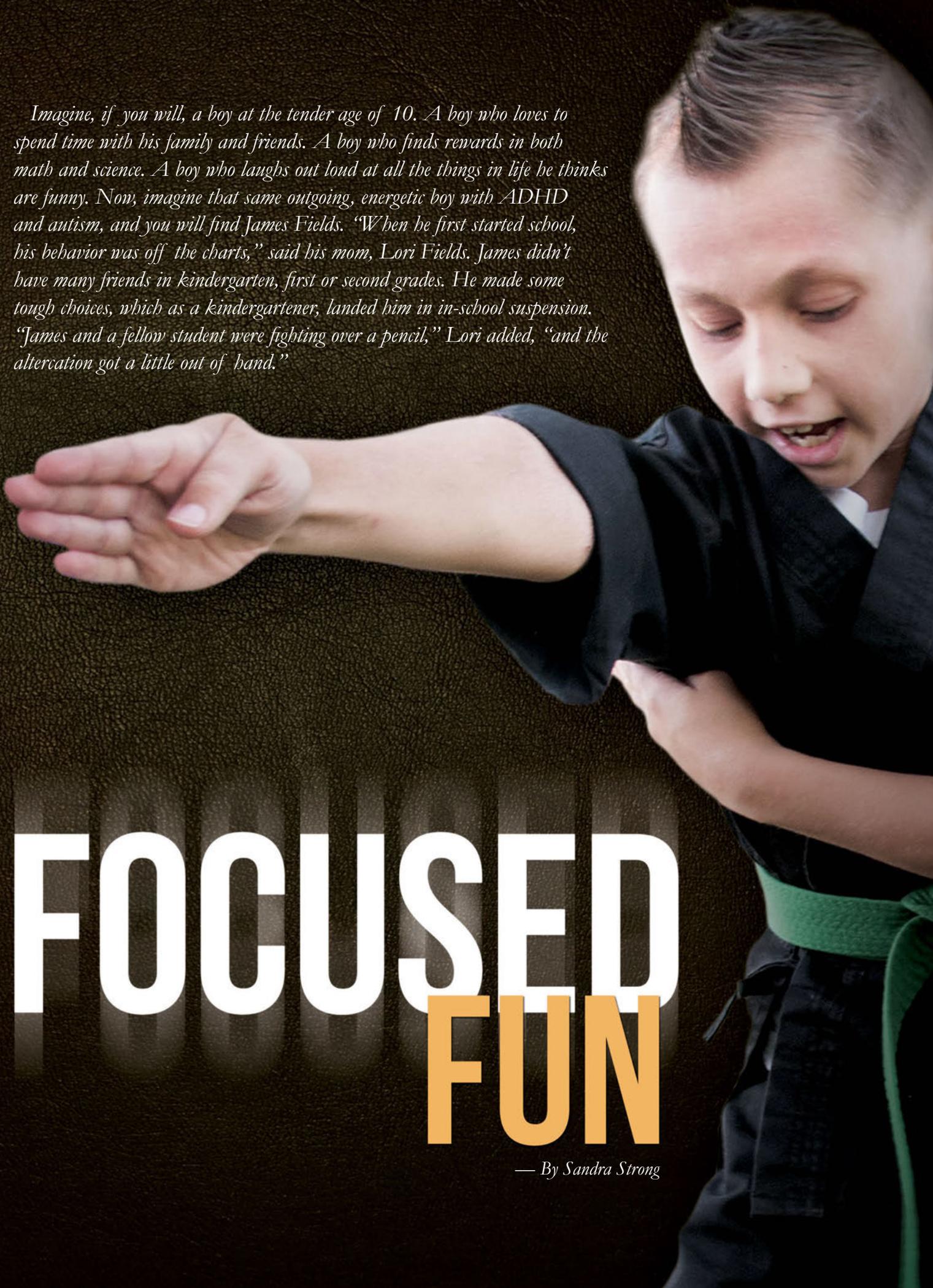




*Imagine, if you will, a boy at the tender age of 10. A boy who loves to spend time with his family and friends. A boy who finds rewards in both math and science. A boy who laughs out loud at all the things in life he thinks are funny. Now, imagine that same outgoing, energetic boy with ADHD and autism, and you will find James Fields. "When he first started school, his behavior was off the charts," said his mom, Lori Fields. James didn't have many friends in kindergarten, first or second grades. He made some tough choices, which as a kindergartener, landed him in in-school suspension. "James and a fellow student were fighting over a pencil," Lori added, "and the altercation got a little out of hand."*

# FOCUSED FUN

— By Sandra Strong



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The next year as a first-grader, James was tested and diagnosed with ADHD. The autism diagnosis came much later, at age 8. Once James' dad, Jason, and Lori were given the results of all the extensive testing, they set out on a mission to help James, the oldest of four biological children and one adopted child.

When James showed an interest in martial arts in December 2014, Lori and Jason wasted no time enrolling him in an after-school program at a local dojo. He, along with his two oldest sisters, Audrey and Madelyn, attend martial arts classes at Lone Star Martial Arts Monday through Friday each week. "They do drills for a full hour on four of the five days, and before coming home, they've already completed any homework they may have had," Lori explained. "We saw a relatively quick change in his overall behavior once he started the program."

By March, James had earned his first belt — a yellow belt — and he'd made several new friends. This first belt gave him the confidence he'd been lacking up to this point. "Before karate, I could hardly keep my eyes on the page," James admitted. "What used to take me an hour to finish at school, now only takes me about 10 minutes." For James, confidence means being able to start and finish something.

"We were hoping it was something that would add structure and focus to his life," Lori shared. "We were so hoping that martial arts would help him cope with many challenges."

"It's a progressive sport," Jason stated. "It's daily reinforcement with continued work toward success."

Everyone in the family now agrees on the importance of having a specific goal in mind to work toward. For James and his sisters, that goal is the next belt. Each child is at a different level. James is now a green belt, working diligently to earn his blue. Audrey is at purple, while Madelyn is currently at yellow. James has competed in two tournaments in the three years he's been taking martial arts lessons — the first while a yellow belt, the second with his purple.

When James talks about martial arts, his excitement is off the charts, yet very controlled. He works at his own pace, with time made for stretching, form work, self-defense and sparring. He likes sparring most of all. "Sparring is technically not really fighting," he explained. "Sparring is like practice where a certain number of points are earned depending on where you hit your opponent."

Focused fun is what martial arts means to Lori and James. "The program has definitely helped him focus on his schoolwork," Lori stated. "He was able to focus on the STARR testing in May, which is a very big deal, but he's also having a lot of fun."

James found his focus thanks to his instructors. "They tell me to focus, look at the target, do it strong, don't go too fast and get my stances right," he said. "And I've learned that I'm going to be OK, if I ever do get into a fight." These same rules on focus he learned at the




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dojo are now the same rules James carries to school with him each day. “I focus on the work and look at what I need to do, then I do it strong. I’ve learned to take my time and get it right,” he added with a big smile on his face.

The most difficult aspect of the sport for James is getting his stances right within each kata. Each of the colored belts has its own kata — detailed patterns of movements practiced, either solo or in pairs. Currently, James is learning his katas solo. Karate is one form of several that can be mastered in martial arts. Each belt represents something very important in the progression of karate: white, new beginning or birth; yellow, sunlight and new strength; orange, sun and growing in power; purple, positive change; green, growth like a seed sprouting upward; blue, sky and additional growth; brown, maturity like a seed ready for harvest; and black, completion and full maturity.

Karate has helped the oldest three children learn how to have a goal to work toward to find positive success. Focus is encouraged at the dojo, but it’s also highly encouraged at home. “I call it intrinsic motivation. It’s a self-motivated focus,” Lori explained. “Intrinsic motivation will help them in life, business, society — everywhere. They learn to compare themselves to themselves and not others.”

Jason and Lori feel it’s good for James, Audrey and Madelyn to be at different levels in the sport. “They are learning to set individual goals,” Jason said. “They are making themselves better by focusing on what’s inside them, instead of their outer appearance.”

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As parents, they also like the team aspect of the sport. At the dojo during practice, the young athletes work as a well-rounded team. During competitions, they compete individually, while their teammates cheer them on.

Karate is the only sport James participates in these days, while Audrey and Madelyn have added gymnastics, although minimal, to their schedules. Jason and Lori also find focused fun three times a week as Camp Gladiator members. “We are all getting fit together,” Lori said. “As parents, Jason and I strive to set a good example for the kids to follow.”

Life is a challenge for any family, and the Fields family is no different. James’ biggest hurdle was school. Once diagnosed, his parents had a clear path to follow for his success, and they’ve not veered from it. They see all three children earning their black belts, and when they do, Lori has told them that they will receive a gift for a job well done. “I asked James if he was going to want a car,” Lori said.

His answer was matter-of-fact and to the point. “I’ll get my black belt long before I’m old enough for a car. All I really want is a drone.” **NOW**

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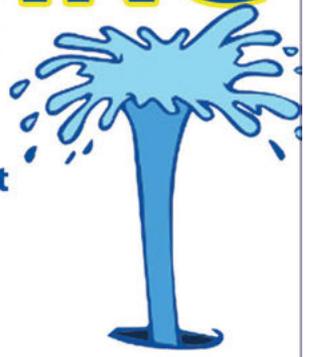
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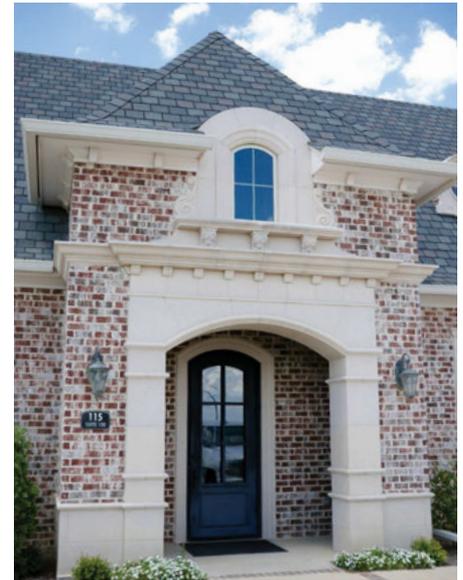


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# POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE

*Knowing when hospice care is needed is of the utmost importance.*

— By Sandra Strong

When people hear the word “hospice,” the first thing that comes to mind is a loved one’s impending passing and the deep sadness associated with that loss. The caring individuals at Bristol Hospice Pathways, LLC would love nothing more than to dispel this misconception. The mission at Bristol Hospice Pathways (BHP) is simple — all patients and families entrusted to their care will be treated with the highest level of compassion, respect and quality of care. Their main goal is to help patients live until they die, because a life has worth and does matter until the last breath is taken. “It’s all about building a close relationship, not only with the patient, but with the entire family,” said Saundra Townley, RN BSN and executive director. “Hospice is about living the remainder of life with dignity.”

In October 2012, what was once Lighted Pathways became BHP. Jim Colwell, the owner of Lighted Pathways, felt it was time he sold the company. He reached out to a lady he met at a conference who had the same heart for people he did. Soon thereafter, Bristol Hospice reached out to Jim. Merging the name after purchase seemed like the natural progression for the company that currently oversees 20 counties with the same personal, small-town touch that Jim and his staff were best known for.

Jim remained with the company that has doubled in size since its opening and is now serving as the senior director of education and community development. His main goal in the community is to educate the medical field on the importance of hospice care. Jeffrey Astbury, MD, FACP worked with Jim in the past at a previous

hospice facility and found himself in Ellis County working at Bristol Hospice about two years ago. Jeffrey is now the facility's medical director. "He's a huge asset to the company," said Brandon Baker, RN, CHPN and director of patient care services. "He's considered the top dog!"

Certified hospice palliative nurses are sprinkled throughout the 20 counties, and the nurse/patient ratio allows the nurses to nurture the special bond with families that is commonplace with hospice care. "Those nurses who aren't yet certified are working toward their certification," Sandra explained. "Their main responsibility is to keep their patients comfortable, while keeping the families informed on each step of the process leading up to their loved one's final breath."

"Hospice is about living the remainder of life with dignity."

Death is part of life. Those at BHP fully understand this, and they want to share this knowledge with patients and their families earlier in the process, as opposed to later. "Knowledge is power," Sandra stated.

"Teaching families to embrace hospice care is so important for the patient," Brandon added, "as well as the family."

Sharing this powerful knowledge is important to Sandra and her team of hospice caregivers. So much so, that they will be helping to host the first Southern Region Walk to End Alzheimer's 5K on September 30. The walk, which promises to raise awareness and offer a myriad of resources to families, will be held in downtown Ennis. "One-third of our hospice patients suffer from Alzheimer's," Sandra shared. "We work with more Alzheimer's patients than we do with those who have cancer."

Hospice treats the patient, not the disease, but it also focuses on the family by providing the care, reassurance and comfort they need during this difficult time. BHP does this, and so much more, with a personal level of empathy that is needed in hospice care, because the last breath is just as important to them as the first. **NOW**

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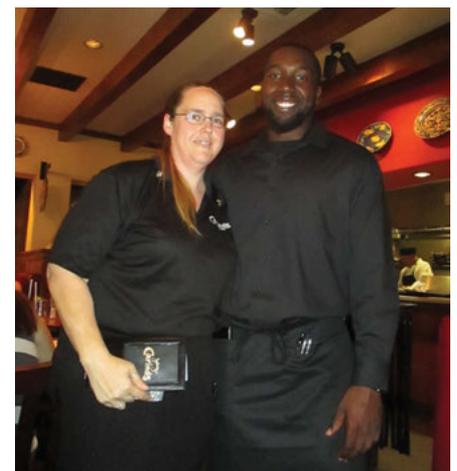
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# School's in Session

— By Zachary R. Urquhart



*Whether your summer has flown by or you are counting down the days until the hot months come to an end, the fact remains that summer is almost over. And with the end of summer comes the start of a new school year! If you are getting your first child ready for kindergarten, or you are a recent graduate headed away for college, follow these tips to get a great start for a great school year.*

## Be Ready for the First Day

- *Dot your I's.* One of the biggest jobs for parents getting ready to send kids to school is finishing paperwork. When you are starting, be ready with shot records, birth certificates and proof of residency, so that you can enroll without a problem. If your children are in sports, get the school's physical form and head to your doctor or a nearby clinic, so they are ready on day one. There is also a mountain of surveys, financial forms and demographic sheets that will take time to complete, so do not wait until the night before the first day of school.

- *Get the gear you need.* No matter which school your child attends, supplies will be needed. Most large stores will have copies of lists from the local schools, so you can head there ready to shop. If your young student is apprehensive about starting, let him or her have fun picking out colors and characters, but be sure you know which supplies are shared by the class. This will help you avoid your son happily picking a themed box of tissues only to find out that the class uses each other's boxes communally. And if you are running short on

time, most elementary schools use fundraising companies that will package a complete set of needed supplies for a small fee.

- *Older kids need stuff, too.* Though your high-schooler may not take the same pleasure in picking out school supplies, you cannot neglect that part of his or her year. Some teachers at that level will have specific requirements for their class. So while you may not be able to get an exhaustive list until your student comes home the first week, you know that they will need paper, pen and pencil and a notebook or two.

## Look the Part

- *Find a style.* Unless your school has a dress code, there are endless options when it comes to dressing for the day. These days, kids can wear almost anything and fit into some style category. Whether they want to have a common theme in their dress, or they want to change it up each day, they can shop anywhere from a thrift store to the fanciest boutiques to come up with great looks for the year.

- *Function matters.* High school students normally have a regulated schedule, complete with time to change for athletics or other special activities. But in elementary school, kids often have a different activity every day of the week. Be sure to include a variety of clothes and shoes, so your daughter does not overheat trying to run in wooly leggings or ruin a fancy dress painting in art class.

## Get in Rhythm

- *Start a routine now.* Summer nights are great for staying up, enjoying sunsets and going on late night excursions. With school fast

approaching, though, it is time to get your little ones back into a bedtime routine. The first few weeks might be tough regardless, but making sure they are getting to bed early now should help ensure a better start to the year.

- *Routines are good for everyone.* While it may seem like a losing battle to ask your teenagers to go to bed early with several weeks left of summer, encourage them to start waking up when they will need to be up for the school year. After a few weeks of being forced out of bed before noon, they will naturally get to sleep at a more reasonable hour. And if your high-schoolers drive themselves in the morning, spend the week before school helping them get the timing of waking up, getting ready and heading out the door in time to get to school before the bell rings.

## College Is Not Just a Party

- *Take care of the little things.* If you are a college student, on your own for the first time, you may be overwhelmed with your new responsibilities. It is a good idea to make a monthly and quarterly checklist to ensure you pay your rent and bills, keep your car maintained and do things like changing air filters and taking care of the yard.

- *Make a budget.* One of the biggest changes for many college students is budgeting money. Figure out how much money you need for utilities, housing, basic grocery purchases and any regular bills you will be paying like insurance or phone service. Compare that to your sources of income, and be sure not to spend more than you have.

- *Be careful with credit.* College students are easy targets for cards with ridiculously high rates. Their free shirt is not worth opening a high interest credit card where a pair of jeans paid for over time can cost you hundreds in fees. On the other hand, you might consider getting a card with good rates and making one or two purchases that you pay off immediately. That can help establish good credit that will help you buy a car or a home down the road.

For anyone sending a child off for the first time, or shipping a graduate into the borderline adulthood that is college, using these tips will ensure a successful start to school. **NOW**

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# A Mind on the Run

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

than females. ADHD often coexists with other behaviors, such as anxiety disorders, learning disabilities and depression.

Inattention is characterized by someone having difficulty with organizational skills. They have problems keeping things in order and manage their time poorly. They make careless mistakes performing important tasks and are constantly losing items. There is difficulty in focusing and staying on task. When it comes to performing tasks that require mental focus, those with inattention may completely avoid them.

Hyperactivity and impulsivity are often seen in combination. When a person is hyperactive, that behavior will often be seen in very unhealthy ways, and being impulsive is a part of that. An example of the predominantly hyperactivity-impulsivity presentation is a person who fidgets constantly and can't seem to sit still. Engaging in quiet activities is difficult. This patient seems to be the type of person who has to go, go, go all the time, is impatient, has trouble standing in line and engages in nonstop talking.

The cause of ADHD is still unknown. Environmental toxins have been blamed, possible brain injury, genetic factors and even cigarettes and alcohol are all suggested causes of ADHD.

The goal of treatment for ADHD is to reduce symptoms for better function. The treatment has to be patient specific and age appropriate. What works for children might not work for adults and vice versa.

When helping children with ADHD, it's important not to label them as "bad" kids. Their behavior is not meant to disrupt and with treatment can improve. Managing this disorder gives the person a chance to live a more normal and calmer life. **NOW**

*This article is for general information only and does not constitute medical advice. Consult with your physician if you have questions regarding this topic.*



"I can't sit still." Those words come from an online blogger, who just needed to vent about ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. She went on to chronicle her struggle with her thought patterns. "Like, I should have one thought that's supposed to do its thing. Instead, it feels like there's hundreds, all darting in different directions and confusing the others." ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that begins in childhood and can last into adulthood.

There are three types of this condition: inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. It is possible to have only one or a combination of the types. All of these behaviors can occur in anyone, but when they reach a level that causes everyday routines to be disrupted on a frequent basis, it is characteristic of ADHD disorder. Behaviors will differ from one person to another. Some will exhibit a combination of symptoms of this condition. Whatever symptoms are most predominant determine the diagnosis. Males are more likely to have this disorder

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## August 2

Bridge Building Competition: 10:00 a.m., Sims Library. Teens will be divided into teams. They will use Lego or K'Nex to construct a bridge that meets specific criteria. The bridges will be tested based on how many books each bridge can hold.

## August 5

TOPMA Pro Mood Series: Texas Motorplex. For more information, visit [www.texasmotoplex.com](http://www.texasmotoplex.com).

## August 10

2nd Thursday Ladies Night Out: 5:00-8:00 p.m., monthly in downtown Waxahachie with participating merchants.

## August 11

Summer Moonlight Movie: *Hairspray*: downtown Waxahachie. For more details, visit [www.waxahachiecvb.com](http://www.waxahachiecvb.com).

## August 12

BOGO 2nd Saturday: participating downtown merchants.

End of Summer Carnival: 10:00 a.m., Sims Library. For more details, contact Holly Browning at (972) 937-2671.

Waxahachie Riding Club Playday: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie Rodeo Complex, 704 Howard Rd. For rainout dates and more information, visit [www.waxahachieridingclub.com](http://www.waxahachieridingclub.com).

## August 16

Teen Ice Cream Social – 10:00 a.m., Sims Library.

## August 21

Solar Eclipse Watching Party: 11:30 p.m.-3:00 a.m., Sims Library. Bring your own picnic to enjoy while watching the eclipse.

## August 26

Ellis County SPCA Paws for the Cause Tailgate Party: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center, 1 Community Dr., Midlothian. The event will include dinner and a silent and live auction. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Tickets are \$40. Reserved tables are \$500 and up. Tickets may be purchased online at [ecspca.ejoinme.org/2017ECSPCA](http://ecspca.ejoinme.org/2017ECSPCA). For more information, email [director@elliscountyspca.org](mailto:director@elliscountyspca.org).

## Ongoing:

### First Mondays

Friends of Sims Library meeting: 10:00-11:00

a.m., library meeting room, 515 W. Main St. Newcomers are always welcome.

### Third Mondays

Ellis County Veterans Networking Group: 6:00 p.m., Ryan's Steakhouse, Waxahachie. Come join the group for dinner and listen to what the guest speaker for the evening has to share. For more information, call Mike Lamb at (214) 763-0378.

### Thursdays

Buckout Arena Ministry: 7:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County, 2374 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass. For more information, call (972) 935-9801.

### Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local singers and musicians. For more information, contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

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

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## In the Kitchen With Tonya Stricker

— By Virginia Riddle

Diabetes and heart disease are two health concerns that most families face at one time or another during these modern times. Tonya Stricker, a cook for most of her life, has been a master wellness volunteer for Ellis County's Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Agency for the past five years, so she can help give recipe suggestions that will assist individuals in managing these diseases well. "We have been doing live demonstrations on healthy eating at the Waxahachie Senior Center for the past three years," Tonya said.

"I want to show how easy it is to eat wonderful food, and I've included some sweets," Tonya explained. "People don't have to be afraid that they will never eat good food again once they are diagnosed with diabetes and/or heart disease." **NOW**

### Smoky Mustard Salmon

Serves 4.

**Vegetable oil or cooking spray**  
**3 Tbsp. whole-grain mustard**  
**1 Tbsp. maple syrup**  
**1/4 tsp. smoked paprika**  
**1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper**  
**1/8 tsp. salt**  
**4 4-oz. skinless salmon fillets**

1. Preheat the oven to 450 F; line a baking sheet with foil. Coat with vegetable oil or cooking spray.
2. In a small bowl, combine the mustard, maple syrup, paprika, pepper and salt.
3. Place the salmon fillets on the prepared baking sheet. Spread the mustard mixture evenly on the salmon; roast for 8-12 minutes, or until just cooked through to center.

### Tortilla Chicken Cilantro Soup

Serves 8.

**2 16-oz. jars salsa**  
**2 32-oz. cans reduced sodium chicken broth**  
**1 1/2 lbs. rotisserie chicken, deboned**  
**1 15-oz. can low-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained**  
**1 cup celery, chopped**  
**2 medium carrots, peeled and thinly sliced**  
**1 bag baked corn tortilla chips**  
**1/2 cup Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese, shredded**  
**1 avocado, peeled and cut into 16 thin slices**  
**1/2 cup cilantro leaves**

1. Place the first six ingredients in a Crock-Pot; cook on high for 2 hours.

2. Pour hot soup into bowls. Top each with a handful of tortilla chips, 1 Tbsp. shredded cheese, 2 slices of avocado and 5 cilantro leaves; serve.

### Southwestern Cheese and Corn Chowder

**2 Tbsp. butter**  
**1 small onion, chopped**  
**3 cups fat-free chicken broth**  
**2 cups fresh corn**  
**2 potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes**  
**1 small red pepper, diced**  
**1 rib celery, sliced**  
**2 cups low-fat milk**  
**1 cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded**  
**1/2 tsp. ground cumin**  
**1/2 tsp. salt**  
**1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper**

1. In a large saucepan, melt the butter. Add onion; cook five minutes, or until tender.
2. Stir in chicken broth and all vegetables. Bring the mixture to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 5 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
3. Remove 2 cups of the soup; puree in a blender or processor, and return to the saucepan.
4. Stir in the milk, cheese and seasonings; simmer 10 minutes before serving.

### Cranberry Sauce Parfait

*Note: Great use for leftover cranberry sauce — makes one parfait.*

**2/3 cup plain or vanilla nonfat Greek yogurt**  
**1-2 Tbsp. honey, to taste**  
**1-2 Tbsp. cranberry sauce, to taste**  
**Granola or cereal, to taste**

1. In a parfait glass or bowl, layer half of the yogurt, a drizzle of honey, a few spoonfuls of cranberry sauce and a sprinkle of granola or cereal.
2. Repeat layers; serve.

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

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