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APRIL 2011

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Dawn Schrodt encourages others to find their inner warrior.

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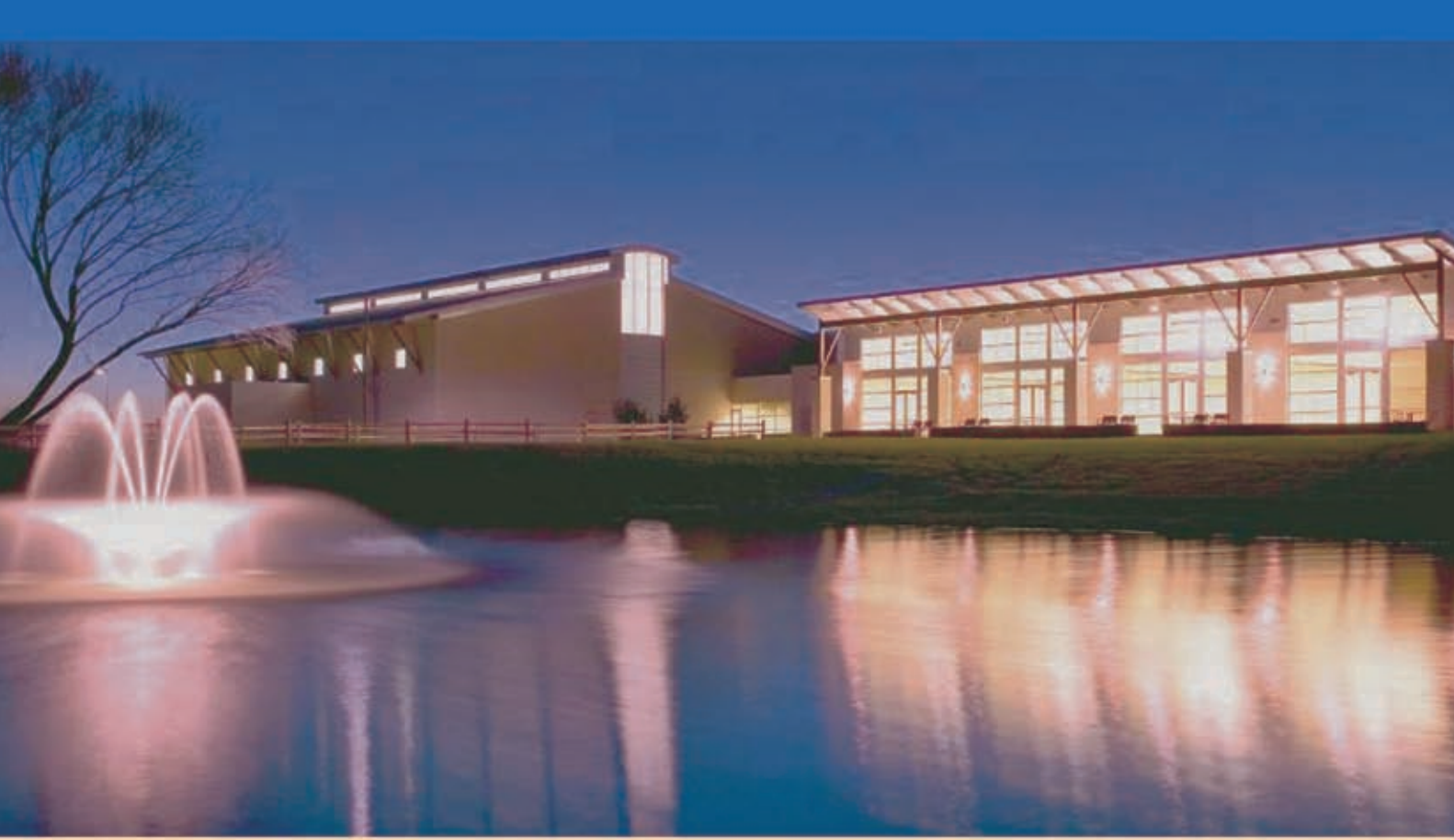
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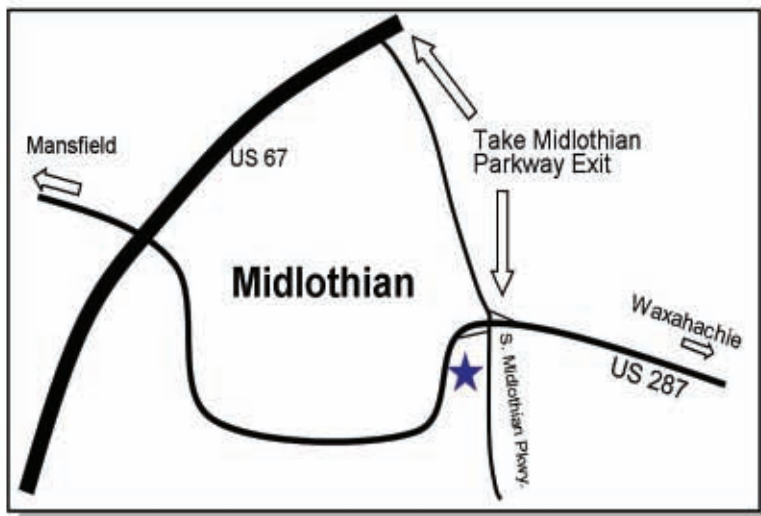
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Publisher, Connie Poirier

General Manager, Rick Hensley

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor, Becky Walker

Midlothian Editor, Betty Tryon

Editorial Coordinator, Sandra Strong

Writers, Alex Allred . Angel Biasatti

Janice C. Johnson

Editors/Proofreaders, Pat Anthony

Teresa Maddison . Angel Morris

Pamela Parisi . Beverly Shay

GRAPHICS AND DESIGN

Creative Director, Chris McCalla

Artists, Julie Carpenter . Martha Macias

Allee Brand . Cherie Chapman

Marshall Hinsley . Arlene Honza

Brande Morgan

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography Director, Jill Odle

Photographers, Natalie Busch

Amy Ramirez . Shana Woods

ADVERTISING

Advertising Representatives,

Rick Ausmus . Teresa Banks . Linda Dean

Laura Fira . Bryan Frye . Melissa McCoy

Carolyn Mixon . Jami Navarro

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Office Manager, Angela Mixon

On The Cover



Dawn Schrod challenges others to live life to its fullest.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (972) 937-8447 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.

Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

Oh, the embarrassment! Have you ever recalled a memory that made you cringe with shame? We have all had those moments when we remember a social misstep or incident that made us want to hide. The older I become, the more I realize the past is truly past. We are powerless to change it. Now is the time to change and improve. I would like to believe that the Easter holiday and the beginning of spring are so close together because they both represent renewal and restoration. In Easter, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and find new hope and renewal of spirit. In spring, there is the magical restoration of the land as life comes anew.

Midlothians, gather your bunnies at Kimmel Park at 10:00 a.m. on April 16 for the annual Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Downtown Business Association. The hunt is open to children ages 1 month to 10 years.

Betty

Betty Tryon
MidlothianNOW Editor
btryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net



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The 2011 MISD Bond proposal is \$97,300,000 and will fund the design and construction of:
HIGH SCHOOL #2 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL #7 FRANK SEALE MIDDLE SCHOOL ADDITIONS

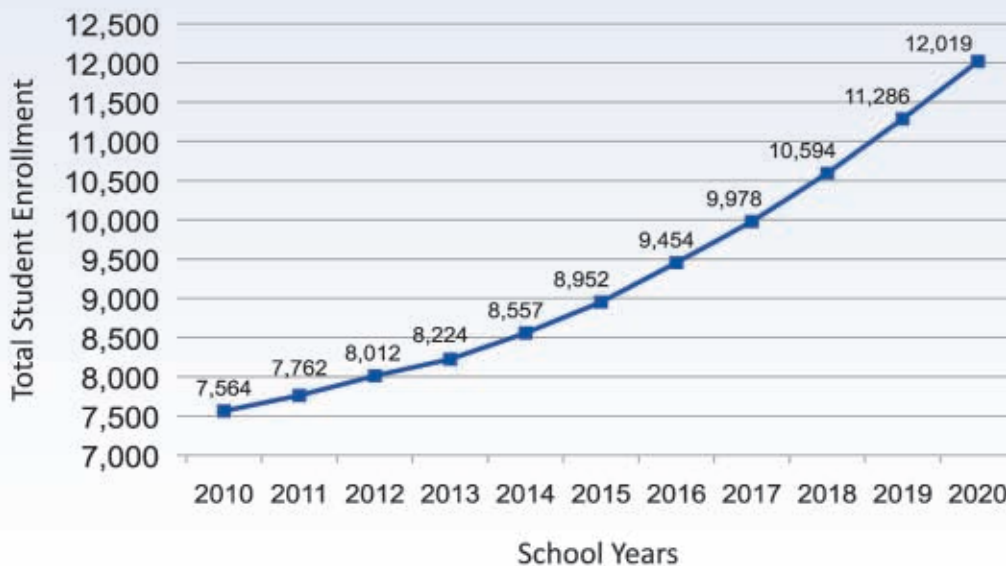
Please VOTE YES for the **Midlothian ISD School Bond, May 14, 2011**, and help us continue to provide educational excellence for our children. This is a **much-needed bond** that will provide for growth, alleviate overcrowding and **DOUBLE** opportunities for high school students. Our good schools sustain our property values and are the foundation blocks that will keep our area growing and strong for years to come. **Our children are our future** and there is no greater legacy we can leave than a **solid investment** in their education. A community which places a high priority on education is a strong community with a **very bright future.** **MISDBOND.COM**

BOND FACTS

ELECTION DAY: MAY 14, 2011

This document is not intended to advocate that you vote for or against the bond referendum, but instead to inform you of facts about the bond election.

Projected Growth



- Projected enrollment is 12,019 students for 2020 school year
- 4,455 additional students within 10 years

Student Enrollment Projections			
	Yr. '11	Yr. '15	Yr. '20
Elem.	3,539	4,220	5,897
Middle Sch.	1,806	2,079	2,792
MHS	2,417	2,653	3,330

Source: Enrollment projections based on Templeton Demographics

Components of the Bond Package

ONE PROPOSITION FOR \$97,300,000 INCLUDES:

High School #2: \$74,000,000

- Phase I for 1,000 students
- Core capacity of 2,500 students
- Estimated occupancy date is August 2014
- Located at corner of Walnut Grove and FM 1387

Elementary School #7: \$20,500,000

- 750 student capacity
- Estimated occupancy date is August 2014

Frank Seale Middle School addition: \$2,800,000

- Expand student capacity from 1,000 to 1,200 students
- Estimated occupancy date is January 2013

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A Growth Management Committee of about 30 people began meeting in January 2010. Their mission was to develop recommendations to the Board of Trustees to meet existing and future facility needs for the next 5-10 years, while fitting within the current financial constraints and meet the educational needs of all MISD students.

They toured existing facilities, reviewed demographic and financial data. The committee also evaluated several building proposal scenarios and focused on the benefits and challenges of each.

The School Board accepted the GMC's recommendation for high school #2, elementary school #7 and FSMS addition.

For more information visit www.midlothian-isd.net/bond or call MISD at 972-775-8296.

Email questions or comments to communications@midlothian-isd.net

Tax Information

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST A TAXPAYER?

Example: A homeowner with a \$182,675 home value, after the state-mandated \$15,000 exemption plus an additional 10% local exemption, will pay an increase of \$212.91 per year if the May 2011 bond passes. See chart for detailed tax impact.

Estimated Tax Increase

Homestead Value	Interest and Sinking (I&S Rate)			Total Payment Increase	
	2010-11	2011-12 Projected without Bond	2011-12 With Bond	Annual	Monthly
\$50,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$42.75	\$3.56
\$100,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$106.88	\$8.91
\$150,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$171.00	\$14.25
\$182,675	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$212.91	\$17.74
\$200,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$235.13	\$19.59
\$250,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$299.25	\$24.94
\$300,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$363.38	\$30.28
\$350,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$427.50	\$35.63
\$400,000	\$0.3575	\$0.4212	\$0.5000	\$491.63	\$40.97

Average home value in MISD

Based on current property value. Fluctuations in property value could cause variation in the I&S tax rate.

Exemption Information

LOCAL EXEMPTION

MISD is the *only* school district in Ellis County that provides an additional local 10% exemption.

STATE EXEMPTION

Homeowners receive a \$15,000 state exemption off of the property valuation. MISD is the *only* school district in Ellis County that provides an additional 10% local exemption.

After these two deductions you get the taxable value for school taxes. These exemptions only apply to school taxes.

OVER 65 AND DISABLED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

For taxpayers who are 65 years of age or older, and the disabled, the May 2011 bond package will *not* increase the school property tax.

Homeowners must apply for the Over 65 or Disabled Homestead Exemption with the Ellis Central Appraisal District.

MISD Tax Rate History

A school district's tax rate is comprised of two tax rates: the Maintenance & Operations tax (M&O) and the Interest & Sinking tax (I&S). The M&O rate is used to operate the school district to include salaries, utilities, furniture, supplies, food, gas, etc. The I&S rate is used to pay off school construction bonds. Bond sales only affect the I&S rate.

	M&O	I&S	Total
2005-06	\$1.5000	\$0.2875	\$1.7875
2006-07	\$1.3700	\$0.3275	\$1.6975
2007-08	\$1.0400	\$0.3275	\$1.3675
2008-09	\$1.0400	\$0.3675	\$1.4075
2009-10	\$1.0400	\$0.3575	\$1.3975
2010-11	\$1.0400	\$0.3575	\$1.3975
Estimated with Bond Passage	\$1.0400	\$0.5000	\$1.5400

Over the past 10 years, MISD has refinanced outstanding bonds at lower interest rates to save \$10,159,562.

Questions and answers on the MISD website at www.midlothian-isd.net/bond

Voting Information

Voter registration deadline is April 14, 2011

EARLY VOTING

Location	Date	Time
Midlothian Conference Center	May 2-6	8a-5p
	May 9-10	7a-7p

ELECTION DAY

MAY 14, 2011 - 7AM-7PM

Midlothian Conference Center
(Pcts. 101, 102, 107, 108, 111, 112, 118, 142)

Ovilla City Hall
(Pcts. 103 and 137)

Para solicitar una copia de esta informacion en espanol, por favor llame el Edificio de Administracion de Midlothian at 972-775-8296



WARRIOR WOMAN

— By Alex Allred

She has been an Indian princess, a Dr. Seuss character and elf, but whatever role she plays, she is always a warrior. The latter is a title Dawn Schrodtt only laughs about, but it is no less true. To the outside world, she is a trim, attractive blonde, quiet in mannerisms and even more so about her achievements. Married with six children, all now grown, Dawn spent much of her adult life serving two roles: mother and employee. For the last 11 years, Dawn has worked as a paralegal at the law office of Susan M. Mason, attorney at law in downtown Midlothian. "All my clients love Dawn! She is always so positive," owner Susan Mason said.

Known for her patience and soft-spoken manner, Dawn is also loved for her baking. Few people know that Dawn is an avid baker, using her grandmother's old recipes. Her family, the staff at her office and choice clients are, of course, privy to this information. "They are my guinea pigs," Dawn smiled. But Dawn also holds another secret — one that has

nothing to do with baking. "I like mud," she said.

It began with a 5-kilometer (3.2-mile) race when Dawn was 47 years old. It was her first race, and to her delight, she actually won in her age group. Until that time, she had been mildly active, participating in jazzercise classes, working out to home exercise videos, walking and



**“Start slowly
and find your
inner warrior.”**



jogging sporadically. “My mother didn’t have very good health,” Dawn said. “I didn’t want that for myself.” But her main focus had always been rearing her children, keeping up with their busy schedules, playing chauffeur and nurse. Never, she admitted, had she consciously considered herself as a role model. But with the success of her first official race, Dawn pushed a little further, running a 10-kilometer (6.2-mile) race, and was again a winner in her age group. As her distances increased, several things began to happen. Her body was changing. She felt stronger and happier than she could ever remember. “It [running] really affects my emotional well-being,” Dawn said. “It is so beneficial to my body. You know, I really thought in my golden years, I would just try racing, do the best I could and say I did it. But now ...” She likes mud.

She ran a half marathon (13.1 miles) and then turned to a new kind of racing. “I really wanted to do some kind of cross

training.” Although she had been very successful running on pavement, she wanted to push herself yet again. Dawn began training for adventure racing, a combination of two or more endurance disciplines. With each race she entered, the dynamics were different. Some adventure races include orienteering, the use of maps to make it through a competitive course. Other sanctioned races are navigational, where no maps are needed but the courses are no less intense. Cross country running on sometimes very rough terrain, mountain biking, paddling and/or climbing are required. Dependent upon the race, an event can last days or be completed in a matter of hours. Teams for adventure racing can include both men and women, but many are restricted to single-sex divisions, and it is here that Dawn picked up an excellent partner in her youngest daughter, Robyn.

They entered the Muddy Buddy races, approximately a 10-kilometer race

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3pm-5pm: 13 years old to 18 years old

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**“I just love mud.
I know it's crazy, but
I really enjoy it.”**

in which two people race as a team, alternately biking and running obstacle courses that include rope events, mud, balance beams and more mud. While Robyn biked, Dawn ran the first mile. At the first obstacle, Robyn arrived first, threw her bike down, completed the obstacle and took off on foot. As Dawn reached the first obstacle, she had two chores. She must complete the obstacle and then find their bike in a sea of other competitors' bikes and jump on to peddle passed Robyn toward the next obstacle. This pattern continued until the end of the race, which required Robyn and Dawn, side by side, to trudge through a pit of mud, a pool of sludge, to the finish line.

An array of pictures, depicting both Robyn and Dawn covered in mud and smiling victoriously, decorates both her home and her desk at work. Pictures from the Warrior Dash races, individual racing events that require a 3-mile course run over obstacles, include swimming, jumping over fire, mud and climbing, also allow for Dawn to sport Warrior Viking helmets and huge, unabashed grins. “I just love mud,” Dawn laughed. “I know it's crazy, but I really enjoy it.”

Beyond the mud, however, Dawn continues to have great success on the road. She joined various running clubs across the state of Texas, has run longer and longer distances, served as a course



coordinator and judge for different races and has literally put hundreds upon hundreds of miles on both her mountain and road bikes. "But it's not always easy," she admitted. "I crash a lot." Indeed. She has become what she calls "good" at flipping over her handlebars. There have been crashes that left her with bumps and bruises, even a cracked tailbone, but she



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would not trade her experiences for the world.

At 51 years of age, a grandmother to seven, Dawn has competed in over 100 races, traveling across the state of Texas and its borders for the opportunity to push herself, crawl in mud, mountain bike, road bike and run on both pavement and trails. While Dawn is almost shy about her own successes, she is beginning to own the title of role model, if only to push other women toward better health. "Women are so amazing. We are so strong. I wish more women could know that," she said. "I wish they could see



that in themselves. Running has made me so happy; I just want to share. I want everyone to know how great it feels!"

Jokingly referring to herself as "the happy runner," Dawn does accept that there are those who simply cannot run. "But you can do something," she added. "Do you like to dance? Do you like aerobics? There is something for everyone, but the important thing is to get out and get healthy." She never set out to win races, though she now concedes, "it is fun to win." To others, she simply advised, "Start slowly and find your inner warrior." Trail running can be likened to life. On trail running, she laughed, "I fall down all the time." It is life. There are ups and downs, rough terrain and sometimes beautiful surprises, like stumbling upon wildlife or welcoming a gorgeous sunset when no one else is around. "The biggest thing is to just try. Be brave. Find your inner warrior." **NOW**

Passport to a healthy heart.

While traveling in Israel, thousands of miles from home, Rachel Howell, PhD, experienced chest pain and shortness of breath that caused her to stop and rest. She dismissed the chest pressure as severe indigestion and continued her journey. "It never occurred to me it was my heart," Dr. Howell says. "I had annual physicals. I was taking high blood pressure medicine and had borderline high cholesterol, but I felt fine." As a former adjunct and distance learning psychology instructor, superintendent, and teacher, Dr. Howell has always been adventurous, with a pressing desire to see the world and experience different cultures.

Everything seemed fine until two weeks after she returned home from her trip. "All of a sudden, I began feeling pressure on my chest — like an elephant sitting on me," she says. "I had trouble breathing, and the pain was very intense. I immediately took some aspirin and told my husband I needed to get to the hospital." Once at Methodist Mansfield, the cardiologist quickly evaluated me," Dr. Howell recalls. "My heart was racing, and he ran several tests. He told me I had had a heart attack and would be taken to the cardiac catheterization lab for interventional treatment."

"Everyone made me feel very comfortable and took good care of me."

Dr. Howell underwent heart catheterization, which revealed that several of her coronary arteries were blocked and restricting blood flow to her heart. Her physician recommended further medication and treatment.

"At the hospital everyone made me feel very comfortable and took good care of me," Dr. Howell says. "The room was large and comfortable, and the nursing staff was very understanding, answering all my questions. I cannot praise Methodist Mansfield and my cardiologist enough. They saved my life."

"Now I feel great and do what I can for my own health," Dr. Howell says. "That includes eating a healthful diet and exercising 30 minutes at least three days a week."

Dr. Howell offers words of advice for other heart patients. "Listen to your cardiologist, and don't be afraid to enjoy a full life," she recommends. "Take your medication and your doctor's advice — it will prolong your life."

For more information about cardiology services at Methodist Mansfield, visit www.MethodistHealthSystem.org/MansfieldCardiology or call toll-free 877-637-4297.



—Rachel Howell, PhD

Mansfield resident and Methodist Mansfield Medical Center patient



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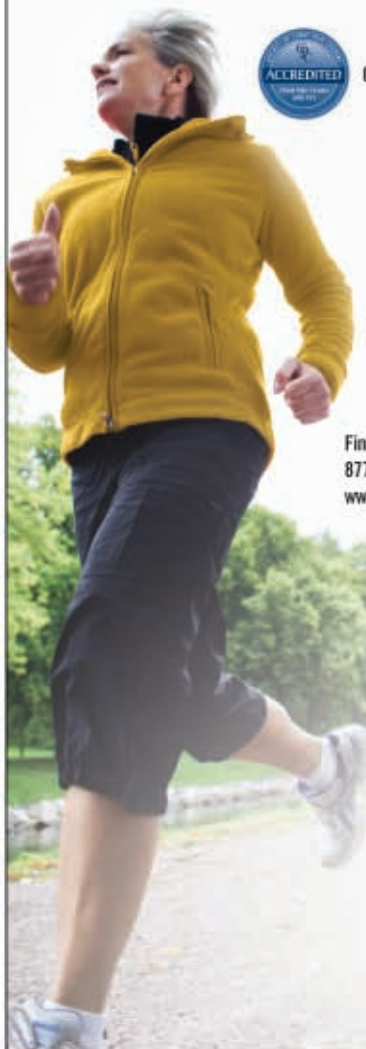
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A Campus of Friends

— By Betty Tryon

Every principal admits to loving kids and helping them learn. Nena Challenner, principal at Baxter Elementary School, is no exception. However, there is a sidebar to her enthusiasm in her role as principal. Her passion in the world of education rests with teachers! “I wanted to become a principal because I enjoy working with children a lot, but I’ve always really enjoyed working with teachers. I thought that I would like to help teachers, as well. Teachers work so hard. They have a true love for children, and they are tireless. It is difficult to keep teachers away during the summertime for that very reason. Their classroom is their second home, and that’s in me, too, so I understand that. It’s important for principals to never lose that teacher inside of them. Once a teacher, always a teacher, I think,” she said.

Nena came to Baxter six years ago at a time of transition in the district when Vitovsky, a fifth- and sixth-grade school, converted to elementary. “There was a lot of shifting of teachers, and Baxter came together that year with a lot of teachers from every campus and a lot of new hires,” Nena explained. “We started together as a group that didn’t know each other very well. It was a time to get to know each other and bond together, and that’s what we’ve done for six years. We really are a circle of friends.

“Circle of Friends is Baxter’s motto. When we have a need on



Faith W., Carlos L., Nena Challenner, Emilee M., and Jackson S.



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our campus, [for example] if one of our staff members has a concern in their family or a health concern of their own, we don't do this often, but when there is a need we gather in a circle and pray together as a campus, after school. When you have 75 to 80 people working on a campus, everyone is going around with some difficult situation they are facing. This campus has a bond that is very close."

Nena's assistant principal, Anita Day, shares the same sentiments regarding teachers. "Anita and I really try to do everything we can to support our teachers. That doesn't sound like a big deal, but when you really support your people, they will do anything for you. We have great confidence in our teachers. We know that they are skilled and that they love our children. We work as a team — administration, teachers and parents. We work together to make sure our students are successful. We have a great support staff, as well. Our paraprofessionals are outstanding. Many of them are going to school to be educators. They are really dedicated and are using this time to gain experience."

Nena makes sure the teachers get that personal touch from her and each other. "We have a lot of fun together," she stated. "I start every meeting that we have with Rocks and Rainbows. We don't ever just jump right into business. I want to hear from them." Rocks and Rainbows is a time for teachers to share the good things and the bad things they are experiencing, both in the classroom



Seated: Judi Cadwell, Donna Cole, Karen Gilson, Nichole Terry, Angela Hendrix, Jennifer Vlach. Standing: is Nena Challenner.

and in their personal lives. "I think when you do that, you validate people," Nena said. "You say that what is going on with them is important to all of us, not just the business of school. Teaching is a hard job; it really is. We need to take good care of each other and lift each other up as much as we can."

Of course, Nena's focus is not solely on the teachers. In everything she does at the school, the students always come first. "Whatever we do, in every decision we make, we have to make sure we are doing what is best for children," she emphasized. "As we try to make a decision, we need to ask ourselves, 'Is that really the best thing for our students?' That will be our measuring stick, and I think we really use that. It may sound simple and trite, but it is the heart of our decision-making. If we keep to that, then we are on the right path."

Nena's empathy with her students began long before she became principal at Baxter. She logged in 19 years of classroom experience before going into administration. "At the end of my classroom experience, I went from General Education to Special Education. I taught two years of PPCD, which is Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities, and two years of CBI,



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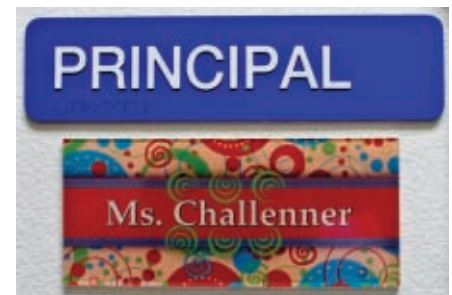
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which is Community Based Instruction. That has really helped me so much as a principal. I'm really glad that I had those years of experience in Special Ed, because it has helped me have a much broader understanding of children and how they learn. All children come to us with various needs. And for some children, the smallest thing such as being able to communicate even by pointing or making a picture choice on an assisted technology device, is a big step. Or, just being able to turn and look at you whenever you're talking to them. All children can learn, but what our expectations for them are — that's what's different. Of course, we have high expectations for all of our students. One thing I insist on, and I don't do it verbally, is to have a positive atmosphere. We are in the business of educating children, so it is important to stay



positive," Nena explained.

Educating children remains a challenging task. It requires a mammoth amount of dedication not just from the administrators, teachers and students, but from parents and members of the community. Baxter works at keeping an active presence in the community and with the parents. "One of our goals here is to increase community involvement," Nena stated. "We have had a Homecoming Float for at least a couple of years and a booth at the Fall Festival. In 2009, the teachers handmade decorations for a tree placed in the Festival of Trees at the Community Center. We will have a parent technology night and a time to cuddle up and read. We are just trying to increase the parental involvement in the school."

While those efforts are ongoing and producing results, Nena never forgets her purpose. She is committed to the teachers and the students on her campus. That combination is a good thing for Baxter Elementary. **NOW**



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Everything to Gain 6 p.m., Thursday, May 19

Dr. David Dyslin and Dr. Augustus Lyons describe the two weight-loss surgery options available at USMD Arlington and answer your questions.

An Ounce of Prevention 6 p.m., Tuesday, May 24

Dr. Russell Dickey and Dr. Ronald Kline discuss the importance of yearly checkups for early detection/prevention of reproductive and lower GI problems as well as vascular disease.



Cozy, Quaint, Convenient

— By Janice C. Johnson

Just driving around the city, no one would recognize that a few of the venerable residences in the historic heart of Midlothian are actually almost new. One of these, built in 2003, belongs to Dan and Connie Cooper.

The Coopers had lived in Duncanville for several years and had been commuting to Midlothian's Lighthouse Church, where Dan serves as lead pastor. They started looking into a move to Midlothian after their children, Paul and Rachel, were grown. Dan showed Connie a charming, newly built home near Kimmel Park, but they found that someone else was

AT HOME WITH 
DAN AND CONNIE COOPER



buying it. The builder, however, had just poured the foundation for another house right next door. "We looked at the floor plan and liked it even better," Connie said. And since construction was barely started, they would be able to pick out the interior features they wanted.

The Coopers thought long and hard about their selections, wanting to show their individuality while avoiding anything too extreme. "We did shop around a lot for ideas," Dan said. "Granite was not in vogue yet, but we wanted granite countertops. We had to find our own granite supplier. I guess we were a little ahead of the curve." He and Connie took on the responsibility of acquiring most of the materials and fixtures for the home. "It was fun – except when they called and said the electrician was coming tomorrow and would need light fixtures," Dan recalled. "That day I had to drive the fixtures from Arlington, and race an ice storm to get them to the house in time."

Dan managed little emergencies like this calmly enough, perhaps because he and Connie both had practice adapting to rapid change. The two had met while students at Christ For The Nations Institute, a Bible and ministry school in Dallas. Dan had come there from Minnesota and Connie from Florida. The following year, they both went on a school tour of England. "During this



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trip, Dan proposed — out of the blue,” Connie said. “I accepted, and we returned to Dallas, where we were married three months later.” As an engagement gift, the young couple received an English rose-pattern china tea set.

Soon after, the couple returned to



England to work with one of their instructors for several months. On their return, Connie finished her training at Christ For The Nations, while Dan began a career in the airline industry. More changes were in store. As the airline transferred them from city to city, the Coopers added two children, Paul and Rachel, to the family. For the sake of continuity, Connie decided to homeschool the children. “And she was very gifted at it,” Dan emphasized. The homeschool choice turned out to be especially handy when the family had another opportunity to live in England, this time for more than two years.

Connie had worked years earlier in the vision care field. Back in Texas again,



and after Paul and Rachel graduated from high school, she earned her medical certification. She now works as an eye technician.

Since Dan’s pastoral work brings visitors across the threshold on a regular basis, the Coopers’ new Midlothian nest is seldom completely empty, even without the children. The three-bedroom home makes the most of its 1,600 square feet of living space. Connie arranged the spacious dining area, open to the kitchen, to be a flexible space for groups. A small round table and chairs occupy one corner, while the main part of the room is kept clear for any temporary setup they might need. A number of customized built-in cabinets and shelves

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The Coopers used light, neutral colors through most of the house, balancing the airy lightness with dark-colored granite in the kitchen and black marble around the fireplace.


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Colonial Hills Baptist Church welcomes Brian and his family and invites the public to join us for the morning worship service at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 3rd.



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"Brian West, formerly of the Bell County Baptist Association, will be coming to Colonial Hills Baptist Church on April 3, 2011 as the new pastor. Brother West comes to Colonial Hills Baptist Church from First Baptist Church, Little River, Texas where he served for the past 8 years. He was also a member of the Executive Board of the Bell Baptist Association Evangelism Team. Brian was the Mission Project Coordinator for 2008 Hispanic Congreso. He launched his church's first Children's Team, Music Minister Search Team and Vision Team, working with a church strategist to develop a plan for the church's future. As coordinator for the good Samaritan Scholarship at Temple College, Brian planned and led weekly prayer and devotion time for students.

Brian is married to Lora and has two daughters, Breanna, 7 yrs. old and Lauren, 5 yrs. old. He claims Isaiah 61:1-3 as his life verse. It has taught him to be an "oak of righteousness". He feels his roots must run deep and his branches must reach high to the sky so that others may discover the Lord's splendor."

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provide space-efficient storage throughout the house. The Coopers used light, neutral colors through most of the house, balancing the airy lightness with dark-colored granite in the kitchen and black marble around the fireplace.

One feature of the original plan that Dan and Connie especially enjoy is the breezeway between the house and garage. They screened it in and added a large barbecue grill and outdoor furniture. The resulting porch handles family meals as well as any overflow when entertaining. “We eat out here a lot in the summer,” Dan said.

Dan and Connie both have a lifelong love of travel. Going out of state for their education and making overseas mission trips, along with their years with the airline, have only fed that love. Though they are not collectors, they have brought some paintings, china and other art from Europe. So, when it came to decorating, they had plenty to work with. In fact, Connie said, “It was a challenge to re-stage existing furniture and artwork in a smaller space, adding new pieces and also highlighting some of our keepsakes.” They found room for Dan’s childhood piano near the front door, handmade Romanian glassware sparkles from recessed shelving in the living room and a curio cabinet beside the fireplace holds smaller souvenirs.

To organize the art, Connie and Dan grouped items from each country into themes for the different rooms. For their master suite, they chose pale, dusty greens and blues and light-colored paintings.



That same color scheme in the master bath enhances the large “spa” tub. One of the spare bedrooms has a “Caribbean/lighthouse” theme; the other is dubbed the “French” room.

Connie appreciates the front porch, part of the “antique” style of the home. As she pointed out, “We get all of the charm of an old house – without the problems.” Dan also likes to relax there and admire the view to the west, off the escarpment. He put in all the home’s landscaping himself and enjoys maintaining it. For a busy pastor with little time for hobbies, gardening offers a tranquil change of pace.

Connie, too, stays busy at the church. She spends much time in the preschool department where, she said, she helps “provide a safe place for young mothers to leave their children while they attend church.”

Dan and Connie still take time to travel, though. The year Dan turned 50 he spent two days hiking across the Grand Canyon,



from north rim to south, a 23-mile trek. The couple also took a trip to Paris last year, when a missionary invited Dan to teach at a church there.

The Coopers said that moving to Midlothian was a very easy choice. With their home just five minutes from their church, “It’s the best commute I ever had,” Dan said. Besides, they like the historic neighborhood and being near Kimmel Park.

From parenting and pastoring to caring for patient’s eye care needs, a common thread runs through the Coopers’ story. As Dan put it, “Our whole life is centered around serving people.” **NOW**

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My In10tion

— By Betty Tryon



Arthur Vanderkar,
Ramsi Russell and
Johnette Wash.



Johnette Wash decided she was not going to take it anymore. The bully on the school bus had pestered her for the last time. She took control of the situation and ended the harassment. "I was a bold type of girl," she said. "I marched down to his house and told his parents that he was making fun of me, and he got in trouble. The parents took me seriously."

Johnette's courage paid off and stopped the troublemaker in his tracks. Perhaps if every child had her courage, or if every parent dealt appropriately in the same situation, there would be no bullies. Sadly, bullies do exist and, in many cases, are thriving. Now, students are fighting back. Two of the teachers at the high school, Ramsi Russell and Alyson Gaither, joined the students in their battle. "I had a discussion with English students last year (who are now sophomores) about bullying and discussed things we could do" Ms. Russell shared. "Some students came to me and said we should make this an organization. Some teachers got together, and we brought in an initial 12 or 13 students who we thought were socially strong, had great leadership skills, could reach out to other students and be beneficial to them. The original organization took it from there, and it has grown to over 70 members in the high school."

"Our goal is to grow as big as possible, to make it where kids feel school is a safe place to be."

The group was called "My In10tion," and Johnette and Arthur Vanderkar were part of the original group. There are now 70-80 members on each campus of the middle schools — Walnut Grove and Frank Seale — an impressive start for such a young group. "Our goal is to grow as big as possible, to make it where kids feel school is a safe place to be," Arthur said.

A troubling poll taken in the high school of 2,171 students, revealed the shocking information that at least 199 students have had suicidal thoughts. My In10tion wants to change that number to zero. One way My In10tion plans to change that and spread their message of kindness is to invite students from all the

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area schools to an assembly to watch *To Save a Life*. This movie shows the struggle of one popular student coming to terms with himself after ignoring a bullied friend who committed suicide. The learning process made him more sensitive to the needs of others.

My In10tion wants to open a dialogue with everyone working with students to find solutions to bullying. "I went with our other co-president, Megan Wallace, to speak to the bus drivers because most of the issues with bullying happen on the bus," explained Johnette. "The drivers were saying that they really want us to reach elementary kids because that's where they have the most problems with name calling."

Inside the classroom, there exists other opportunities for bullying to take place. The obvious monitor for these activities would be the teacher. However, teachers have their hands full. Since most bullying occurs out of the eyesight of the teachers, it is important for bystanders to speak out against this behavior. "We don't want it to fall all to the teachers. We want other people to stick up for them because the teachers are busy," Arthur stated. "We want to have people who are not afraid of what others think to stand and tell someone that they are wrong and to stop or just be there for the kid [who has been bullied]."

Johnette agreed, "One of the main things we focus on is the bystanders. Bystanders should speak up and say, 'That's not cool.' Don't be a bystander. Say, 'I'm not going to let people be



treated like that.”

Giving the point of view of the teachers, Ms. Russell said, “In a sense it’s hard for teachers to understand the full scope of what’s going on because we only see the surface at times. The original My In10tion students who started the group from the high school and middle school campuses had a presentation about this issue in front of all secondary teachers in the district. It was good to have the students be on the same team as the teachers.”

An unfortunate playground for malfeasance happens to be the Internet. The students agree that there is more harassing and bullying online than in person. A Facebook account can give a bully anonymity to be more vicious online than he or she might be in person. “We want to help them [bullied kids] be more self-empowered and to have more confidence. If they show that they don’t care what the bullies are saying, the bullies won’t keep on trying to get to them,” Johnette said.

Arthur agreed, “If we can’t make it stop, we want to be there to make it better.”

Making it better can be an enormous endeavor. “It’s everywhere,” Johnette said. “I see it every day. It may not be physical, but it’s there.”

“High school can be a cruel place,” Ms. Russell agreed. “Something as small as rolling your eyes at someone — that could be the straw that breaks the camel’s back. You don’t know what that person could be facing outside of school or outside that particular classroom. It’s important to treat everyone with utmost respect 100 percent of the time.”

My In10tion does not just address bullying. Their goal is to reach out to students who are facing difficult situations — from those with parents who are going through a divorce to those who have lost their home to a fire. “Any type of outrageous situation that someone is

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facing — those are the people who we try to let know there is somebody here they can lean on. They don't have to go through it alone," Ms. Russell said.

Another way the group reaches out to those in trouble is the availability



Jessica Wallace, Sarah Steele, Courtney Bauer, Jacob Morgan, Hannah Knight and Angie Black.

of Locker 614. Anyone can slip notes in there and share their experiences so someone can help them. Confiding to a member of My In10tion can be a liberating thing. "We want to be a place where people can vent, to be able to tell what's wrong without being judged or having other people know about it," Arthur explained. "We want to be able to fix it, or at least try and to make you feel more accepted and have friends."

The good news in all of this is the kids are becoming more aware of their responsibility in treating each other with respect and intervening when they witness bullying taking place. A large sign in the high school is filled with students' intentions to be a force for positive change. One student wrote, "My in10tion is to no longer be a bystander." Another said, "My in10tion is to come out of my comfort zone." One of the quotes borrowed from a great peacemaker summed up everyone's resolve. "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." — Mahatma Gandhi. **NOW**

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TAPPING FOR BROADWAY

— By Betty Tryon

Rhythmic tapping feet danced across the stage as the two girls dazzled the crowd, while performing at Music Hall in Fair Park. Haley Smith and Micah Chapman, at the tender age of 13, did what some dancers work their entire careers to achieve. They opened for a Broadway musical! The Broadway production, Wicked, toured the United States in 2010. A talent scout looking for dancers with great ability and flair to open for the show discovered the girls during an annual local event called Dance for the Planet Festival. The diversity of dancers and the performances draw scouts looking for new talent.

“It is a bunch of dancers from around the nation and some from Europe, Africa and India,” Haley said. Adding to the information was Laurie Trees Flores, the girl’s dance instructor from Stage Door School of Dance. “Dance for the Planet

was started 14 years ago,” she said. “They try to search the planet for dancers, and they pull from as many countries that can participate. What is so cool about this festival is that they pull in master teachers from all over the world, and



From left to right: Haley Smith and Micah Chapman.

anyone can take the classes. They are just trying to make people aware of dance as an art form and as an exercise. They also show the different forms of dance in the different cultures, like the way the Hindus dance, the way they dance in Spain and the folk dances from Mexico.”

In 2010, Booker T. Washington School hosted the Dance for the Planet event.

“They have state-of-the-art facilities and an auditorium,” Laurie explained. “That’s where they were discovered. The girls performed twice, a hip-hop routine with another group and then a tap dance.”

The tap dance was the one that drew the scout’s attention. They were performing to the tune of “William Tell Overture” from the TV show *The Lone Ranger*.

Haley marveled at the thought of being selected to open the Broadway show. “We just didn’t think it could ever happen. We really didn’t know what to think. We started dance as a fun thing to get in shape. Then we started going to competitions, and thought, *Well, maybe I am good*. But, I wasn’t thinking about that [when] we got spotted by a talent scout.”

“I really didn’t know what a talent scout was,” Micah added.

Although it was a fascinating experience for them, it still had its mishaps. Micah had a wardrobe malfunction right before show time. “That day, one of the screws fell out of one of my tap shoes. It was loud on one side and soft on the other side, so I was scared the tap was going to fall off,” she stated.



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"We were in the lobby practicing, and she said, 'This sounds funny,'" Haley recalled. "She looked and her tap was, like, falling off. We had to duct tape it."

The girls, lacking experience at such an exalted level, were still performers at heart. That was all they needed to go on stage and do a great job. Performance takes the place of nervousness when they start to dance. "Both were nervous,"



Laurie admitted. "There were so many people there, and they were dressed to the hilt going to the music hall!"

"Performing at *Wicked* was kind of nerve-racking, because the people before us were really good," Micah stated. "They were little boys and girls performing *Annie's 'It's a Hard Knock Life.'*"

Haley joined in with, "I think when you are little you think, *OK, I'm going to go onstage and dance for my mom.* But, when you get older, you think, *Is my best friend out there watching me?* And, you have to look all cool and everything. You might think about how nervous you are before you go on, but when you get onstage you think, *OK, now all I have to think about is the next step.*"

The girls, both in the seventh grade, attend different middle schools — Micah at Frank Seale and Haley at Walnut Grove. Other than attending different schools, the girls have been inseparable since they first started dancing together at age 4 as squirrels in their first recital. “We were best friends and asked Miss Laurie if we could do a dance together.” Haley said. “Now we always do a duet together.”

“Their first duet was ‘Disco Inferno’ when they were 6 years old,”



Laurie remembered. “They have danced together so long that you just know that when they mess up, they know what to do to correct it.”

Haley recalled, “We feed off each other.” It must be working, because they both excel in competitions with their competition dance team — Odyssey Dance Team. The team competes with other dancers and dance schools in the U.S. With the “William Tell Overture” tap dance number, the girls won platinum and gold trophies. The girls are so good that they assist Laurie in the dance classes. Both of them work part time at Stage Door School of Dance with the students. Currently, they are all preparing for their June 18 recital, with *Mary Poppins*



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Haley and Micah are also involved in other activities, in addition to their dancing. At their respective schools, they were both cheerleaders for the 2010-2011 season. Micah shows additional athletic abilities as a starter for the seventh-grade basketball team at Frank Seale Middle School and indoor soccer. Haley wants to



compete in the University Interscholastic League in both science and impromptu speaking. Making the AB Honor Roll, she is proud of her perfect attendance since first grade.

They now have another opportunity to be a part of the magic of Broadway. Their performance of the "William Tell Overture" was so special that they were invited to, once again, open for another Broadway show. "The music hall suggested to the touring Broadway musical *Spamalot* that the girls open for their musical at Fair Park the week of June 21-25. So, we are working on a fast and very challenging dance to Flight of the Bumblebee, which they will compete with and open for *Spamalot*."

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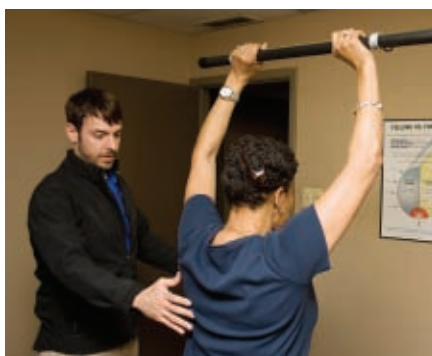
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Standing from left:
Debi Tucker, Dr. Cliff Collins and Chadlyn O'Brien. *Seated:* Dr. Brad Collins.

ADJUSTMENT FOR HEALTH

Dr. Brad Collins, chiropractor, believes having a chiropractic adjustment is only one part to getting and staying healthy.

— By Betty Tryon

Most people think of aching backs when they think about chiropractic care, and rightly so. Many times getting that adjustment to your spine can bring instant relief. However, often it is only a temporary relief. Dr. Brad Collins of Midlothian Chiropractic Care has the philosophy of focusing not just on adjustments to alleviate pain, but including a path back to wellness. “Three quarters of my practice is the result of something that happened 10 or 15 years ago,” he stated. “I have very few patients that fell off a ladder or got hit by a car and come in. When most people get hurt, they take some medicine; it goes away; and then 10 years later, it comes back and bites them.

Pain will bring a lot of people through the door, but we try to find out why they are hurting, work on fixing it and get them back to being healthy and staying healthy.”

In addition to back pain, neck pain also causes a lot of distress. “You should have a curve in your neck,” Brad explained. “When you lose that curve, your head tends to bobble and the muscles in your back tense up. I can massage those muscles and they may feel great for a little while, but the reasons why those muscles tightened up in the first place hasn’t really changed, so it is going to retighten. That is what we are trying to teach people. I can be great pain relief, but that’s not what it’s about. It’s about

you being healthy. More important than the adjustment I do is the education. If I don't educate them, then they get their adjustment and leave, and I really haven't helped them that much."

Part of the education process is identifying and addressing repetitive acts a person may be doing that result in harmful effects, such as having their body in the wrong position for computer work. Assisting in correcting those detrimental habits is Dr. Cliff Collins. "He is a chiropractor and has a background in personal training," Brad explained. "He is doing assessments to find out where your muscles are imbalanced, and we're creating programs to strengthen them. That way the adjustments I am doing last longer. We are trying to get people to change their lifestyles. We are trying to change the mechanics so people come

**"We are trying
to get people
to change their
lifestyles."**

in and go through a series of treatments much as you would with a trainer. If someone can go through all of the steps diligently, they will see improvement. I just know what we do works."

Brad takes his skill and knowledge to the athletes at Midlothian High School. "I do a lot of chiropractic work on the sports teams at the high school on Friday nights. I told the coaches before the season started that they [students] don't have to be hurting to come and get on my table. If I can keep them functioning better, they are less likely to be injured and to perform better.

"Helping patients is what it's all about. It's exciting to see a 7-year-old who has had headaches for two years and they go away. It's exciting to see people's pain go away, and they get their health and life back. That is what brings me to work." **NOW**



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Baxter students and staff accept Rachel's Challenge of showing kindness and compassion.



JAV students received a special reading treat from Target employee mentors.



Miller fourth-graders in Mrs. Lowe's class brought over 350 pencils to send to the children of the village of Dymarka, Ukraine.



First Annual Miller CATCH committee Chili Cook-off winners pose for a picture.



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Pay tribute to mom by scheduling her lifesaving test!

— By *Angel Biasatti*

Mother's Day is a great time to pay tribute to your mother, grandmother, sister or daughter by reminding her to schedule her annual mammogram or physical. Women routinely help spouses, kids, parents, friends and neighbors while, unfortunately, their own health takes a back seat. You want the women in your life (including yourself) to enjoy the best of health and adopt good health habits. This includes screenings, such as a mammogram, colonoscopy and annual physicals. The earlier a potential health problem is identified, the better the outcome.

Mammograms can detect a cancerous tumor in the breast before the most experienced doctor can feel it, giving women a head start on potentially lifesaving treatment. At Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, digital mammography is made more comfortable with a soft warm cushion, and advanced technology enables images to be stored and accessed electronically.

Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third-most common cancer diagnosed in women in the United States. However, it is preventable and treatable if diagnosed early with a colonoscopy, usually starting at age 50.

Annual physical exams are important. They screen for heart disease, cancer and other diseases, as well as help maintain overall health with immunizations and preventive medicine.

Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer of women, taking the life of one in three women each year. The best way to know where you stand is to get a blood test for total cholesterol levels, HDL "good" cholesterol, LDL "bad" cholesterol and blood

fats known as triglycerides. Your doctor will also test your blood pressure, as high blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease.

An annual skin exam can detect unusual or suspicious-looking brown or red spots, as well as moles on your hands, feet, toes, underarms and scalp. Early detection and treatment of skin cancers can save lives.

Starting three years after becoming sexually active or by age 21, whichever comes first, women need an annual Pap test to detect any abnormal cell changes that could lead to cervical cancer.

If you have a family history of diabetes or are overweight, ask your doctor about a blood sugar test to screen for diabetes.

Share with your loved ones family medical history and the potential risks for some diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease. A family member who had or has a disease does not mean you will develop it, too, but you may be at a higher risk. While you cannot change your genes, you can alter your health by exercising regularly, eating healthy and quitting smoking.

This Mother's Day, reach out and let the women in your life know how much you care about their good health. **NOW**

Angel Biasatti

*Director Community Relations and Marketing
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April is National Foot Awareness Month



Did you know?

The foot contains 26 bones, 33 joints, 107 ligaments and 19 muscles? Women have about four times as many foot problems as men. High heels are partly to blame. Walking is the best exercise for your feet. It also contributes to your general health by improving circulation, contributing to weight control and promoting all-around well-being. There are 250,000 sweat glands in a pair of feet. Sweat glands in the feet excrete as much as a half-pint of moisture a day. And here is our favorite bit of knowledge: Walking barefoot can cause plantar warts. The virus enters through a cut.

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April 8-10

All About Dance Garage Sale: 525 N. 9th St. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation in honor of one of our students. Contact Lindsey Underwood at (214) 577-2636 or lindsey@allaboutdancetx.com.

April 9

Kid's Fishing Derby: 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., 435 Ashford Lane, Midlothian (Midlothian's future Community Park). Free event, but space is limited. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. Contact Parks and Recreation at midlothian.tx.us or (972) 775-7777.

Navarro College Brilliance 2011, Realizing Educational Dreams: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian Conference Center. Gala benefiting students from all Ellis County communities. Funds raised will be used toward Navarro College student and dual credit scholarships. Tickets \$75. For more information or reservations, contact Lynn Pike at (972) 923-6439 or lynn.pike@navarrocollege.edu.

April 12

MISD will host its annual Senior Citizens Tour for Midlothian residents who are 55 years of age and older: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The day will include tours of various campuses, student entertainment and lunch provided by the MHS culinary arts class. Space is limited so sign up

today! (972) 775-8296 or communications@midlothian-isd.net.

April 15

Veterans Networking Group meeting: 6:00 p.m., Zula's Coffee House, 1804, Business Hwy. 287, Waxahachie. Enjoy fellowship and networking with fellow veterans on the third Friday of each month. Call Michael Lamb at (214) 763-0378 or Terra at the coffee house at (972) 921-6988.

April 15 and 16

Shakespeare's famous battle-of-the-sexes farce, *The Ten Things I Love About You*, presented by the student drama group, The Navarro College Players: 7:45 p.m., Navarro College Midlothian campus. Tickets are \$5.00.

April 24

Easter

April 30

The Chamber's annual Spring Fling Arts & Crafts Festival: 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Heritage Park in downtown Midlothian.

First and Fourth Mondays

School Board meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Creative Quilters Guild of Ellis County meeting: 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., Waxahachie Bible

Church, 621 Grand Ave.

Tuesdays

Midlothian Rotary Club meeting: noon, Midlothian Civic Center, 224 South 11th St. Call (972) 775-7118.

GED Class: 6:00 p.m., Meadows Library, located at Midlothian High School.

First Tuesday

The Midlothian Area Historical Society meeting: 7:00 p.m., Community Room, Citizens National Bank, 310 N. 9th St., Midlothian. midlothianhistory@hotmail.com.

Third Wednesday

The Ellis County Christian Women's Connection, monthly luncheon: 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Waxahachie Country Club, located at 1920 W. Hwy. 287 at I-35 East (Exit 401B). Cost is \$13.00, inclusive. Reservations are preferred, Contact Kay at (972) 937-2807 or windchime423@yahoo.com, or Margaret at (972) 937-1016 or pmestepp@yahoo.com.

Submissions are welcome and published as space allows. Send your event details to btryon.nowmag@sbcglobal.net.

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In The Kitchen With Dianna Michelle Garcia

— By Betty Tryon

For Dianna Michelle Garcia, cooking is a huge part of her life. She spends her weekdays helping to prepare meals for the students at Baxter Elementary School, then goes home to do the same for her children, Shane and Shelby. “I enjoy cooking because it’s my job, and it brings me great pleasure when the people I cook for tell me everything is delicious,” she said.

Dianna recalled a baking experience when she was a teenager that did not go as planned. “I made sugar cookies for the first time, and they came out tasting like salt.” That was many years ago, and nowadays with recipes in hand from her 85-year-old grandmother, she has begun to teach her daughter. “Shelby is always watching me or helping me.” **NOW**

Chicken and Rice

- 2 boxes long grain and wild rice
- 2 cans cream of celery soup
- 1 cup milk
- 1 pkg. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 pouch onion soup mix

1. Mix rice, cream of celery soup and milk.
2. Pour into a 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Add chicken.
3. Sprinkle onion soup mix on top of chicken and rice. Bake for 1 1/2 hours at 350 F.

Taco Soup

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 can chunk chicken
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning
- 1 can Ro*Tel tomatoes
- 1 can diced tomatoes (Mexican flavor)
- 1 can ranch style beans
- 1 can corn

- 1/4 cup onion, minced
- 1 can of Campbell’s Cheese Soup
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Garnish with shredded cheese

1. Brown ground beef.
2. Add chicken and taco seasoning. Simmer.
3. Add all other ingredients and continue to simmer until done.

Rice Pudding

- 4 cups milk
- 3/4 cups rice
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins

1. Boil milk.
2. Add rice and then add the remaining ingredients.
3. Pour mixture into a greased baking dish.

4. Bake at 325 F for 2 hours.
5. Stir occasionally during baking.

Apple Crisp

Topping:

- 2/3 cup flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 4 oz. brown sugar
- 2 tsp. cinnamon, divided use
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 3/4 cup butter

Filling:

- 1 bag apples, peeled and sliced
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- White sugar, to taste

1. Make topping by combining flour, rolled oats, brown sugar, 1 tsp. cinnamon, salt and butter.
2. Mix until crumbly and set aside.
3. Prepare filling by spreading peeled/sliced apples evenly in a baking dish.
4. Pour lemon juice over apples and sprinkle with 1 tsp. cinnamon.
5. Add sugar to taste.
6. Sprinkle topping evenly over apples. Bake in a 350 F oven for 25-35 minutes, until topping is brown and crisp.

Sticky Buns

- 1 1/2 cups pecans, chopped
- 1 pkg. Parker House rolls, frozen
- 1 box butterscotch pudding (not instant)
- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. cinnamon

1. Butter a 9 x 13-inch pan.
2. Layer bottom of pan with chopped pecans.
3. Place frozen bread dough on top of the pecans.
4. Sprinkle butterscotch pudding over the dough.
5. Melt butter in a bowl or saucepan.
6. Add brown sugar and cinnamon.
7. Mix all together and drizzle over frozen bread dough.
8. Set on countertop overnight. Don’t cover
9. In the morning, put sticky buns in a 350 F oven for 30 minutes or until golden brown.
10. Let cool for 5 minutes and invert onto a serving dish.

To view recipes from current and previous issues, visit www.nowmagazines.com.



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To schedule your mammogram or for more information about cancer care services, call **1.800.4BAYLOR** or visit us online at **BaylorHealth.com/WaxCancer**.

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