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OCTOBER 2018

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Jammie Wells builds
real-life Hot Wheels



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Pages Inside

pp. 38 & 40

Honoring History

At Home With
Sam and Kellye Jasper

Crossword/Sudoku

pp. 42 & 44

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ON THE COVER

Jammie Wells has built a bit of notoriety through experience and grit.

Photo by
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Angel

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Hello, Midlothian!

Ahh, October! Is there any month better? The trees burst forth with colors of fall, and every weekend there's a festival to be found. Squirrels abound, secreting away acorns in yards. Little ones decide between princesses and pirates, superheroes or something more creative that will garner the most treats at month's end.

Here in Midlothian, the Chamber's 41st Annual Fall Festival and 5K Cupcake Run takes place Oct. 20 from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the MISD Multi-Purpose Stadium. Families are invited to the free event for shopping, food and fun with vendors and crafters. Runners who have registered for the 8:00 a.m. race receive a free YUM'S cupcake from Brookshire's, too!

The city also hosts a downtown trick-or-treat extravaganza from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at Heritage Park Oct. 31, with a "Spooky Hall" at 104 W. Ave. E. Local churches do their best — offering Halloween "trunk or treats" — to fill the door-to-door tradition of the past. Watch marquees for safe alternatives planned around town.

While October brings cooler temperatures, it also heats up as National Fire Prevention Awareness Month. The National Fire Protection Association offers tips to keep your family safe at www.nfpa.org. Whether festival hopping, carving pumpkins or making your home safer, may October inspire you to relax, even as end-of-year activities kick into gear.

Let's say "Ahh-ctober" together!

P.S. We hope you enjoy our new Fun Pages for kids and adults!

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Lights, Camera,
ENGIN



NE

— By Zachary R. Urquhart



A car is only as good as its engine. While Jammie Wells' machine shop seems humble from the outside, like the cars he works on, what happens under the hood is what really matters. Jammie has more than a machine shop, though. He is doing work that is helping put Midlothian on the map, one engine at a time.

Jammie moved to Midlothian as a kid, so he remembers when Frank Seale Middle School was Midlothian Middle School. It was in middle school that Jammie met his now wife, Crystal. Jammie's dad owned the golf course for decades, so he is used to family-owned business, and he cut his teeth around cars. "My dad owned salvage yards in Grand Prairie for a long time, so I messed around in them. He got rid of those about the time we moved here, and he started running the golf course," Jammie said.

After finishing school, Jammie went straight to work, and there was never really a question as to what he was going to do. "I got a job at an engine shop for a little while, then went to work at another auto shop," he recalled. "Then I found a good spot at an engine repair shop in Grand Prairie for 11 years."

It was while he was working in Grand Prairie that Jammie reconnected with Crystal. "She had moved to Farmers Branch, and we hadn't seen each other for years," he recalled. "But I was in my 20s, and I called her up. Within a few years, we were married and had our first

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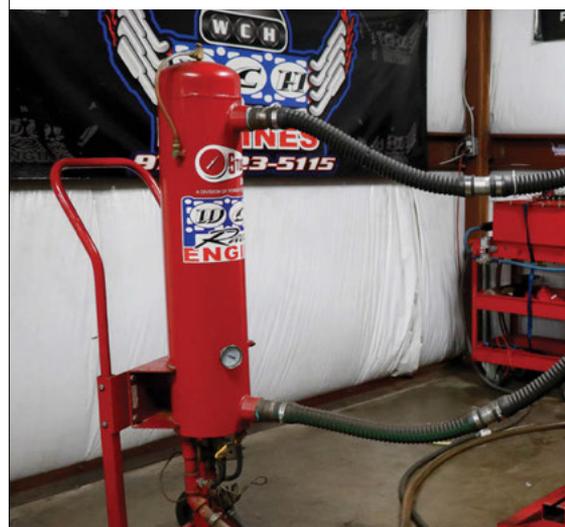
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child." Together they have three daughters, Destiny, Angelina and Briella, and two sons, Dylan and Tyler, who have worked in the shop off and on for years.

After spending 15 years working in various shops, Jammie decided he was ready to be his own boss. "My dad gave me a \$500 loan, and he let me use a dirt-floor barn that was a golf cart garage at the course," he laughed. "I bought my first machine in 2003, on Craigslist, and a year later, I turned my shop into a corporation."

From getting that little bit of seed money, it only took Jammie about 18 months to get enough business to build the first version of his new building. He began with



a shop that he figured would be doing general engine manufacturing, but the business quickly started doing a lot of performance builds and classic restorations.

It was one of Jammie's clients on the custom side that helped him gain fame in the business. "We watch a lot of *Fast N' Loud* from the Gas Monkey shop in Dallas," Jammie described. "I had tried to go meet them, but they got bombarded by people, so it went nowhere. It turns out one of my customers knows Aaron Kaufman, and he helped me get my foot in that door."

After that initial meeting, Jammie has been featured on the show a few dozen times, and has even been on two other shows, *Dallas Car Sharks* and *Misfit Garage*.

Generally, Jammie's appearances consist of a few clips, capped off by him bringing a finished engine to Gas Monkey for them to install on their latest project. "They have only shot footage here one time, and of course, they'll film for hours just to show a 40-second clip," he detailed. "But, when *Dallas Car Sharks* had us on, they did the whole episode here, and that was really cool."

Though it was difficult at first, Jammie is comfortable now in front of the cameras. "At the Gas Monkey shop there are just lights everywhere, so it took me a while to get used to that," he explained.



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Jammie has a book's worth of great stories from his many times appearing on the shows, beginning with one of the coolest projects he helped complete. "Mattel hired Gas Monkey to build two new Hot Wheels cars, the Midas Monkey and the Hi-Po Hauler," he listed. "We built the motors, and I actually got to start the engine in the finished product."

Working on amazing projects is not the best part of being featured on a show like *Fast N' Loud*, as Jammie has had a chance to work with and meet some great people. "I've gotten to be pretty good friends with the guys in the shops, and even met some other celebrities like Mark Cuban and Danny Trejo," he said. "But it's also been great getting to know the show's crew. Some of them helped us film a pilot in case we ever want to try to have our own show."

Being featured on one of the premiere custom car shows on TV has been good for more than just increasing business. "In the last five years, we've expanded the shop three times to keep up with the uptick," he admitted. "But that's not it. Crystal and I were at Disney, and a guy from Denmark stopped me because he recognized me from the show. Crystal and the girls give me a hard time about it, but they think it's pretty cool, too." **NOW**



Photo by David Rankin



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HISTORY

— By *Angel Morris*

At Home With Sam and Kellye Jasper



Sam and Kellye Jasper's habit was to follow listings online and drive to Midlothian from Arlington on weekends to see properties. But, when Sam saw a unique ranch-style home become available mid-week, he decided to drive over on his lunch break. "I called Kellye and said she had to see it. There was just something about it," Sam said.

For Kellye, it took convincing. "The land was really overgrown. It needed work," she recalled. "We went inside, and there was a huge lizard in the tub. I said, 'I'm out!'"

Nevertheless, the Jaspers saw the home's potential. "It had a lot we never knew we

were looking for. It's not on a busy street, and there's land but it's part of a neighborhood," Sam said. "We thought we wanted 2 acres, and this house has 6 acres. Turns out, I love riding a mower around."

Purchasing the home in 2012, the couple discovered they owned the farmhouse that was part of the original 450 acres that is now the Crystal Forest addition. Tax rolls put the home's age at around 78 years, but Sam noted that may only be because 1940 was the first year those records were collected.

The Jaspers calculate that the home had some remodeling in the 1970s, and they have done considerable work on the 3,400-square-foot property, as well. "It's almost like two houses split down the middle by a hallway that is 2,000 square feet itself," Sam joked. "One side has a semi-open concept kitchen, living and dining area. The other side has the bedrooms, bathrooms and another living area."

The couple's interest in rare finds is evident, with an old fortune telling scale in the corner of the gameroom, where a bar Sam built from old doors also resides. This room is highlighted by Spanish tile and a huge masonry fireplace, with outdoor lights strung around the ceiling giving the space a warm glow. A drum set in the corner encourages their 10-year-old son, Sammy, to try his hand at musicianship. "I like to keep music around our son," Sam admitted.

The steering column of a ship's helm lives in the entry/office space. A metal toy plane sits atop a shelf — an American Airlines memorabilia piece Sam found in the rafters while clearing out one of two old sheds on the property. Sam's love of guitars is evident, with two mounted here on the wall, along with other "random finds" cleverly displayed.

"I have a collection of collections — hats, custom artwork, bobblehead dolls, antique toys. Anything with character," Sam explained. "I get it

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area across the hall. Attached to the primary bathroom, the space houses her vanity and large mirror, flanked by seating benches on either side. Jewelry is creatively displayed on walls, and storage abounds in closets and shelving.

“It took some getting used to not having a bathroom attached to the bedroom, but I love this space,”



from my Uncle Bill, who passed in 2002. It’s in the Jasper genes.”

Bill’s collection of nearly 100 Pez dispensers passed to Sammy, and is housed in a curio cabinet in his room. Sammy’s space also holds fishing gear, his LEGO collection and bug displays. “He’s an incredible fisherman and loves anything with a pulse. Bugs, dogs, frogs, reptiles. It’s

in his blood,” Sam remarked.

While Kellye’s design made Sammy’s room all boy, she used grays and teals for a soothing master bedroom. These colors flow to a guest bedroom with teal walls and brown and blue accents. Kellye’s favorite retreat, however, is her dressing

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Kellye admitted. A hairstylist by day, Kellye appreciates the salon-type dressing area.

While Sam works in the telecom industry, their home brings out his inner carpenter. He's built a harvest table for the dining room, firmed up and reconstructed the property's sheds and completely built an outdoor space intended to be a carport for his tractor and mower. "Neighbors would wander over to see what I was building and what should've been a one-year project lasted two-and-a-half," Sam joked. "It took on a life of its own because they said it had to be bigger. We had a lot of fun."

Now the neighborhood man cave, the space showcases Sam's custom-built table with a top from a 100-year-old school desk, as well as a drafting table from his youth. Music plays in the space where walls display items purchased during vacations — fishing in Alaska, canoeing in Arkansas, touring Dolphin Island and more. "We bring back stuff from trips with the friends we've made in this neighborhood," Sam said.

The building faces land where Sammy's baseball team practices, and parents watch from lawnchairs. "The joke is that now we need to build some bleachers and put up stadium lights," Sam said.

Before tackling that project, however, the Jaspers plan to rebuild the 1,500-square-foot deck outside the home. "We really love that



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space. Our tiki hut is the first thing we moved to the house,” Kellye reflected. “We also need a pool eventually,” she added with a grin.

While the first two years were spent clearing brush, repairing, cleaning and painting, today the home highlights the family’s creative, eclectic design style. “It had been out of use for some time. There was a lot of work to be done,” Sam said. “And with an older home, there will always be general maintenance to keep us busy.”



Ultimately, a kitchen makeover is in store, but for now the family is happy to enjoy the historic home they have made uniquely their own. “I’m in touch with the man who grew up here, and I look forward to learning more about its history,” Sam said.

Like the red dinner bell that Kellye rings from the porch at mealtime, it seems this property called the Jaspers home. “It’s ironic we had to move away from neighbors right beside us who we didn’t know, to a place where there is space between us but we’ve made the best friends we’ve ever had,” Sam said. “Buying this land really was the best decision we ever made.” **NOW**

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Expanding With Love

— By Joy Horn

Smiling faces and sweet treats greet guests upon entering the charming facility. A guest book lies at the front of the room next to an old quilt made in honor of those who have contributed to making Midlothian Senior Center what it is today. The warm, hospitable atmosphere lends itself to camaraderie, community and companionship, as the host caters to each need of those who arrive.

It is evident Karen Cox cares deeply about those she serves. “We strive to make everyone feel comfortable and happy,” she said. “We want this to be a place where they want to come, make social connections, eat a healthy lunch and keep their brains and bodies actively involved in the community.”

Karen and Midlothian Senior Center were featured in the February 2010 edition of *MidlothianNOW Magazine*. Since then, many updates and remodels have been made to help accommodate members. “We added a whole wing,” Karen said. “The community has grown, and we wanted to continue to serve the seniors in a safe and enjoyable space.”

Members needed room to enjoy lunches, play games and get involved in other activities the facility offers. Things had gotten too cramped, so Karen initiated fundraising. “We expanded our dining room to have a large gathering area, so it’s more of a family atmosphere,” she explained. “It had gotten really difficult to serve lunch. Now we have a drink station, and there is more room to spread out. It is less noisy, more calming and everyone has more space. We went from an average of 40-50 people a day to 50-80 people a day.”

In addition to expanding the dining room, they added a flex space where members do yoga, exercise classes and even line dance. Speaking of dancing, members at the

center love when the band comes to play. Everyone has enjoyed more space to move since the dance floor was expanded, and now entertainers have more room to set up.

Coloring/painting and arts and crafts have been added to the list of activities, as well. There is also a computer center where members can do research or surf the web. "Our biggest day is when we play bingo. Members receive prizes, and blackout is a \$10 gift card. I also have a few people asking about bridge, so I am planning on offering that, as well. I try to roll with what everyone wants to do," Karen shared. "We like to stay flexible, so we can stay open to trying new things. We have an art gallery of local artists on display for members to enjoy and host student art contests."

Most scheduled activities at the center run from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. to accommodate the bus transportation schedule. It's evident the new accommodations are making members feel more at home, and the hard work that went in to making it possible was well worth it. "We paid for the remodel through the community. It took us five years of fundraising to raise the money. Now we have an 11-by-11-foot donor tree to thank everyone who contributed," Karen said.

The large, metal tree hangs on the wall and is the focal point of the new wing of the building. It displays contributors' names on leaves, branches, acorns, birds and stones. "I wanted to bring art into the building. It was my concept, and the architect made it happen for us," Karen explained.

Many seniors bought a leaf and like seeing their names on display. Donors from the community have also enjoyed coming in to take pictures by this symbol of love, dedication and commitment to all the precious people who attend the center. Karen said, "We thank all our volunteers and seniors for making this a great place." **NOW**



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Rescued Purpose

— By Alexandra Allred

For days Laurie Miller Reynolds, alongside fellow dog-rescuers, rotated around the clock to capture a dog that had been abandoned. When the crew was finally able to get to the dog, which was hidden beneath an abandoned mobile home, they found her litter of puppies, as well as one lone survivor — a 6-month-old from a previous litter. Otherwise, “she was surrounded by puppy skeletons,” from all the previous litters that, save one, had starved to death. “It was a very emotional rescue,” Laurie said. “She was completely feral. She had never been touched in a kind way by a human.”

For months, Laurie would sit with the newly named Amelia and read to her. “Twice a day, I’d sit in a chair and read *A Dog’s Purpose* out loud, so she could know my voice, hear me, trust me. She wouldn’t eat in front of me, even though she was starving.” Laurie just read and read and read.

Not quite 10 years ago, Laurie was running a plumbing company. Hers was a world of accounting and purchasing, and while she loved her dogs, she had little control over them. “My dog, Ranger, was about 1 1/2 years old. He was crazy and out of control.”

Laurie’s diagnosis with breast cancer in 2007, however, changed everything. She had triple-negative breast cancer, a most aggressive form and, thus, had to have three combined surgeries, followed by aggressive treatment. “I would be in bed for

three to four days, unable to move,” she recalled. During that time Ranger defiantly refused to leave her side.

“I was so self-conscious. Chemo makes you feel so gross. It comes out your pores. You lose your hair, but Ranger never cared. Of course, my family and friends were there for me, but I could see the pity in their eyes. Ranger never pitied me. He just loved me. He licked my bald head,” Laurie laughed.

After six rounds of chemo, she opened All About Dogs, a full-service grooming and training facility. It was when a client asked her to re-home a dog they could no longer keep that Laurie found her true calling. “I became more passionate about rehabbing because every dog deserves to have a happy, healthy life.”

Laurie soon discovered that for those dogs “damaged” by neglect or abuse, re-homing was nearly impossible. “Finding forever homes for these dogs became my reward, not money.”

She teamed up with fellow dog rescuers, Mysti Boehler and Jennifer Harisis, to create the nonprofit organization, Streets to Sheets, but also became involved in the American Cancer Society’s Bark for Life, a fundraising event honoring canine caregivers. When Laurie read the words, “for the opportunity to be empowered through their canine companion partnerships,” she was hooked.

“My dog made my heart grow. He gave me purpose. He changed the course of my life. I can’t imagine not doing what I do.”

The American Cancer Society felt the same way and asked Laurie to be lead chairperson after several years of her involvement. It was a move that rocketed the fairly successful event in Midlothian to become the largest Bark for Life event in the state of Texas. But Laurie is only warming up.

She created Bark After Dark, teaming up with another local



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nonprofit, Paws for Reflection Ranch, to hold a silent auction. She and Ranger have reached near celebrity status at every Spring Fling and Fall Festival, and she once delighted trick-or-treaters when she and Ranger appeared as Cruella de Vil and a dalmatian.

Together, she and Ranger helped a local high school senior on a class project to overcome his fear of dogs. By the time Laurie and Ranger were done working with him, the student not only got a 98 on his project, he decided to get a dog.

While most 501(c)(3)s choose not to pair up with other nonprofits, Laurie has that dog-pack mentality: "We're stronger together." Described as one who never met a stranger, Laurie wants to help everyone. In fact, she hosted a 5K to help a family pay for a diabetic alert dog for their child, raised funds for a restorative eye surgery, gives back to area seniors, fights cancer and fights abuse, using canines as her platform of power. "I just want to honor dogs who could do for their person what mine did for me," she said.

As a personal family crisis descended upon her it was, once again, her dogs who came to her rescue. "I realized that I would never have been able to support myself or financially survive," had it not been for her dog business and, once again, she felt the need to pay it forward. She restored an unused building to house neglected and abused dogs for rehabilitation. With Ranger as her "business partner," Laurie opened Cripple Creek Kennels.



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The timing was excellent as Streets to Sheets received notice that a Labrador deemed “vicious” and “un-savable,” was to be euthanized. A family had reportedly moved, leaving their dog behind to become so feral that it took local animal control almost three years to capture him. Under Laurie’s care and endless patience, Scout began to trust, then love, then give back.

“There is a reason for everything,” Laurie said. When her oldest daughter was diagnosed with the same breast cancer Laurie had survived, she knew just what to do. As Ranger, 13, moves into retirement and a diagnosis of degenerative myelopathy (narrowing of the spine), Scout has officially taken over the role of canine companion for their public appearances. “My cancer made me strong for my daughters, and I know Scout was sent to me for Ranger.”

As for Laurie’s first rescued dog, Amelia, rehabilitation is far from over. Laurie continues her purpose of “honoring back what was given to her,” with each new milestone she and Amelia reach. And Amelia, Laurie believes, is only making her stronger for the next dog (and human) in need. **NOW**

Editor’s Note: For more information about Streets to Sheets, contact www.facebook.com/streetstosheets/. For more information about Bark for Life, contact www.relayforlife.org/barkelliscountytx.

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CookingNOW

In the Kitchen With

EVA JACOBSEN

— By Lindsay L. Allen



Eva Jacobsen is not interested in short cuts in the kitchen. If a recipe calls for a premade crust, she will opt to make it from scratch (unless her mom says they are in a time crunch). “I like the challenge of starting something from scratch and seeing it to completion. I also like to be solo in the kitchen to surprise my family with the final result,” she said. “My parents always say that I don’t want the ‘simple or easy’ version. I have to make it more complicated.”

At 11 years old, she could spend hours in the kitchen. One time, she spent three hours on her mom’s birthday dinner, and another time, she spent all day making Christmas treats to share with neighbors and friends. **NOW**

Slow Cooker Beef and Broccoli

1 cup beef broth
1/2 cup soy sauce
1 Tbsp. sesame oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup brown sugar
2 lb. sirloin steak or boneless beef chuck roast, thinly sliced
4 Tbsp. corn starch
4 Tbsp. water
1 head broccoli, cut into florets
Cooked white rice

1. In a Crock-Pot, whisk together beef broth, soy sauce, sesame oil, minced garlic and brown sugar.

2. Place slices of beef in the liquid; toss to coat. Cover with lid; cook on low heat for 4 hours.
3. After 4 hours, whisk corn starch and water in a small bowl. Pour into Crock-Pot. Add the broccoli; stir to combine.
4. Cover with lid; cook 30 minutes to cook broccoli and thicken sauce.
5. Serve with warm rice.

Banana Bread Fondue Boat

Bread:
4 ripe bananas
4 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 egg
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon

Chocolate Fondue:

12 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
6 Tbsp. heavy cream
6 Tbsp. milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Bananas and strawberries, sliced

1. For bread: Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, mash ripe bananas with a fork.
2. Add oil, egg, sugar and vanilla; stir until combined.
3. Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon; stir until combined.
4. Pour the batter into a greased loaf pan. Bake for 40-55 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
5. For chocolate fondue: In a small saucepan, combine chocolate, cream and milk; melt over low heat. Add vanilla; stir to combine. Remove from heat and cover with a lid.
6. Let bread cool for 30 minutes; place on a serving dish.

- Using a knife, cut a rectangle out of the top center of the loaf, leaving a two- or three-inch perimeter of banana bread. Make sure not to slice through the bread. Cut the rectangle into 2-inch slices. Gently pull out each slice 1 at a time. Press the crumbs into the base of the cut-out bread.
- Re-heat chocolate if needed; pour it into the banana bread boat.
- Slice bananas and strawberries, and place inside of the banana bread and around the fondue boat.

Meatball-stuffed Garlic Bread

Meatball Stuffing:

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1/2 Tbsp. salt
- 1/2 Tbsp. pepper
- 1 baguette
- 10 slices mozzarella cheese
- Marinara sauce, for dipping

Garlic Butter:

- 3 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

- For stuffing:* Preheat oven to 350 F. In a medium bowl, mix first six ingredients.
- Pinch off a ball of the mixture; roll between your hands to make 1-inch size meatball. Repeat until all meat is used.
- Cook meatballs over medium heat, turning to brown each side. Remove from heat; drain on a paper towel.
- Slice the baguette into thirds or fourths. (Each baguette piece should be the length of 2 meatballs.)
- Hollow out the inside of each baguette piece with a knife. Lay two slices of mozzarella on top of each other with a 1-inch overlap. Place 2 meatballs on the bottom, then fold the mozzarella tightly around the meatballs.
- Push the rolled meatballs and cheese into a baguette piece.
- Slice the stuffed baguette pieces into 1-inch slices; place them tightly side-by-side on a baking sheet lined with foil.
- For garlic butter:* In a small bowl, mix together all ingredients.
- Brush the garlic butter evenly over the baguette slices, making sure some drips in between the slices.
- Wrap foil over the reassembled baguette; bake for 15-20 minutes, until cheese is melted and bread is turning brown. Remove foil; serve with marinara.

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— By Angel Morris

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within a year, he hired help to learn all there was to know about tires, mounting and balancing.”

Fast forward 26 years, when six employees are selling 75 to 100 tires a day, with about 300 in-stock sizes. Tim brought a bachelor’s degree in business to the shop nine years ago and will take over the business upon Bill’s retirement. “It’s not just a father-son business. We have another father-and-two-son team and brothers with decades of combined experience in the industry,” Tim explained of manager Patrick and his sons, AB and Christian; Aurelio; and his brother, Razz. “My father is also still here every day, two hours before anyone else arrives.”

It is important to Tim to continue Sardis’ legacy. “My dad made sure I started from the bottom up and preached the importance of being quick and honest,” Tim explained. “He also stressed how we would not be

successful without our guys. It's not about having a lot of help but having the right help."

To help the business move forward, Tim created a new website design for the company while still in college. He then converted the business from handwritten files to a computerized system once he began working there. "My dad was skeptical at first, but he knew it was where the world was headed. Now we can keep up with every customer, and our year-end inventory is more precise."

Among Sardis' tire services are installation, free rotation, balancing, pressure monitoring and flat repair. "Buying new tires or wheels can be overwhelming, so we help customers choose what best fits their needs and budget," Tim said, noting the shop's use of top-quality brands including Goodyear, Cooper, Mastercraft, Nitto and others.

Being conscientious about customers' needs is why Sardis is open seven days a week, including holidays, providing free rotation with the purchase of four tires, plus mount and balance, valve stems and disposal of old tires. "If people phone around, they might find a cheaper price, but when they go to pay, they'll find additional fees for all the things we include in our one low price," Tim explained. "We have the lowest cost even adding in National Road Hazard for just 10 percent of the total price of the tire if a customer chooses."

Customers can receive a quote for services at the business' website, where they can also send Tim a message, or link to the company's various social media platforms. "We pride ourselves on being people's No. 1 choice for tires and on having them in and out of our shop in about 20 minutes," Tim noted. "You will see that our online reviews are overwhelmingly positive, and we plan to do all we can to keep it that way." **NOW**

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MGM and More

— By Michele Goldberg

What do you get when you begin with our fantastically beautiful corner of classic New England, blend in dozens of unique attractions, swirl in some cool college vibe and top it all off with MGM Springfield, one of the most impressive new hotel casino experiences in the United States? Why, Western Mass, of course!

Long celebrated as a “triple threat” destination, the region bursts with top attractions and provides ultra-easy access and superb dollar value. High-profile places like the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Yankee Candle Village, Six Flags New England and the Springfield Museums bring literally millions of visitors here annually. Quintessential college towns and major events like the Big E and Bright Nights — plus craft fairs, sporting events and the arts — draw millions more.

And it’s getting even better and more diverse! The opening of MGM Springfield, a state-of-the-art entertainment complex in the heart of the region’s biggest city, provides excitement ranging from Vegas-caliber shows to top-shelf dining to incredible shopping and, of course, lavish casino gaming options.

Positioned at the junction of I-90 and I-91, Western Mass is regarded as the “Crossroads of New England.” Boston is a 90-minute drive, and New York City can be reached in less than three hours. The public is also served by train, as well as major bus lines. Bradley International Airport is only about 20 minutes from Springfield, making access by air a breeze.

MGM Springfield promises tons of excitement, but there’ll also be no shortage of activities to keep young ones busy.

Visitors to MGM Springfield will discover a movie theater, a classic New England bowling alley, restaurants and more than a dozen specialty retail outlets. An ice-skating rink operates in the winter, and a farmers' market offers local produce in the summer. You don't have to be a grown-up to get a huge kick out of this place!

Near MGM Springfield, the esteemed Springfield Museums offer access to four world-class museums, plus the new Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum and the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden, all under a single admission. Right there, you've got a day's worth of exploring on your hands.

Minutes away, the Springfield Armory National Historic Site recalls its days as a powerhouse of industrial manufacture of military firearms. This was America's first armory, established by George Washington.

We also invented basketball here in Springfield, and the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame proudly traces its history. The Hall is completing a renovation featuring upgrades in their exhibits. A few miles north in Holyoke, there's the Volleyball Hall of Fame, because we invented that game, too!

For more fun, there's Six Flags New England — home to an array of fabulous rides and attractions. During the month of October, the park transforms for its annual Halloween festival, Fright Fest, and winter brings Holiday in the Park.

One of the region's most-recognized attractions is Yankee Candle Village. This sprawling candle-focused experience boasts 200,000 candles on display in more than 200 fragrances, plus a wide variety of other activities. The opportunity to craft a wax likeness of your hand, create personalized candles and dip-your-own critters makes Yankee Candle a sure-fire day of fun for all ages. **NOW**

To continue to explore Western Mass, visit www.ExploreWesternMass.com. Photos courtesy of Michele Goldberg.



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Aaron and Brielle Sasse play a game of jumbo tic-tac-toe at Kimmel Park.

Zoomed In: Pam Blair

By Angel Morris

As president of Midlothian Homeschool Co-op, Pam Blair joined a small group of dedicated individuals to breathe new life into the 15-year-old organization this year. It had looked as though MHSC would disband after losing more than half its board and several longtime families whose children were moving to higher levels of education or seeking more academic support.

“We weren’t sure that MHSC had a future, but I felt God wasn’t finished with this co-op. Confirmation came with a record 21 families attending our meet-and-greet functions,” Pam noted. “We have a big new family and are very excited about the future. My desire is to stay true to the values of MHSC, but also offer new opportunities to meet the needs of our growing and changing community, providing educational opportunities, Christ-centered fellowship and support for local homeschool families.”



Emily enjoys an after-school ice cream with her grandfather, Dale Manor.



Backyard Orphans founders Eric and Trisha Porter are pleased to settle into the Midlothian business community.



Local baker Krystal Hughes attends a dessert class at Don Alfonso's while on a trip to Italy.



In Home Genius welcomes visitors to an open house tour.



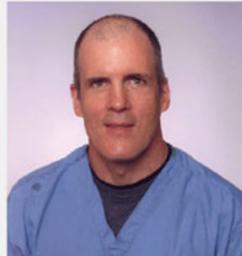
Dallas Baptist University students volunteer sorting shirts for Bridges Training Foundation's annual barbecue fundraiser.



These gentlemen are ready for Midlothian Cotillion, which begins registration on Facebook this month for 2019.



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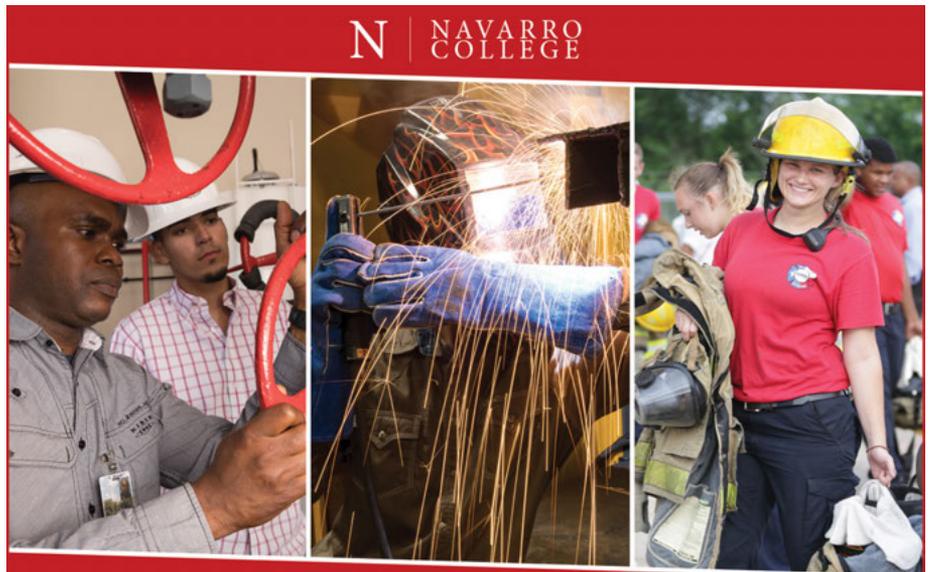
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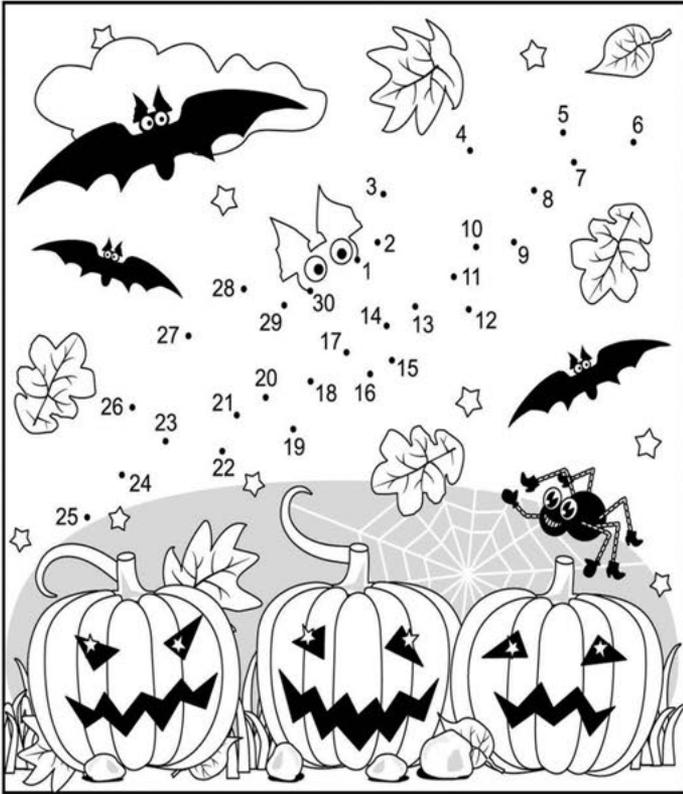
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Kids' Fun Pages

Draw a line from dot number 1 to dot number 2, then from dot number 2 to dot number 3, 3 to 4, and so on. Continue to join the dots until you have connected all the numbered dots. Then color the picture!



5. MONSTER



1. GHOST



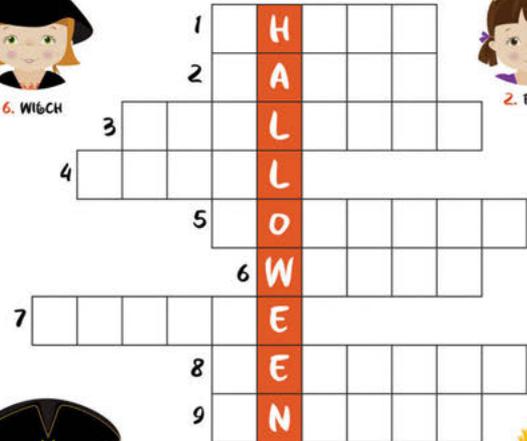
4. DEVIL



6. WITCH



2. FAIRY



7. PIRATE



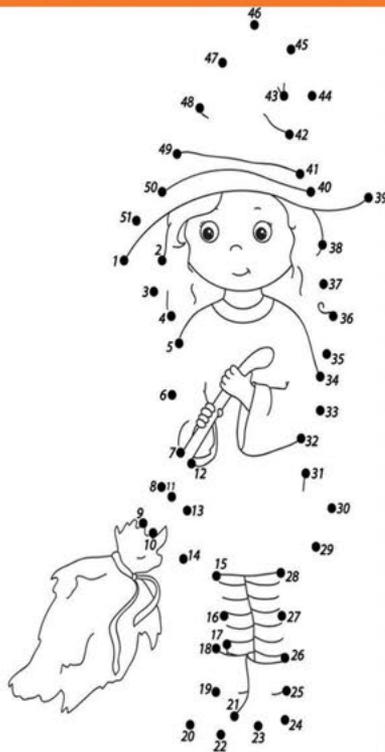
8. MERMAID



3. SKELETON



9. KNIGHT



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WORD SEARCH



- moon
- monster
- scream
- zombie
- october
- halloween



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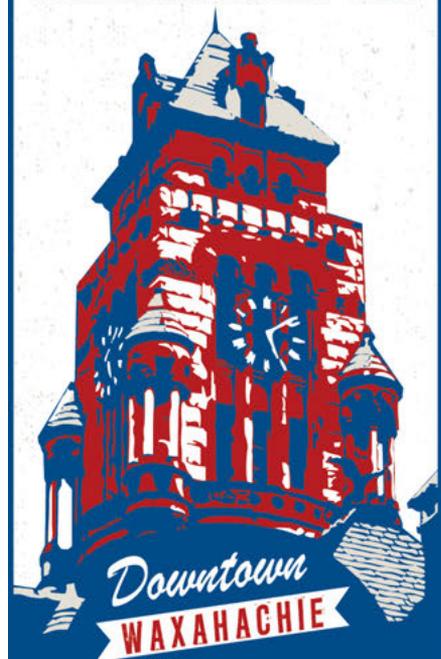
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GHOST
HORROR
MONSTER
MOON
NIGHT
PUMPKIN
SCARY
SPIDER
TOMB
TWILIGHT
WITCH

A	H	T	H	G	I	L	I	W	T
A	U	L	L	R	E	D	I	P	S
N	O	T	S	C	A	R	Y	E	W
I	T	M	U	D	A	R	K	V	R
K	S	O	B	M	H	E	N	I	E
P	O	O	A	C	N	L	I	L	T
M	H	N	T	E	E	T	G	R	S
U	G	I	C	A	T	S	H	A	N
P	W	T	O	M	B	A	T	E	O
H	O	R	R	O	R	C	N	F	M

MYSTERIOUS WORD: _____

SOLUTION: HALLOWEEN

dot to dot game

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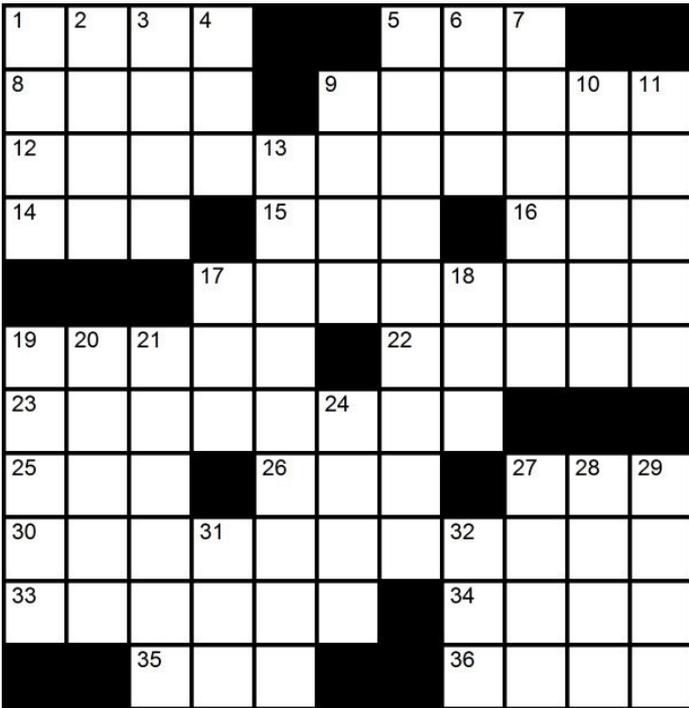
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/Amanda Williams (InstaPic Photo Booth)

Crossword Puzzle



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Across

- 1 Substitution word
- 5 Opposite of 'tain't
- 8 One of the WWII Allies
- 9 Circles and such
- 12 Stand-in
- 14 Lock opener
- 15 Ask for a loan
- 16 Fuss
- 17 Interrupted
- 19 Diplomat's department
- 22 Tend the roast
- 23 Quixote's opponent
- 25 Well, --- monkey's uncle!
- 26 Air-pressure measure
- 27 Meet
- 30 They get elected
- 33 Wears slowly
- 34 Hess or Breckinridge
- 35 Deity
- 36 Noble

Down

- 1 Wait in ambush
- 2 Now it makes sense!
- 3 Catch sight of
- 4 Online address
- 5 An event might be open to it
- 6 "--- the Walrus" (Beatles tune)
- 7 Talks
- 9 Mark left by a healed wound
- 10 Initiate the break-up
- 11 Rock
- 13 Went for
- 17 Usual amt.
- 18 Record-holder --- Ripken
- 19 Hit
- 20 Indonesian island
- 21 Not digital
- 24 Horn-wearing goddess
- 27 Jack's "Chinatown" co-star
- 28 Concerning, in legal memos
- 29 Former Russian ruler
- 31 Words to wed
- 32 Mischievous child

Solutions on page 48

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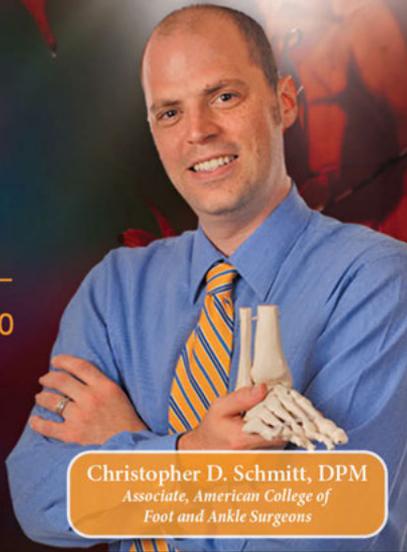
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Sudoku Puzzle

Easy

Medium

		9					5	1
				2			7	
		5				8		
1	3							2
				4	8		9	6
4			3					
	4	3						5
7							8	
			8			2		

						9	7		8
5					6				9
	4				1	7			
	9	2	3		6				4
	5								2
								9	
				9			8		
	2								
			6		5		4	7	1

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Solutions on page 48

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1

Adult Evening Book Club: 6:30 p.m., A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. First meeting of a new group for those who love reading and book discussion. For more information, contact Terry at (972) 775-3417.

5 — 6

Jaguar Choir Coffee House Concert: 7:00-9:00 p.m. (5th); 2:00-4:00 p.m. and 7:00-9:00 p.m. (6th), Heritage High School Café, 4000 FM1387. Coffee and pastries for purchase. Admission \$7 for adults, \$5 seniors, students and children.



6

First United Methodist Church of Midlothian Lord's Acre: 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., 800 S. 9th St. Auctions, sales, children's activities, lunch. Proceeds benefit missions and ministries. For more information, call (972) 775-3993.

6th Annual Round Up fundraiser: 6:30 p.m., Paws for Reflection Ranch, 5431 Montgomery Rd. Learn more at pawsforreflectionranch.org.

Waxahachie Symphony Presents Saint Louis Brass: 7:00-9:00 p.m., SAGU Hagee Communication Center, 499 E. University Ave., Waxahachie. Adults \$10, college students \$8, under 18 free. Learn more at information@waxahachiesymphony.org.

9

Cancer Survivor Support Group: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Cowboy Church of Ellis County, 2374 W. Hwy. 287 Bypass, Waxahachie. Those impacted by cancer in any way are invited. **October 9** theme is grief. **October 23** theme is trust.

13

Sardis United Methodist Church Lord's Acre: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 645 Sardis Rd. Times vary for country market, turkey dinner and auction. Call (972) 679-0381 for more details.

Bark After Dark: 4:00 p.m.-midnight, Paws for Reflection Ranch, 5431 Montgomery Rd. Learn more on Facebook at Bark for Life Ellis County.

19

MISD Education Foundation Golf Tournament: 1:00 p.m. shotgun start, Mansfield National Golf Club, 3750 National Pkwy., Mansfield. Learn more at www.misd.gs/mef.



20

Coming Home Fall Market: 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., SAGU Hagee Communication Center, 1200 Sycamore, Waxahachie. \$5 admission for adults, \$2 for children.

Fall Festival and 5K Run: 6:30-7:30 a.m. run check-in; 8:00 a.m. race begins; 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. vendor

fair, MISD Multi-purpose Stadium, 1800 S. 14th St. Free admission for food, shopping and entertainment. Details at midlothianchamber.org.

27

4th Annual Spooktacular Skeet and Sporting Clays Fun Shoot: 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Ellis County Sportsmans Club, 470 W. Sterrett Rd., Waxahachie. Register at www.iclays.com. Email Redoakhsst@gmail.com to learn more.



Texas Country Reporter Festival: 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., downtown Waxahachie. Join Bob and Kelli Phillips, hosts of TV show, *Texas Country Reporter*, for this free arts and music festival. Call (469) 309-4040 or visit www.waxahachiecvb.com.

28

Trunk or Treat: 4:30-6:30 p.m., First Baptist Red Oak, 320 E. Ovilla Rd., Red Oak. Free food, candy and games. For more information, visit www.FirstRedOak.com.

31

Trick or Treat at Meadows Library: 5:00 p.m. until closing, A.H. Meadows Public Library, 923 S. 9th St. Kids up to fifth grade, wear your costume and get a treat.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your current event details to angel.morris@nowmagazines.com.



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Crossword - Sudoku Solutions

1	L	2	I	3	E	4	U		5	T	6	I	7	S	
8	U	S	S	R				9	S	H	A	P	E	10	S
12	R	E	P	L	A	C	E	M	E	N	T				
14	K	E	Y		15	T	A	P		16	A	D	O		
					17	S	T	R	U	18	C	K	I	N	
19	S	T	20	A	T	E		22	B	A	S	T	E		
23	W	I	N	D	M	24	I	L	L						
25	I	M	A		26	P	S	I		27	F	I	T	28	
30	P	O	L	I	T	I	C	I	A	N	S				
33	E	R	O	D	E	S		34	M	Y	R	A			
					35	G	O	D		36	P	E	E	R	

Easy

2	7	9	6	8	3	4	5	1
3	8	4	5	2	1	6	7	9
6	1	5	4	7	9	8	2	3
1	3	8	7	9	6	5	4	2
5	2	7	1	4	8	3	9	6
4	9	6	3	5	2	7	1	8
8	4	3	2	1	7	9	6	5
7	6	2	9	3	5	1	8	4
9	5	1	8	6	4	2	3	7

Medium

2	6	1	5	3	9	7	4	8
5	7	8	4	6	2	1	3	9
3	4	9	8	1	7	2	6	5
7	9	2	3	8	6	5	1	4
1	5	3	7	9	4	6	8	2
6	8	4	1	2	5	3	9	7
4	1	5	9	7	3	8	2	6
8	2	7	6	4	1	9	5	3
9	3	6	2	5	8	4	7	1

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Making the LEAP

— By Derek Jones

For the past three years, Midlothian ISD has implemented Leadership, Excellence, Academics and Perseverance Academy, which is designed for students in need of a nontraditional graduation plan. Program Administrator Christy Shelton explained, “The city of Midlothian and the district are growing, and programs such as LEAP Academy better allow us to meet the individual needs of the students in our district. Everything we do is focused on providing opportunities for the students to be successful.”

Christy has been involved with LEAP since its inception, first as a teacher and now as an administrator. “Kids are facing so many unique circumstances,” she stated. “Some of our students have been home-bound. Some have dropped out of school and have returned to get their diploma. Some have medical issues, but all these students deserve an opportunity to finish high school.”

The program has been a success, with more than 100 students having received diplomas through LEAP since it began. “There is nothing more satisfying than watching students facing difficult situations, overcome the odds and walk across that stage and receive their diploma,” Christy said. “It is amazing what these kids are accomplishing.”

LEAP Academy operates on a needs basis, so there are always students rotating in and out of the program, but the instructors

in the classroom do not let this deter them from what is important. “Every teacher in the program really strives to develop a relationship with the student and learn their background, as well as what their goals are,” Christy explained.

She acknowledged an attitude of caring is critical, and it is what makes the program so successful. “It’s all heart in our building,” Christy said.

The success of the program, however, is not dependent only on teachers. Christy pointed out, “The administration supports us 100 percent. The parental support we receive is phenomenal, and the community of Midlothian is so supportive of our students.”

One aim of the program is to help students get their diploma, so they can then, in turn, contribute to the community. The partnership between city and school encourages success on both fronts.

With support coming from many different avenues, Christy is quick to point out who the real stars of the program are. “It’s the kids who make the difference,” she said. “Whether their post-graduate goal is to go to college, trade school, the military or enter the workforce, once they discover their passion, there is nothing that can stop them.”

Personalization is what makes LEAP unique in comparison to similar programs elsewhere, according to Christy. “Success is not a straight line, and the LEAP Academy allows us the flexibility to meet these amazing kids right where they are,” she said, noting the program’s 94-percent graduation rate. “This program has incorporated a plan for after high school to ensure students have created a comprehensive pathway to college, a certification or career.” **NOW**



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