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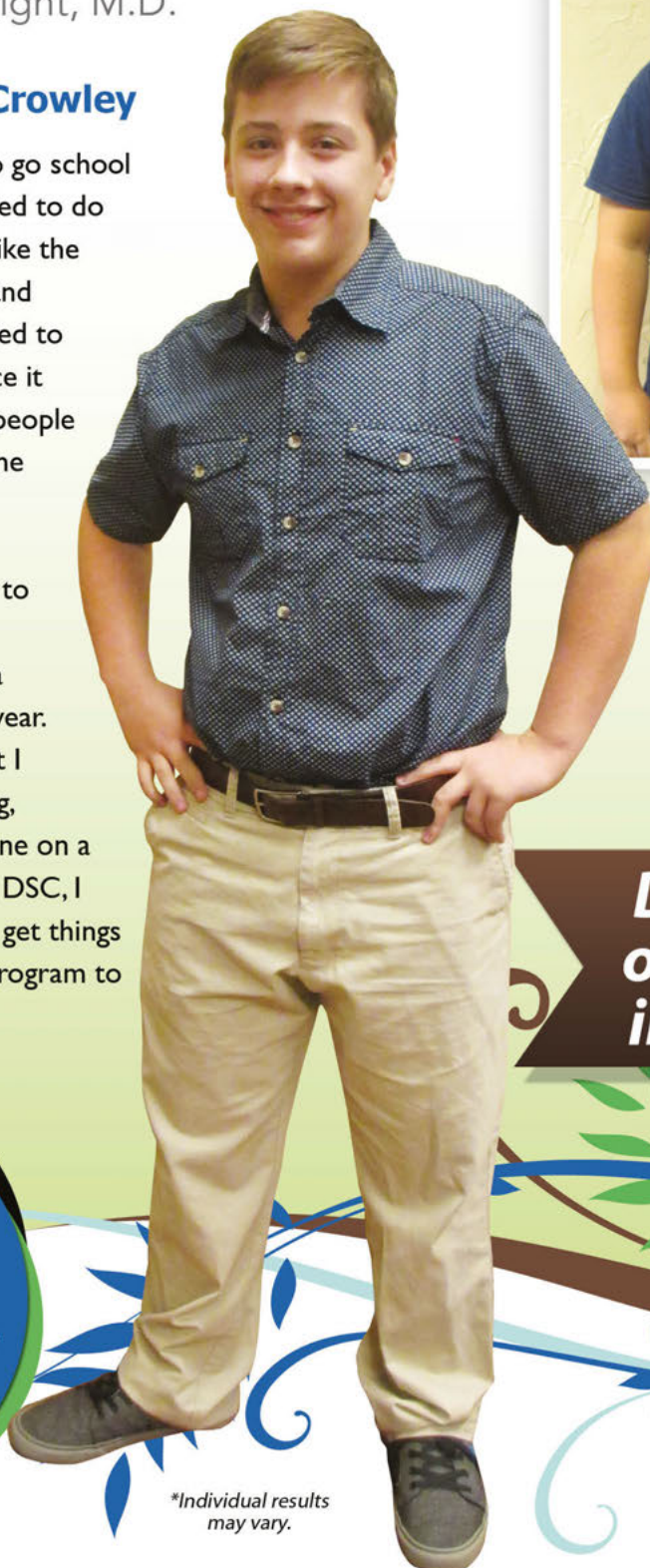
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When it comes to home, J.D. and Brandi Thompson love being simple.

Photo by Vanessa Polozola.

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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

Where does the little downy feather go when it falls from the breast of my preening bird? Once I sweep it out the door, and off the porch, I forget about it and move on to other, more pressing items. Like writing more words.

Our words seem to me a bit like the little downy feathers. Whether they waft from our mouths or drop like lead, they may or may not weigh in our neighbor's heart. They often seem to disappear. Or maybe we just have moved on to more pressing items, without noticing the impact of our words.

Were it possible to control our speech and its effect, would we sleep on downy word pillows filled with other people's ideas, or our own? Could we wash our pillows, fluffing them to fullness without ever refilling them? Would tiny word fluffs begin escaping while we dreamed? Would we miss the little ideas as they found their way to the dust bunnies congregating in the recesses of our lives?

Only the wind knows ...

Melissa

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Link multiple chains together, and you get a net. When one link is missing, the net's usefulness is diminished. Whether people can be likened to links in a chain is arguable. What is not is the value of every person in a community. When one needs help, anyone stepping in to bear their burden uplifts the community. And when numbers of people join hands to aid their neighbors, the net cannot be permanently broken. Another way to look at it, according to local builder Stoney Short, is that the community needs a safety net for those who don't have one of their own. That's where Mansfield Cares comes in.

The charity has been serving people in Mansfield since 1998. Its volunteers work to provide the resources to meet the health, wellness and educational needs of our community. Many of its services are accessible in a 2-acre area on West Broad Street, where The Caring Place health clinic and the Harvesting International food bank are located. Yet the warm, outstretched hands of Mansfield Cares volunteers are also felt working throughout the city. Food pantries run by churches, the thrift store and emergency services offered by Wesley Mission Center, the backpack program run by Common Ground — all these and more receive financial support from Mansfield Cares.

The need is great, according to Stoney and his fellows on the Mansfield Cares board of directors. Its president, Debbie Koennecke, has lived in Mansfield since the turn of the millennium and noticed the need as soon as she began

V
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“Sometimes,
you see
people
getting help
that you’d
think might
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— *By Melissa Rawlins*

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Todd A. Simmons
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familiarizing herself with the people here. A former "Air Force brat" who lived in England, Alaska and California before returning to her father's home state of Texas in 1970, Debbie has worked for community-minded independent banks throughout her career. "It was instilled in me in my earliest position, at the age of 18, that you were involved in your community and you offered services for the community needs," she said.

As a senior vice president for Mansfield Community Bank, Debbie has partnered with other organizations dedicated to helping meet the health, wellness and education needs of the town. "A lot of people see Mansfield on the surface as a high-income bedroom community. They don't realize we have a lot of people in need," she explained.

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Office Administrator Jodie Owens does her best to keep things running smoothly.



Gregory Dewbrew works hard to ensure the needs of the community are being met.

"As we've grown from 5,000 to 60,000 people, that need has grown due to contributing factors, such as economic downturns and structural changes in the corporate world." Whether Methodist Mansfield, Habitat for Humanity, Wesley Mission Center or the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce, Debbie has tried to find other organizations that help in the community so Mansfield Community Bank could help them help others.

She carries her philosophy into the philanthropic efforts of Mansfield Cares, which Stoney joined 10 years ago. He grew up all over Texas in a family that survived by doing construction. He came from Arlington to Mansfield 14 years ago with his wife, Julie, also a Mansfield Cares board member, and their children. Even before settling here, the Short family regularly participated in food distribution events in Ft. Worth, on the corner of I-35 and Rosedale, in order to teach their children to give and let them experience what they've never experienced firsthand.

"As a child, we were not as fortunate as my children are," Stoney stated. "We had to do without and did not have places to go get [what we needed]." Understanding the desperation some people feel, Stoney is convinced that Mansfield Cares is keeping people in need from deeper troubles. "Sometimes, you see people getting help that you'd think might not need it, but as you get involved, you figure out that they do have a need."

Of their many different projects, the community garden behind the food bank is a joint collaboration between Mansfield Cares and the Mansfield Rotary (Noon) Club. "I am excited about the community garden," Debbie said, "because teaching people how to take care of themselves underlies everything we do."

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community where they built their home and business, Mansfield Custom Homes, Stoney and Julie donate their time and elbow grease to Mansfield Cares because it supports so many people's real concerns. "Julie and I are both growing in the fundraising area. The way we contribute is by taking on tasks," he said.

While the 15,000-square-foot Mansfield Women's Club Caring Center was being constructed, Mansfield Custom Homes donated various trades to the work overseen by Grossman Design Build, who contributed their time as general contractor. Stoney said, "I have very little maintenance to do on the The Caring Center, because Gregory Dewbrew of Harvesting International takes care of it quite well. Our Nix Family Caring Place facility is a little older and is a busy place, so it endures a lot of wear and tear."

"At the Caring Place clinic, we rely on the services of board members, like Stoney or Chuck Wilson, to help repair roof leaks, damage caused by rats or simply stuck hinges," Debbie said. "Our office administrator, Jodie Owens, has them on speed dial. She just calls and texts them, and they come and take care of it."

Other hands-on contributions Stoney and Julie make include volunteering to pack the Feed The Kids bags for MISD disadvantaged families during the summer and helping with the Community Garden. Their children, now ranging in age from 19-30, have helped Mansfield Cares produce their biggest fundraiser, the Mansfield Cares Charity Ball.



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“We’ve had the children of Mansfield Cares volunteers, and from local schools’ organizations like the Key Club, help before and after the ball,” Debbie said. “They are so helpful in bringing in all of our auction items and decorating when we are setting up, and helping us take everything down after midnight on the day of the ball.”

This month’s ball brings the community together for a fun night to raise as much money as possible by bringing awareness to the needs in the community. Stoney, Julie, Debbie and all the board members make themselves available, so people can ask about the different areas where Mansfield Cares helps. “The deejay or auctioneer will play a video about families we’ve helped, giving the statistics of what we’ve done, to inspire the guests to be more involved,” Stoney explained. “If people are aware, they’ll want to help. We want to make it easy to get plugged in.”

“Everybody’s a very important person to us,” Debbie said. “We’re inviting everybody in the community to be a VIP at the Mansfield Cares Charity Ball.” She means it, too. In years past, hosts have asked the band to stay late for the VIP guests who want to keep on dancing. And all this is done for the sake of each of Mansfield’s very important people. **NOW**

Editor’s Note: If you wish to attend the Ball and support your community, entries are available at www.mansfieldcares.org.

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AN Angel AC

— By Jill Martinez

As a verb, accompany is defined as: to go somewhere as a companion; to perform an accompaniment; to be in association with. These are the things that have been the focus of Ruth Edwards' life. Music has been a part of Ruth as long as she can remember. Her mother played the piano and asked their church organist to teach Ruth to play. "I am most grateful to this teacher who helped me to gain this skill, which has shaped my life," Ruth said.

Ruth attended Howard Payne University where she majored in elementary education and minored in music. "I loved music too much to major in it," Ruth chuckled. She took lessons on the pipe organ there and played the piano for the students who took voice lessons. One of these voice students, named Jim, later became her husband, and Ruth has accompanied him through life ever since. Their relationship still thrives today, nearly 50 years, two children and four grandchildren later.

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Jim was a music minister and a manager for a chain of Christian bookstores for many years. His job took the family from Texas to Washington, Louisiana and North Carolina, before they settled back down again in the Mansfield area 10 years ago.

Every place they have lived holds precious memories, but one of Ruth's favorite places and times was the 13 years they spent in Washington. "The

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beauty of the place was so breathtaking," she commented. Her love for the Pacific Northwest is evident in the decor of her home. During these years, Ruth continued to support her husband in his musical pursuits. At the same time, she accompanied her own children and many others through their educational endeavors.

Ruth spent a total of 31 years as an educator. She began as an elementary school teacher, and while living in Louisiana, she earned her master's degree and became a librarian. She loved books so much that it just seemed like a natural move for her. Ruth focused on alphabet books in her study. She has several on her shelves and a poster of one on her wall called *The Butterfly Alphabet*. It features



photographs of butterfly wings with patterns that look like alphabet letters. Of course, this was a favorite that she shared with many children on their journey to literacy.

As a librarian, Ruth also accompanied numerous children through their study of author-illustrators. She helped them to perform research and interviews of over 100 of the greats. One of Ruth's favorites was *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick. "The illustrations are simply amazing!" Ruth commented.

When Ruth and her family moved back to the area, her husband was semi-retired, but Ruth continued working as a librarian in Mansfield ISD. She felt very fortunate to work with such wonderful people there, and they sent her off with lots of love when she, too, retired.

These days, Ruth is finding new ways to walk with people through their lives. Whenever possible, she pours into her grandchildren. Sharing books and music with them are her greatest pleasures. Their children sing and play the piano, following in her and her husband's footsteps. In addition to the love of books and music, Ruth worked to instill the important values of faith, family and friendships.

Ruth serves the Mansfield community in a number of ways. First of all, she is an active member of the Metroplex Business Associates. "I like to connect with people. It's easy for me because I'll talk with anyone," she said. As she



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meets people living and working in her community, she's able to help others make connections. Oftentimes, she can refer a business associate to a person who may be in need of something they can provide.

Ruth has been a cosmetics consultant for 16 years and offers her services to those who are interested. When she lived in North Carolina, she met a special woman in the business who introduced her to it. "It was like God had ordained for our paths to cross. She taught me so much about working my business. We are still friends to this day," Ruth said.

One of Ruth's associates introduced her to a worthy cause called Soldiers' Angels, which is an award-winning nonprofit organization that aims to make sure that no soldier goes unloved. This organization sends thousands of care packages and letters overseas to deployed service men and women, helps to purchase assistive technology for wounded veterans and much more. Ever since Ruth learned of this nonprofit, she has been raising money and sending care packages.

She has a pink piggy bank, which she lovingly refers to as "Princess the Pig" because of its tiara-adorned head.

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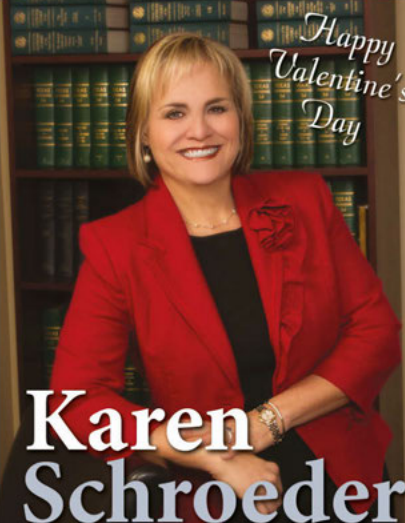
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Ruth blesses those living in her own hometown, as well. At Christmastime, students from Lillard Intermediate School in Mansfield help decorate gift bags and distribute them to each resident at Brookdale Mansfield. Some of the residents have few visitors, so these treats during the holidays help them to know they are not forgotten.

Still today, Ruth continues to serve others with her piano skills. Her venue now includes churches, living centers and performance halls. One Sunday afternoon a month, she plays the piano for the residents of Brookdale Mansfield.

She also goes monthly to Watercrest Mansfield, where she plays hymns, and they sing along to the ones they select. In an effort to support students, something she could never give up, Ruth plays accompaniments for MISD students competing in UIL.

Ruth has used her talents in music and business as a means of serving others her whole life. It gives her joy to know that she has been able to reach out to others and give a bit of herself to make their lives richer. The number of people she has impacted may be too many to count. "My purpose in life is to connect with others and accompany them using the skills I have." **NOW**

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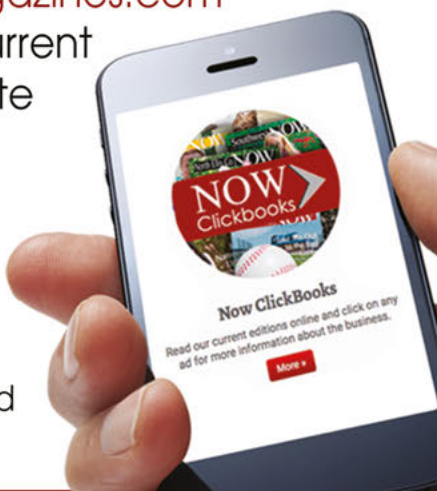
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Their Own Palace

— By Rick Mauch



Creativity is the centerpiece of their lives. Whether it's working careers that build and protect lives or turning old things into beauty throughout their home, J.D. and Brandi Thompson love a challenging project. "When she says she did it, she means she got a power tool and dug in," J.D. said of Brandi, who did most of the decor throughout their 2,600-square-foot, two-story home in Mansfield. One example of her work is found in an old dresser that she turned into a laundry room utility cabinet, except for one drawer. "She used that one drawer as a planter by the kitchen window," J.D. continued.

Brandi, 36, formerly a special education teacher, is a student support intervention expert at Arlington Collegiate High School. She helps guide students as they earn high school degrees, while also working on college degrees at Tarrant County College. "As they transition from the



 At Home With 
J.D. & Brandi Thompson



traditional setting to college, I maintain their progress," she said.

J.D., 38, is a system's engineer at Lockheed Martin in Grand Prairie. He works in the air defense department. "We want to knock the bad guys' stuff out of the air with our good guy stuff," he said with a chuckle.

But when it comes to home, they love being simple. The dining table is one Brandi found on Craig's List and reworked, painting it teal, which is her favorite color, followed closely by gray. The colors are prevalent throughout the home. A multilevel serving table just inside the front door is teal. The doors on their son, Adam's, room are a rustic gray, resembling those from a farm house in the early 1900s.

J.D. and Brandi have three children. Their two biological daughters are 11-year-old Alle and 12-year-old Ella. Adam, 11, was adopted during their short stay in Greenville, South Carolina.



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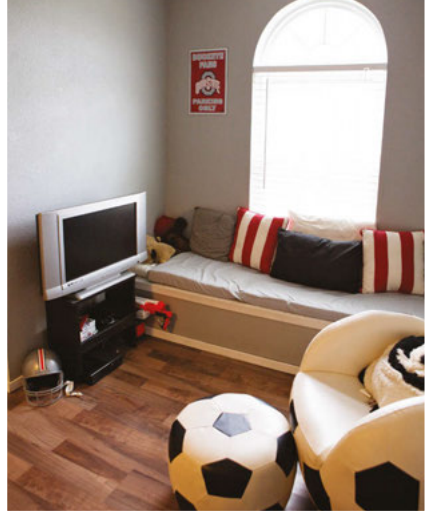
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Originally from the Canton/Akron area of Ohio, they moved to Mansfield for the first time in 2006. A year later, they moved to South Carolina for a short time before returning to Mansfield in 2009. "We realized this was home," Brandi said. "We moved just long enough to adopt Adam," she added with a smile.

Adam seems right at home in Texas, though his room is highlighted by Ohio State memorabilia. He chuckled when asked if the red letter *A* over his bed stands for Alabama, whom his beloved Buckeyes defeated in 2014 on their way to

college football's national championship.

There is also a secret door to Adam's room. It allows entry from the pantry area of the kitchen. What looks like a normal shelf holding family photos has a secret latch that opens much like a bookshelf in some Sherlock Holmes movie.

Adam and his siblings have their own hangout area. A mother-in-law suite has been turned into a family room, complete with its own kitchen, refrigerator — even lockers in which the kids can keep their "stuff" as they watch TV or play on the

computer. It's all anchored by a large sectional big enough for the whole family to relax on as they watch a movie.

The family room features hardwood floors, and its kitchen has tile. Throughout the rest of the house, however, are concrete floors painted either black or gray with a hint of blue. "It was all carpet when we moved in," J.D. said.

"The cement hides the dog hair," Brandi added.

The Thompsons have three dogs: an American Bulldog/Boxer named Scarlet,

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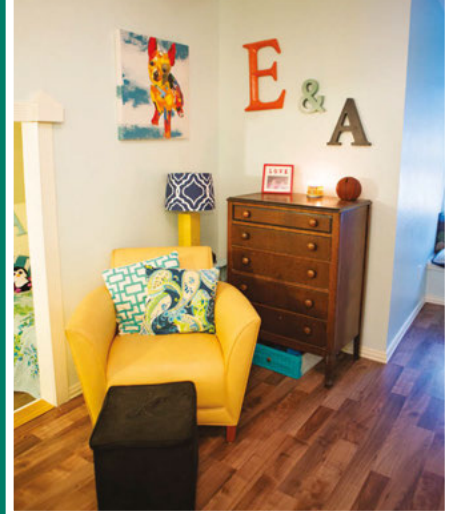
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a European Labrador named Dezi and Layla, a Chihuahua. They also have two cats, Chloe and Catniss, named after Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games* story, with the obvious exception of one letter. “We have a tradition of naming all of our cats starting with the letter C,” J.D. said with a smile.

The living room is spacious and homey, highlighted by a fireplace that is 4 feet 6 inches tall and 5 feet wide, hand-painted by Brandi — teal, of course. On the walls is artwork drawn by each of their children: a pumpkin, by Ella; a blue dog that more closely resembles a raccoon, by Adam; and on the hall wall is another blue dog in Ohio State garb, by Alle.

On the black steps leading upstairs are the words, “come on up,” painted in a sequence of three. Once upstairs, visitors find a nook overlooking the living area, along with Ella’s and Alle’s rooms and a Jack-and-Jill bathroom. “Or, in this case, a Jill-and-Jill,” Brandi said, laughing.

In Alle’s room is a closet door that looks exactly like a miniature barn door. It even squeaks like one when it’s opened. “What’s a barn door if it doesn’t squeak?” J.D. asked.

Out front is a circular driveway and a large yard. By the front door is an antique school desk that looks like it served its original function in the 1940s and ’50s. There’s a covered patio with plenty of room to sit between the plethora of benches and chairs in the backyard area. There’s a gas grill, mini-frig, an L-shaped table with a granite table top and a fire pit. Another fire pit, this one larger and concrete enclosed, is about 20 yards away near the pool.

“We’ve sat and had fires and the kids still swim. They don’t care how cold it

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is,” Brandi said. “We spend a lot of time outside.” Next to the pool is a barn that is used as a pool house for changing and keeping equipment. Next to that is a large playpen for the animals.

The basketball court with two goals is found farther into the backyard area. Nearby is what used to be a storage area that now serves as a guest home for relatives or friends when they visit. It has also housed several friends who were between homes.

Helping others is a big part of the Thompsons’ life. J.D. and some friends even started a nonprofit organization at The Church on Rush Creek, in which they host cornhole tournaments. The proceeds benefit those in need. “About six years ago, we came across a family in need,” J.D. said of the company called C4C (Caring For Community).

The group has helped open a maternity home in Cedar Hill and a playground for an apartment complex in Mansfield. They also helped raise \$15,000 for an orphanage in Africa. “We get some strange looks, but when we write a check, people love us,” J.D. said. “It’s just a great, simple way to do something good and have fun.” It also seems fitting, given the Thompsons’ penchant for taking something simple and making it great. It’s been the cornerstone of their small palace. **NOW**



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A Perfect Proposal

— By Carolyn Wills

Somewhere between the magic of falling in love and the union of “I do” comes the all-important question of, “Will you marry me?” It’s the marriage proposal — that thrilling, risky, sometimes awkward hope — asked and answered throughout time. Today, the occasion of becoming engaged remains a special, celebrated passage. In fact, the world is “awhirl” with ideas, options and resources on how to plan the perfect moment.

Wedding-related websites, magazines, consultants, bloggers, florists, jewelers and churches have long provided in-depth information. And, now, specialized companies actually design marriage proposal packages.

There’s even a National Marriage Proposal Day. Who knew? It happens on March 20, coinciding with the first day of spring and the Vernal Equinox. The year it was first observed is unknown, but its origin is credited to ... wait for it ... a fellow Texan named John Michael O’Loughlin.

Has, then, the occasion of getting engaged been elevated to a new art form? In recent years, the important question has been delivered via flash mobs, Skyping, skywriting, texts, Facebook posts, Twitter, YouTube videos, live TV and stadium Jumbotrons, and all while new digital and virtual options keep emerging. According to statistics, though, there’s still something to say about good ole tradition.

A 2013 Engagement Ring and Jewelry survey commissioned by The Knot, a multiplatform wedding resource, suggested that tradition still prevails when it comes to the engaging moment. Overwhelmingly, 91 percent of suitors say they planned their



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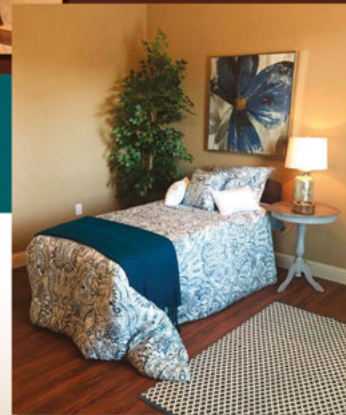


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proposal, while 47 percent planned it meticulously. Nearly 60 percent “popped” the question privately (between the beloveds), while the remaining 40 percent went public. A whopping 88 percent actually used the words, “Will you marry me?” And 81 percent proposed on bended knee.

Additionally, a 2014 Associated Press-WE tv Poll found that while 75 percent of Americans would be fine with the woman proposing, only about 5 percent of currently married couples polled confirmed that that’s what actually happened. Also, according to David’s Bridal’s “What’s on Brides’ Minds” survey, brides strongly prefer personal, low-key proposals to elaborate public displays.

While it’s comforting to learn that tradition has held value, and it’s exciting to hear about new options, ultimately and importantly, isn’t the unique, meaningful and memorable meeting of two loving people all that really matters? Creating the marriage proposal that adds a happy chapter to a romance and a forever story for the couple and their family throughout the years, starts with two people knowing each other, understanding they are moving in the same direction and, then, paying attention to what is special to both parties, as in the following scenarios:

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Sweet and Simple:

Amy, a mother in Burleson, Texas, with two teenagers, had been single for six years. "I asked God, if it was in His plan, to bring someone into my life," she said with a smile. Not long after, church friends introduced her to Billy. "His wife had passed away," she shared. "By the second date, we 'knew' we were right for each other." For alone time, they would take daily walks and, on one of those walks, they happened onto a new street waiting for houses to be built. It was the beginnings of a new neighborhood and, as it happened, the perfect moment for Billy to propose. "We met in August and married in October," Amy added. "I wasn't expecting a proposal on our walk, but it couldn't have been more perfect."

She Asked/He Answered:

Then, there's Kate and Aaron in Wickenburg, Arizona, who had been



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together for 13 years. "I told him it was time he proposed," Kate said with a grin. She added that it should happen by Christmas Eve, and she wanted to be surprised. As time passed, she would announce that Christmas had come and gone and she was fine with things as they were. Fast forward to April, her birthday and an invitation from Aaron for a morning ride at the ranch, where he is head wrangler. As they headed into the desert, he sidled his horse next to hers. "I could get off and kneel?" he smiled. For Kate, it was a complete surprise.



Bell's Tweet:

Kristen Bell is proof that it works for the woman to propose. Disney's *Frozen* star asked her longtime boyfriend, Dax Shepard, for his hand in marriage via a Tweet!

Two Best Ever Proposals:

Excerpts from "Best Wedding Proposals Ever" by Kate Store, *New York Post*, March 20, 2015 (National Proposal Day):

A prospective groom devoted a year to preparing his proposal. While vacationing in Aruba with his beloved, friends and family, he surprised her with a video of him proposing 365 times.

A surprised prospective bride was greeted by a town car after work and taken to a Los Angeles theater where her boyfriend had arranged for their love story to be performed as a musical. For the final act, he appeared on stage, kneeling toward her with a beautiful engagement ring and a hopeful, "Will you marry me?"

A Royal Proposal:

According to Britain's *Daily Mail Reporter* (November 2010), Prince William proposed to Kate Middleton in an isolated log cabin (no electricity and

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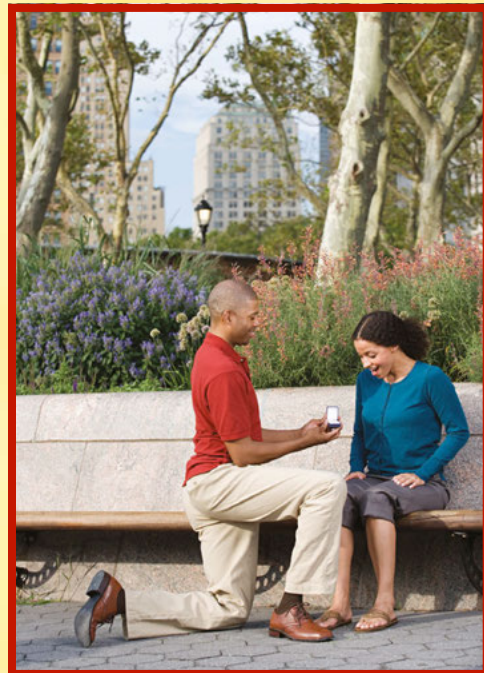
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accessible only by air or horseback) while on a stopover during a Kenyan holiday. Kate reportedly said, "It was a wonderful 24 hours ... so romantic!"

Clearly, the prospective couple who respect each other's dreams and boundaries down to the tiniest of shared interests, favorite colors, flowers, foods, music, humor and traditions can take heart. When the moment of the all-important question arrives, the question will already be answered. **NOW**

Sources:

1. National Marriage Proposal Day: www.dates.about/traveling-the-world.com/special-holidays/national-proposal-day
2. The Knot 2013 Engagement Ring and Jewelry Survey Infographic by Hearts on Fire: www.heartsonfire.com
3. 2014 Associated Press and WE tv Poll: ap-gfcpoll.com/uncategorized/our-latest-poll-3
4. David's Bridal's "What's on Brides' Minds" survey: "Most Brides Don't Want An Elaborate Marriage Proposal" www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/06/marriage-proposals
5. *New York Post*, March 20, 2015: "Best Wedding Proposals Ever," Kate Store
6. *Daily Mail Reporter*, November 2010: www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1331191/Prince-William-proposed-Kate-Middleton-remote-Kenyan-hut

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— By Melissa Rawlins

"God put us here to serve the people we come into contact with," Registered Nurse Melinda Conn said, remembering her journey into home health. While a teen in her Oklahoma farm town, a community health nurse served as Melinda's father's nurse while he received care in his home for terminal lung cancer. Melinda knew then she wanted to help people in similar situations.

After completing her R.N. degree at Texas Christian University, she served as a trauma nurse at Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital in Fort Worth, Parkland Memorial Hospital and Methodist Dallas Medical Center for many years. She also worked part time as a nurse for a home health service in Mansfield. In

2013, she and her prior husband, John Conn, purchased Care of Excellence Home Health.

The 26-person, faith-based operation tends to patients' needs in the home or assisted living centers. Staff prays with patients while providing services, such as skilled nursing, physical, speech and occupational therapy, and CNAs that have been ordered by physicians.

Nurses at Care of Excellence Home Health are on call all day and all night, every day of the year. The nurses and therapists see their assignments as opportunities to serve people in need. Nurses report to physicians the changes in their patient's condition to

obtain adjustments to the plan of care.

The staff educates the family about safety in the home, fall prevention, wound care, IV administration, diabetes care and specific diseases. They work with patients and their families to develop plans to allow people to stay in their homes longer, with small changes to ensure safety with activities of daily living and medication administration.

Another goal is to prevent unnecessary visits to the emergency room. The staff visits the patient any time there is a change in the patient's condition or a fall reported by the family or patient. "An R.N. is always a phone call away," Melinda said.

She and her entire staff live in the Mansfield area, operating in a 30-mile radius. After 22 years as a trauma nurse, Melinda has seen a multitude of situations and enjoys teaching her staff how to manage many aspects of care in patients' homes. "Our goal is to keep patients in their own home, where they are exposed to fewer germs and infections that can be devastating to the population we serve," she shared.

Patients become like family to Care of Excellence Home Health staff, who like to say they are neighbors caring for neighbors. Melinda stresses holistic care. Her staff members can spend up to an hour per visit attending to patients' needs. They develop relationships with every patient. "If there is a need a patient is concerned about, the staff works diligently to resolve the issue," she added.

Compassion and accountability go hand in hand for Melinda, who runs her business as she would prefer to be cared for. Melinda is proud that Care of Excellence Home Health has been Medicare and Joint Commission certified since the office was opened in 2006. They work with most insurance plans and Medicare for payment of services.

Setting an appointment for an in-home visit with Care of Excellence Home Health requires your doctor's referral. The choice of home health providers is yours. When you need what Melinda's team promises, remember their mission is to deliver excellent care to every patient, with kindness, compassion and understanding. **NOW**

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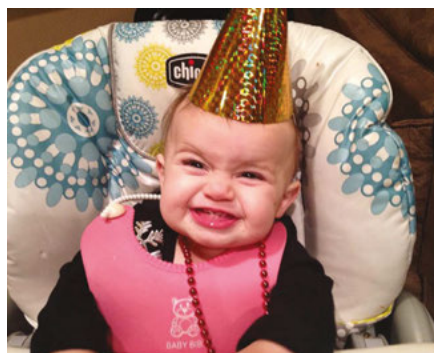
Seven-year-old Tyler Adkins bunts and bides rocks at Katherine Rose Park.



Josh Gallas edits a video while Ron McCranie designs a web site in their vibrant and remote office.



Darlene Wrishnik treats her granddaughter, Andrea Barr, to lunch at Mama Cuca's.



Riley Lynn Gustafson cheesin' for 2017.



Mia Coello and her mom, Amanda, enjoy a concert at The Oasis on Joe Pool Lake.



Sue Boger, Open Arms Health Clinic volunteer administrator, and clinic volunteer physician, Dr. Odilon Alvarado, play a fundraising game called Heads or Tails at the clinic gala.



Nan Wileman, center, brings her friends, Ginger and John Robinson, to Mansfield's new Wendy's for a frosty visit.



The Powell sisters, Mya and Eve, enjoy a nice day outside.



Developer Kim McCaslin is surrounded by supporters at Villagio's grand opening reception.



Students enjoy learning about the environment around them during a hands-on educational field trip at Oliver Nature Park.



Avoid Emotional Investment Decisions

What's the biggest obstacle to your ability to invest successfully? Is it the ups and downs of the financial markets? Political events? The fact that you weren't born rich? Actually, the chief hurdle you face is something over which you have control — your own emotions.

Your emotions can lead to a variety of ill-advised investment behaviors, such as these:

- **Cutting losses.** Declines in the financial markets can lead some investors to try to “cut their losses” by selling investments whose prices have declined. Yet, when prices have dropped, it may actually be a good time to buy investments, not sell them, especially when the investments are still fundamentally sound.
- **Chasing performance.** In the investment world, the flip side of “fear” is “greed.” Just as some investors are propelled by fear of loss, others are motivated by quick, big gains. They may pursue “hot” investments, only to be disappointed when the sizzle quickly fizzles. Instead of trying to “score” that one big winner, you may be better off spreading your investment dollars among a range of vehicles — stocks, bonds, government securities, certificates of deposit (CDs) and so on. While diversification can't guarantee a profit or protect against loss, it may help reduce the impact of market volatility on your portfolio.
- **Focusing on the short term.** When the market is down, you might get somewhat upset when you view your monthly investment statements. But any individual statement is just a snapshot in time. If you were to chart your investment results over a period of 10, 15 or 20 years, you'd see the true picture of how your portfolio is doing — and, in all likelihood, that picture would look better than a statement or two you received during a down market. In any case, don't overreact to short-term

downturns by making hasty “buy” or “sell” decisions. Instead, stick with a long-term strategy that's appropriate for your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon.

• **Heading to the investment “sidelines.”** Some people get so frustrated over market volatility that they throw up their hands and head to the investment “sidelines” until “things calm down.” And it's certainly true that, when owning stocks, there are no guarantees. You do risk losing some, or all, of your investment. But if you jump in and out of the market to “escape” volatility, you may take on an even bigger risk — the risk of losing some of the growth you'll need to reach your goals. Consider this: If you had invested \$10,000 in a package of stocks mimicking the S&P 500 in December 1979, your investment would have grown to more than \$426,000 by December 2013. But if you had missed just the 10 best days of the market during that time, your \$10,000 would only have grown to less than \$206,000 — a difference of about \$220,000, according to Ned Davis Research, a leading investment research organization. The bottom line? Staying invested over the long term can pay off. (Keep in mind, though, that the S&P 500 is an unmanaged index and isn't meant to depict an actual investment. Also, as you've no doubt heard, past performance is not a guarantee of future results.)

Our emotions are useful in guiding us through many aspects of our lives, but when you invest, you're better off using your head — not your heart. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Shawn M. Malley is an Edward Jones representative based in Mansfield.

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February 4

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February 7

Technology Summit: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, 114 N. Main St. Take stock of your Cyber Security practices. Mansfield Area Chamber of Commerce, (817) 473-0507.

February 10

MISD District Spelling Bee: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., The MISD Center for the Performing Arts, 1110 W. Debbie Ln. Volunteers from Mansfield Sunrise Rotary Club will be on hand to celebrate the student champions from each MISD elementary, intermediate and middle school campus. The winner will advance to the TCU College of Education Regional Spelling Bee on **Thursday, March 2**. Call Lynn Wilkie, (817) 299-1252.

Night to Shine: 6:00-10:00 p.m., 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. First Methodist Church Mansfield is one of 200 sites chosen for this

year's Tim Tebow Foundation Special Needs prom. We invite guests 16 years or older to experience a night to remember. Register at www.fmcm.org.

February 11

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Mansfield Environmental Collection Center, 616 S. Wisteria. Bring your hazardous wastes, electronics and recyclables along with proof of Mansfield residency. A full list of accepted items can be found at www.mansfieldtexas.gov/ecc. Contact David Macias, (817) 276-4239.

February 12

Family Experience: 5:00-7:00 p.m., 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. First Methodist Church Mansfield invites the community for a family friendly worship experience led by kids for kids. The theme is LOVE. Attendees will sing songs, have a great story and conclude with a Family Valentines Dance in the Gym. Visit www.fmcm.org/familyexperience.

February 15, 21, 28

Wesley Mission Center classes: **15**, Robin's Wings, 10:00 a.m.-noon; **21**, Faith & Finances, 6:00-8:00 p.m.; **28**, Jobs for Life, 6:00-8:30

p.m., 777 N. Walnut Creek Dr. Each class requires weekly attendance throughout the spring. For more information, visit www.wesleymissioncenter.org.

February 18

National Audubon Society Great Backyard Bird Count: 9:00 a.m.-noon, Elmer W. Oliver Nature Park, 1650 Matlock Rd. Families are welcome to join the citizen-science project collecting data on wild birds. Free program activities include games, bird feeder making and nature walks. Direct inquiries to tiffany.gorrell@mansfieldtexas.gov.

Mansfield Cares 18th Annual Charity Ball: 7:00 p.m.-midnight, Walnut Creek Country Club. The event, presented by Avante Salon & Day Spa, will feature the King David band, live and silent auctions, heavy hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Cocktail attire. Valet parking will also be available. \$125 per person/\$150 at the door. For more information or to RSVP on line, visit www.mansfieldcares.org

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to melissa.rawlins@nowmagazines.com.

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Gingivitis and Your Heart

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

Having a pretty smile is not the only reason for good dental health. For the last 20 years, researchers have been investigating the possibility that poor dental health may be a potential link to heart disease. Although there is a definite connection, the premise could not be definitively proven. One thing the researchers were clear about was good dental health does not prevent heart disease. Because the connection seems strong, it does warrant a deeper look into the possibility of a link and a more focused and consistent attitude toward care in maintaining good oral health.

Gingivitis or inflammation of the gums is a condition that should be treated as soon as possible. This could be a reason or link that may predispose one toward an increased risk of developing the complications of heart disease. Inflammation is a sign of gum disease. The bacteria that resides on the gums gets into the circulatory system and sets up the scenario for heart disease and other complications.

Normally, your mouth is full of many different types of bacteria that belong there. It's a certain type of pathogenic bacteria that finds its way into your mouth that will cause decay and gum inflammation. These types of bacteria will break down the barrier healthy gums provide and allow harmful bacteria to enter the circulatory system. Wherever the bacteria land and begin to colonize, they set up the process of inflammation that damage

tissue, including blood vessels in the heart. This disease process can not only predispose one to cardiac disease, it can also make existing heart problems worse. If you have a heart condition, you should check with your cardiologist to determine if antibiotics are necessary before any dental procedures.

More research is needed before anything definitive can be proven. The findings, so far, are very suggestive of a link, so good dental health is vital. Any gum disease or signs of a disease, such as sore and swollen gums, should be treated. Daily dental care is important in keeping the mouth as clean as possible. Your toothbrush can harbor a multitude of germs and should be rinsed thoroughly after each use and stored upright to air dry in between brushings. Replace it after three months or when the bristles start to turn up. Daily flossing is necessary to clean in between teeth. It's important to have regular dental checkups to make sure your mouth and all its parts are healthy. Keeping a clean, fresh mouth makes sense both aesthetically and medically. **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.



In the Kitchen With London and Haven O'Connell

— *By Melissa Rawlins*

Sisters London and Haven O'Connell love chocolate, especially for Valentine's Day. They developed a knack for preparing fun food with their mother. London recalls youthful lessons in the makeshift kitchen of an old fire station her dad bought in Boston. "While we renovated, we lived in it," she said. So, with only a two-burner, portable hot-plate plus a toaster oven and a microwave, her mom taught London to safely make all kinds of food.

Moving from Massachusetts to Texas when London was 7 and Haven was 2, the family kitchen evolved as vibrantly as the girls. "It gives me happiness to make things for others and see them enjoying what I've made," Haven said. "We all need to allow ourselves to enjoy yummy things and to enjoy feeling good." **NOW**

Cookie, Fudge & Ice Cream Extravaganza

1/2 gal. ice cream
1/2 gal. another flavor of ice cream
1-2 pkgs. Oreo cookies
Cooking spray
12.8 oz. hot fudge topping
12 oz. whipped topping, softened
1 8-oz. chocolate bar (optional)

1. Remove both flavors of ice cream from freezer. Let soften while you crush 8-10 Oreo cookies with the bottom of a glass or cup in a large bowl. Add another 8-10 cookies until all cookies have been crushed and crumbled. (Use the second pkg. of cookies if a thicker base for dessert is desired.)
2. Spray the bottom of a 9x14-inch cake

pan or glass casserole dish. Pour the crushed cookies into the sprayed dish. Using the same glass or cup, press/push cookie crumbs into dish to create the foundation of your dessert.

3. Spread one flavor of ice cream over the cookie crumb base. Use a spatula to spread evenly and into all corners of the dish.

4. Warm hot fudge in microwave until topping is easy to spread over the first layer of ice cream in the dish. Move quickly, as the fudge will begin melting the ice cream underneath.

5. Again, moving quickly, spread the other flavor of ice cream over the fudge. Use spatula to spread evenly into all corners of the dish.

6. Spread whipped topping evenly over the second layer of ice cream.

7. If desired, grate a bar of chocolate over the finished dessert to create a 'snow falling' effect.

8. Cover finished dessert with dish lid or foil, leaving enough room so dessert doesn't stick to the cover. Place back into freezer until ready to eat. Remove from freezer 15 minutes before serving. Use a knife to cut portions, and a spoon to collect any melted ice cream.

White Chocolate Cherry Shortbread Cookies

1/2 cup maraschino cherries, drained
2 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup cold butter
12 oz. white chocolate baking squares with cocoa butter, finely chopped (divided use)
1/2 tsp. almond extract
2 drops red food coloring
2 tsp. shortening
Red edible sprinkles or glitter

1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Spread cherries on paper towels to drain well. On cutting board, finely chop cherries into small pieces.

2. In a large bowl, combine flour and sugar. Using a pastry blender, cut in the butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs.

3. Stir in cherries and 4 oz. chopped chocolate.

4. Stir in almond extract and food coloring. Knead until smooth and form into a ball. Dough will be crumbly, at first, but will come together as you work it with your hands.

5. Shape dough into 3/4-inch balls. Place balls 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Using the bottom of a drinking glass dipped in sugar, flatten balls to 1 1/2-inch rounds.

6. Bake in preheated oven for 10-12 minutes, until centers are set. Cool for 1 minute on cookie sheet. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and let cool.

7. In a small saucepan, combine remaining 8 oz. white chocolate and the shortening. Cook and stir over low heat until melted. Dip half of each cookie into chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. If desired, roll dipped edge in red edible sprinkles and/or edible glitter before the chocolate hardens on the cookie.

8. Place cookies on parchment or waxed paper until chocolate is set.

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