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ON THE COVER



The Simon home is filled with love and laughter.

Photo by Amy Ramirez.

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Editor's Note

Welcome back to school!

I was the kid at school that everyone loved to hate. Not because I was unlikeable, but because I didn't look forward to summer vacation. I loved winter break because it included Christmas, family I'd not seen for a year and presents from Santa. But summer — now that was a different story altogether. Two months off was too long for me. The boredom would set in within the third week and last until the giddy excitement returned the night before

school started again following Labor Day.

That excitement included a new book bag and all the supplies that were required for the next grade level. Of course, I'd have matching pencils, folders and spirals. My name would be printed perfectly on each one. Looking back, I now realize I loved school so much because it was the one place where I could ask questions and have them answered without feeling ostracized. I'm thankful for the wonderful educators I had over the years. As school resumes later this month, I hope the students find the fulfillment that I still vividly remember.

Ask the questions and welcome the answers!

Sandra

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With a Happy Heart

— By Virginia Riddle

JACK LUMMUS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



Principal Rodney McNeill and Rebecca Hoffman are ready for the new school year to begin.

Math in middle school doesn't conjure up great memories in a lot of folks' minds, but there's sometimes a special teacher who can make learning the new concepts of pre-algebra a little easier. One such teacher is Mrs. Rebecca Brown-Hoffman, who teaches sixth grade math at Ennis ISD's Jack Lummus Intermediate School. "I really love my job, the campus and students. I have a great team and a supportive family. I love what I do," she said.



Teaching wasn't a first career choice for Mrs. Hoffman. After high school, she worked with her mother at Ennis Business Forms. "I learned then how to deal with people," she said. Following her graduation from St. John High School, Mrs. Hoffman attended Navarro College and graduated from Dallas Baptist University with a degree in business. "Corporate America just wasn't for me," Mrs. Hoffman said.

Life has a way of changing a person's path. Mrs. Hoffman wanted to find a job where she was available for her two children — Molly and Logan, 17 and 13 years old, respectively. Teaching was just the ticket. She gained a position teaching pre-kindergarten students at Tabernacle Weekday Program for six years. "Mrs. Ruth Wilcox



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Mrs. Hoffman's student council members won first place with the float they entered in the 2016 Parade of Lights.

encouraged me to pursue a career in education. My parents, Ronnie and Susan Slovak, were my rock and everything to me during that time," Mrs. Hoffman said.

She graduated from Texas A&M University-Commerce with a degree in education, after observing and interning at Austin Elementary School, Bowie Elementary and the G.W. Carver Early Childhood Center. Mrs. Hoffman is certified as a generalist to teach Pre-K early childhood through eighth grade. "Teaching's hard work — the hardest job I have had. It's very stressful, but it feels right to me. At the end of the year, I love to get the students' letters saying they will miss me and thanking me for what I've done," she said.

Other joys of teaching have come her way. "I like the moments when the lesson just clicks and the students gain understanding. The vast majority of sixth grade math concepts are new information. I try to make each lesson fun, interesting and enjoyable. It's a great feeling when everything just totally clicks," Mrs. Hoffman said.

But math is a challenging subject to teach and master. "My students aren't on the same level. They don't have the same background knowledge or life experiences. It's tough when I have one-25 hands flying up to find balance in meeting all the individual needs. Sometimes, I'm not able to turn it off when I go home," Mrs. Hoffman explained.

Instructional duties in her classroom are just part of her professional life at school. Mrs. Hoffman also is one of the school's student council and WKNN news network sponsors. "Sponsoring the network was a new experience for me. We broadcast every morning, and

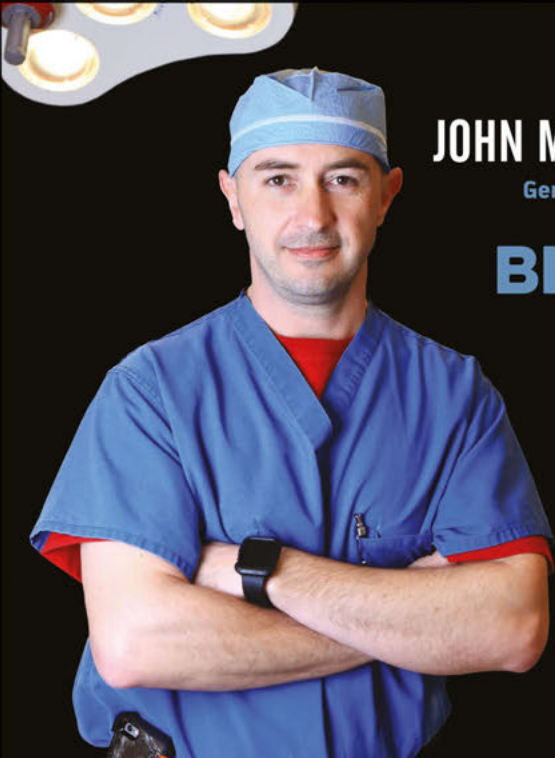


it's really cool. The students are trained over the summer, so it's a lot of extra work, but I have great help from Mrs. Barnett, Mrs. Rodriguez and Mrs. Rojas," she explained.

While on more familiar ground, sponsorship of the student council also takes extra time, but Mrs. Hoffman finds that it's time well spent and adds to her most memorable moments. "Serving on the student council teaches kids leadership," she said. "They want to be leaders at the school." The projects are many and varied but include collecting recyclable items at school; trick-or-treating for canned goods that they donate to Helping Hands; collecting during their Pennies for Patients drive, which donated more than \$4,000 last year to the Leukemia Foundation; and creating a float for Ennis' Parade of Lights every Christmas. Coordination of these activities gives our students opportunities they would not have had otherwise.

But it was the 2016 Parade of Lights that she will always remember. "We won first place in the parade. My husband, Dan Hoffman, was driving and received the trophy. My family had worked so hard on that float. The kids were all so excited to win," she said.

As is the case for most educators, Mrs. Hoffman really liked school when she was a student. "I had small classes, so I had really good friends. It was more like having one big family. I would be a full-time student still, if I could," she revealed. She does still learn, especially during the summer, when she attends conferences and training sessions. "I look at the things that we struggled through during the previous year and try to figure out new instructional strategies to use," she said.



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Mrs. Hoffman believes that her students can do anything they want. "Attitude is 99 percent of the game. I have to be flexible with each lesson, even though I like structure. I have to remember I'm working with 12-year-olds. To keep my sanity, I can't get too serious," she explained.

A member of the Association of Texas Professional Educators and Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, Mrs. Hoffman gives back to her profession. She also gives back to her community. "I'm so proud of this town and its spirit of community. It's amazing how people step up and take care of each other," Mrs. Hoffman explained. She serves as her school's team captain for Relay for Life and volunteers, alongside her family, for numerous community events.

As the saying goes, it does take a village, and this Ennis native is surrounded by family and friends, while she reaches out to teach the city's next generation. Lummus' sixth-graders, who have crossed paths with this teacher, learn more than just math. "Sixth grade's an important year. I want students to leave our campus with more than the three R's. I want them to believe in themselves and develop confidence and perseverance. I want them to stay with something until they finish it, and I try to lead by example," Mrs. Hoffman stated. "At the end of each day, I go home with a happy heart." **NOW**

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Dr. Silverman graduated from the Medical College of Virginia and completed his internship and residency at Wilford Hall U.S.A.F. Medical Center at Lackland A.F.B. in San Antonio. He has practiced in Ennis, Texas for the last 20 years.



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Living the Small-town Life

At Home With Brian and Gabby Simon

— By Sandra Strong

Brian Simon moved to Texas from Louisiana as a high school student to be near his dad. He bought the three-bedroom, one-bath house built in the late 1950s soon after graduating from Ennis High School and quickly got busy with the work of remodeling. "I was only 18 years old when I purchased the house," Brian admitted. "It was definitely a fixer-upper."



The home's interior and exterior have changed many times over the years. Brian likes to stay busy, so changing paint colors on the walls, adding details here and there and building new furniture pieces are commonplace at the Simon house. Brian gives his dad credit for teaching him about construction and how to build items that will last a lifetime because they are built right the first time.

Brian and Gabby met during a friendly game of cards. They were at the home of Gabby's brother-in-law and younger sister, German and Sandra Cisneros. German invited Brian, and Sandra invited Gabby. "She stole all my money," Brian said with a smile. Looking back, one could say they both came out winners.

After that first meeting, the two quickly became a couple. Today, their blended family includes the two of them, plus four children ranging in age from 7 to 9. "Gabriel and Miranda, the oldest and the youngest are mine," Gabby explained. "The twins, Lindsey and Jayden, are Brian's."

Brian and Gabby were engaged in July 2016. Their family and Sandra's family had gone on vacation together to Florida. After Gabby got Brian and the kids dressed and ready to go, it was time to get herself presentable. When she opened the bathroom door, she quickly realized she'd been left behind. "I was so upset," Gabby recalled. "I almost missed my own boat."



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As the boat neared the island, Gabby saw Brian and several other people off in the distance. "My first thought was that he and German had made some new friends," she said, referring to the two who seem to make new acquaintances wherever they go. As the boat got closer to the shoreline, Gabby was overcome with emotion. "Brian was standing in the center of a heart he'd drawn in the sand," she said, "and the four kids were holding a banner that read, 'Will you marry me?' I was so surprised!"

"Jayden helped me pick out the engagement ring months in advance,"

Brian said. "All four kids knew about the surprise, but they all kept it a secret."

"And they did a wonderful job," Gabby added.

Brian was very happy that his mom, Wonder Simon, was in attendance. She was born with an eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa. "It causes a slow and gradual loss of peripheral vision," Brian explained. "Mom really wanted to be there while she could still see."


Once home, Brian and Gabby have settled into a routine that works for their family of six. Although they would like to eventually add at least a second half-bath



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The main wall in the living room is the conversation piece for first-time guests. Brian covered the entire wall with pine slats.



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off the master bedroom, as a family, they manage quite well in the home just as it is.

The fleur-de-lis symbol is found in many of the details seen throughout the home, not because Gabby has a love for them, but because they remind Brian of home and his beloved New Orleans Saints. There is one decoratively placed on the mock fireplace mantel in the living room. Several more hang on the wall with the crosses they've collected. When Brian remodeled the kitchen the last time, he added fleur-de-lis door pulls and refaced several of the cabinets with glass fronts. The island in the center of the kitchen and the bookend shelves on both sides of the refrigerator were also created by Brian's skillful hands.

Brian removed a small bar that separated the kitchen from the dining area and added vinyl squares that look like stained concrete to the floor. Once the bar was removed, the dining area was larger, allowing plenty of room for the dining table and two benches Brian constructed specifically for the new dining area.

His handiwork is found in each room. The main wall in the living room is the conversation piece for first-time guests. Brian covered the entire wall with pine slats. The two remaining walls are painted a deep gray. The hardwood floors, which are original to the home, were sanded and painted a dark brown. The white trim brings a completeness to the room's cozy, family feel.

The wooden clock hanging on the living room wall and the blanket holder are also Brian's creations, although Gabby is getting more involved in the painting side of things. "I painted the details on the clock," she said.

"I build. Gabby paints," Brian added.

The master bedroom is a work in



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progress. Brian is working on framing and adding doors to the wall-to-wall closet he built, which he and Gabby share.

The antique chest of drawers and vanity marry the old with the new, something the Simons like to do, when it works. The glitter on the wall behind the bed adds a uniqueness to the room. "The glitter is supposed to look like stars," Gabby shared.

Gabriel and Jayden share one bedroom, while Lindsey and Miranda share another. The L-shaped bunkbeds in each room are identical. Once again, Brian crafted these with the children's needs in mind. The built-in desks under the beds that were included in the design give each child work and play space they can call their own.

The girls' room has twinkling white lights lining the desk area, while the boys' room boasts of red, white and blue lights, paying homage to the two teams — Texas Rangers and Dallas Cowboys — they love and root for. Each of the two rooms also has large, oversized locker units that Brian acquired when GAF, where he's been employed since moving to Ennis, was discarding them. "I repainted the one in the girls' room orange," he said, "and the boys' locker is now red with a Texas Ranger T on each locker door."

The boys are athletes who play football, baseball and soccer. The memory wall and the trophies displayed atop the lockers are a testament to how busy this family is. "Both boys are in karate now," Gabby shared. "Both girls are cheerleaders, and Lindsey also plays softball."

Their large corner location, which is really two lots in one, affords them the room to do most anything imaginable outdoors, from riding four-wheelers to grilling on the back patio. As a family, they love to go to the movies and bowl on Thursday nights. Including the children in all they do is what's most important to Brian and Gabby. They are just happy living the small-town life. **NOW**

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Claiming Their Identities

— By Carolyn Wills





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

In 2014, they founded a nonprofit organization known as SWAGG Programs. What SWAGG is, how it came to be, the many children's and families' lives it's touched and what its future might be is truly a remarkable story.

The goal for SWAGG is for every child to experience Serenity, Wisdom, Agility, Grace and Guidance. It is, on one hand, a glorious store filled with every item of necessity and joy and, on the other hand, a place of self-affirming programs with names like SWAGG Bag, Art and Recreations, The Beauty in Me, The Man



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Mr. Alvin Onstad



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to Be, Prom Prep Day, Orphan Awareness and Holiday Support.

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


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

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

The day they welcomed three brothers, ages 12, 8 and 5, was a happy day at the Ransons' house. The combination of three brothers was familiar and seemed ideal for everyone. As it happened, though, there was more to know. "The boys were essentially nonverbal at first, and then the oldest began asking about their two sisters and two more brothers," Larry said. Sure enough, Larry and Nikeesia would learn of four younger siblings who were also in foster care.

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

It was life-changing. Nikeesia transitioned from educational administrator to a stay-at-home mom. Larry focused on working from home as a telecommunications specialist. The office became a girl's bedroom. The media room became the 12-year-old's bedroom. "His own so he could be young again," Nikeesia said with a smile. Life became filled with Hello Kitty toothbrushes and rubber



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duckies, meals served in phases, medical and dental issues, emergency room visits and, of course, trading the family car for a 12-seater van.

All of this and, yet, there was an overriding question. "We kept asking ourselves, 'Once we adopt, then what?'" Nikeesia said. "We didn't know how we would continue our mission to bless others." As always, the answer was revealed in family prayer, as they considered some important questions: "What was God telling us to do? What did we want our kids to have? And, then," Nikeesia shared, "we asked the children, 'What do other foster kids need?'"

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

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

The store carries everything from hygiene items, medicine and cosmetic items to clothing, uniforms, diapers, shoes, socks, underwear, purses, jewelry, school supplies and SWAGG bags — duffel bags they get to fill with items they choose. The bags become theirs to keep through any transitions they may have. "We want

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children to have choices and opportunities to claim their own identity," she added.

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

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



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

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

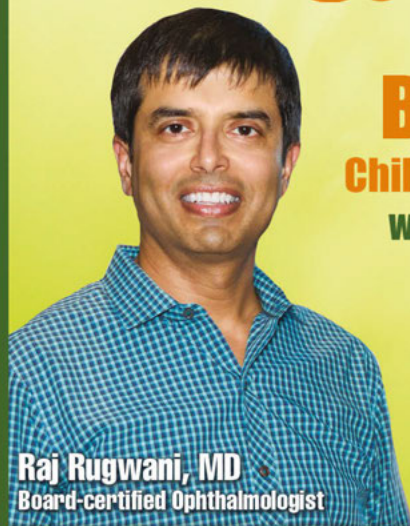
"The minute our family stepped into the SWAGG home, we felt the love," Maria Miller from Waxahachie shared.

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

Editor's Note: For more information, visit www.swaggprograms.com.

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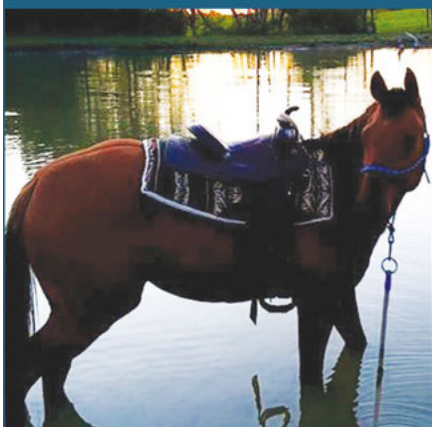
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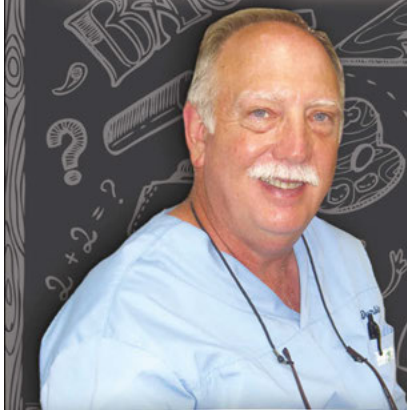
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The staff at Ennis Care Center are meeting the needs of each resident with respect and understanding. They balance out losses with gains as they create individual care plans specific for each resident.



Offering Options

When quality matters, families call on Ennis Care Center. — By Sandra Strong

If you were asked to list the five most important things in your life, what might those five things be? The list could include a multitude of things, from family and friends to church and outings to the local grocery store. When plans are being made for a loved one in need of nursing or rehabilitative care, Ennis Care Center Nursing and Rehabilitation takes great pride in finding out as much about the prospective resident beforehand as they can, all the while hoping to keep their five most important things intact. “We want to know their likes and dislikes,” said Sharon Wolfe, director of nursing. “We are serving a new generation of individuals who are no longer satisfied with things the way they used to be. They are the generation of fast entitlement who want their needs met with respect and understanding.”

The Care Plan Team at Ennis Care Center takes their

responsibility seriously, as they work to create a plan that is unique and specific for each resident. This plan includes the areas of nursing, social services, dietary, daily activities and spirituality. “We must not remove their identity,” Administrator Daniel Whitehead stated. “They come to the facility with fear of the unknown and the feeling that they may be losing their freedom to make choices. We don’t want to strip them of those things that make them who they are.”

This new generation of residents is used to having choices, so offering them options is of the utmost importance to the Ennis Care Center staff. During the admission process, a detailed assessment is done. Lots of pertinent information is gleaned from the packet — information that helps the team create a plan that will be successful for the resident. “Their expectations are

higher,” Sharon admitted. “Productivity and busyness are very important. We don’t want boredom to set in.” Experience has taught them that flexible schedules make for happy, well-adjusted residents. “The residents have a much bigger voice than in the past,” Sharon added. “There are a lot more impromptu choices in the daily schedule.” Some of those choices are as simple as when to sit down to breakfast and what days during the week to shower.

The staff at Ennis Care Center is a called group of caring individuals.

Once they get settled into their new surroundings, some will become social butterflies, while others will continue to spend time alone because that’s what they did prior to coming to Ennis Care Center. Others will stay busy throughout the day working on jigsaw puzzles, playing dominoes with new friends and socializing in the TV room or on the back patio. “We try our best to balance out their losses with some gains,” Sharon said.

“We identify with all their concerns,” Daniel explained. “We have family members with the same concerns. We are sowing seeds because we want to take care of them. We want to be their oasis to quality health care.”

This new generation of nursing facility residents relies highly on technology. They are connected to the outside world through their personal cell phones, Facebook and the Internet. “We have to know the answers to their questions before they ask,” Sharon said. “They are able to educate themselves about Ennis Care Center because they know how to search the Internet beforehand.”

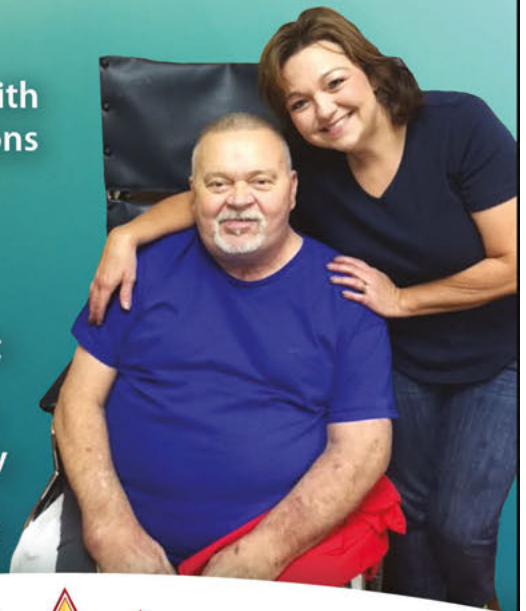
The staff at Ennis Care Center is a called group of caring individuals. They have a heart for the residents they serve, and they understand the importance of offering them individualized, personal care. “It’s a challenging calling,” Sharon admitted, “but it’s one we embrace because we love what we do.” **NOW**



Everything went really well while I was at Ennis Care Center and I am very pleased with my results. I really appreciated having a private room because I had a lot of visitors and we had plenty of room. I have recommended ECC to others before and will do it again. — James Z.

My father was in the hospital for a long time after a devastating motorcycle accident. We knew that he would need extensive rehabilitation. My father had been to ECC for successful rehab in the past so I knew if anyone could get him walking again, it was ECC. After a very long recovery and a lot of work, he is now home. His stay at ECC was wonderful! — Tina P.

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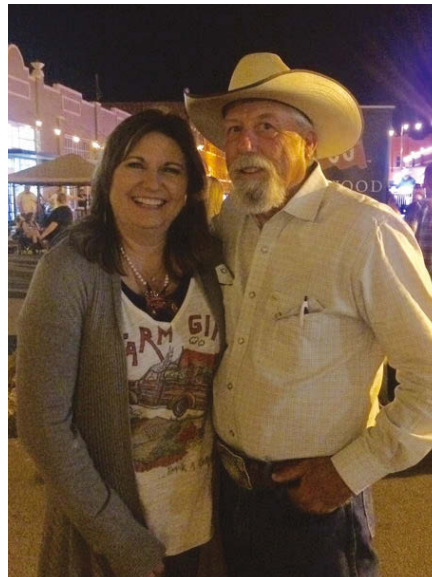
Erika Allen; Kate Gutierrez; Erica Todd and her sister, Emily Valdez; and Hannah Jones spend an enjoyable afternoon with the youngest members of their families.



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Don't Let Your Investments Take a "Vacation"

It's summer again — time for many of us to take a break and possibly hit the open road. But even if you go on vacation, you won't want your investments to do the same — in summertime or any other season. How can you help make sure your portfolio continues to work hard for you all year long? Here are a few suggestions:

- **Avoid owning too many "low growth" investments.**

As you know, different investments have different characteristics and can help you in different ways. For example, you typically own stocks because you want them to grow in value, so that you can eventually sell them for a profit. Other investments, such as certificates of deposit (CDs), provide you with a regular source of income and stability of principal — two valuable contributions to your portfolio. However, investments like CDs don't offer much in the way of growth. So if you own too many of them, you might be slowing your progress toward your important financial goals, such as a comfortable retirement.

You can maximize the productivity of your portfolio by owning a variety of investments — domestic stocks, international stocks, corporate bonds, U.S. Treasury securities, CDs and more. How much of each investment should you own? The answer depends on a variety of factors, including your age, income, risk tolerance, family situation and specific objectives. Over time, your ideal investment mix may change, but you'll likely need at least some growth potential at every stage of your life.

- **Don't let your portfolio go "unsupervised."**

Your investment portfolio can be subject to "drift" if left

alone for extended time periods. In fact, without you making any moves at all, your portfolio can move in directions that may not be favorable to you. Suppose you think your holdings should be made up of 70-percent stocks, but due to strong gains, your stocks now make up 80-percent of your portfolio. This development could lead to a risk level that feels uncomfortably high to you. That's why you should review your portfolio at least once a year, possibly with the help of a financial professional, to check your progress and make adjustments as needed.

- **Don't stop at the nearest "resting place."**

Some people hope that if they can get that one winner, they will triumph in the investment arena. But the ability to get rich quick is much more of a myth than a reality. True investment success typically requires patience, persistence and the resilience to continue investing even during market downturns.

In other words, investing is a long-term endeavor, and you need a portfolio that reflects this reality. The investment moves you make today may pay off for you decades from now. You need to establish your goals and keep them constantly in mind as you invest. And you will never really reach the end of your investment journey, because you'll need to make choices and manage your portfolio throughout your retirement years.

Hopefully, you will enjoy a pleasant vacation sometime this summer. But your investment portfolio shouldn't take time off. **NOW**

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Jeff Irish is an Edward Jones representative based in Ennis.

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A Mind on the Run

— By Betty Tryon, BSN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Through October

Ennis Farmers Market: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.,
Saturdays, historic downtown Ennis.

August 5

Honor Flight DFW Mission program:
10:00 a.m.-noon, VFW Corsicana.
Veterans of WWII, the Korean War and
Vietnam War will be honored. Contact
Cory Landrith at (469) 275-8839, Alicia
Rogers at (903) 519-1044 or Jennifer
Tatum at (903) 493-0557.

August 8

EISD School Board meeting: 7:00-9:30
p.m. No student events on agenda.

August 10

Carver and Crockett ECC Open House:
5:30-7:00 p.m.

Austin, Bowie, Houston and Travis elementary
schools Open House: 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Lummis and Miller intermediate schools
Open House: 6:30-8:00 p.m.

August 11

Breakfast of Champions: 7:30-11:30 a.m.,
EHS Ensign Cafeteria.

EHS Fish Camp: 1:00-5:00 p.m.,
EHS Auditorium. Sponsored by the
Student Council.

August 15

EJHS Open House: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

August 24

Meet the Lions: 6:30-8:00 p.m., Lions
Memorial Stadium.

August 25 — September 9

Moon Over Buffalo: Ennis Public Theatre.
For full details, pricing and curtain times,
visit www.ennispublictheatre.com.

August 26

EHS Band Annual Ice Cream Supper
Fundraiser: 6:00, EHS, Ensign Road
cafeteria and gym. Tickets are \$3 each.
Cake and ice cream will be served until
7:15. A concert with door prizes and cake
auction will follow. For more information,
call Julie Kelly at (972) 804-8672.

Ellis County SPCA Paws for the Cause
Tailgate Party: 6:00 p.m., Midlothian
Conference Center, 1 Community Dr.,
Midlothian. The event will include dinner
and a silent and live auction. Sponsorship
opportunities are available. Tickets are \$40.

Reserved tables are \$500 and up. Tickets
may be purchased online at ecspca.ejoinme.org/2017ECSPCA. For more information,
email director@elliscountyspca.org.

August 28

EHS Open House: 6:00-8:00 p.m.

September 30

Telico Volunteer Fire Department Annual
Barn Dance: 4:00 p.m., Sokol Hall, E.
Hwy. 34. The event will include a silent
and live auction, live band, activities for
the children, great food and fun for the
family. This year's event celebrates 50
years incorporated as a fire department.
For more information, contact Marvin
Trojacek at (972) 875-6655.

Ongoing:

Mondays

Sign Language Class: 4:00-5:30 p.m., Ennis
Public Library, 501 W. Ennis Ave. Classes
are free and available for all ages. No sign
up required.

Third Mondays

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

Ellis County Aggie Moms meeting:
7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United
Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin,
Waxahachie. For more information,
visit www.elliscountyyaggiemoms.org.

Fourth Mondays

Texas Master Naturalists Indian Trails
Chapter: 6:00 p.m., First United Methodist
Church, Waxahachie. The program begins
at 7:00 p.m. For more information about
the group, visit www.txmn.org/indiantrail.

Second Tuesdays

Ennis Masonic Lodge No. 369 meeting:
dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting to follow at
7:30 p.m., Masonic Lodge, 209 N. Dallas
St. For more information, contact Cecil
Curry at ccurry_98@yahoo.com.

First Wednesdays

Bluebonnet Patches Quilt Guild meeting:
9:30 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, 210
N. McKinney. Contact Judy Wensowitch
at (972) 921-8800 or Diana Buckley at
SeldomSeenQuilting@gmail.com for
more information.

Third Wednesdays

The Ellis County Christian Women's
Connection meeting: 11:30 a.m.-1:00
p.m., Waxahachie Country Club. Cost
is \$13. For more information, contact
Barb at (214) 463-5064 or email
barb.jacobs19@yahoo.com. Reservations
are due Sunday before the meeting.

Thursdays

Chess: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Ennis Public Library,
501 W. Ennis Ave., Ennis. Elementary age
and above. No sign up required.

Fourth Thursdays

MACS: 6:00 p.m., Tabernacle Baptist
Church Life Center. Evening includes
a covered dish meal and a program of
singing or informational message.

Second Thursdays

Mom's Connected meeting: 9:30-11:30
a.m., Tabernacle Baptist Church, 1200
Country Club Rd. Call the church office at
(972) 875-3861 for more information.

First and Third Fridays

MOPS meeting: 9:30-11:30 a.m. during
regular school semester, Tabernacle Baptist
Church, 1200 Country Club Rd. A ministry
for mothers of preschoolers in the Ennis
community. Visit www.tabernaclefamily.org/mops/.

Second Fridays

Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support
Group: 9:30-10:30 a.m., Ennis Regional
Medical Center.

Fourth Saturdays

Bristol Opry: 7:00 p.m., featuring local
singers and musicians. Sponsored by
Bristol Cemetery Association and Caring
Hands of Bristol. For more information,
contact Jim Gatlin at (972) 846-2211.

Sundays

GriefShare meeting: 2:30-4:00 p.m.,
Cowboy Church of Ellis County in the
sanctuary Youth Inc. room. For more
information, call (972) 935-9801 or visit
www.cowboychurchofelliscounty.org.

*Submissions are welcome and published as
space allows. Send your current event details
to sandra.strong@nowmagazines.com.*



In the Kitchen With Tiffany Sarmienta

— *By Virginia Riddle*

Most great cooks start honing their culinary skills early in life, but Tiffany Sarmienta admits it just wasn't her thing to do as a child. Life has a way of changing interests though. "When I got married 10 years ago, I didn't know how to cook anything, except Hamburger Helper, and I didn't want my husband, Anthony, to eat only that. I found Pinterest and started experimenting with things he, and now our kids, enjoy eating," she said. "I'm a self-taught cook."

A banker by profession, Tiffany became a stay-at-home mom after the couple's first child was born. She homeschools their four children and likes to bake with them. Tiffany explained, "I enjoy getting the kids in the kitchen to learn without them realizing they are learning." **NOW**

Peanut Butter Balls

- 1 cup Karo Light Corn Syrup**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 1 1/2 cups peanut butter**
- 6 cups Rice Krispies**

- 1.** Melt the syrup and sugar on medium heat, stirring constantly to blend well, until mixture boils.
- 2.** Add the peanut butter; continue stirring until the mixture is creamy and begins to boil.
- 3.** Remove from heat. Mix in the Rice Krispies; rub butter on your hands to keep from burning them.
- 4.** Roll the mixture into balls; let them cool.

Meat and Potatoes

- 1 lb. ground beef**
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and diced**
- 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce**
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups water**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- Cumin, to taste**
- Garlic powder, to taste**
- Loaf of bread**

- 1.** Brown the meat; drain.
- 2.** Add potatoes, tomato sauce and water; season with salt, pepper, cumin and garlic powder.
- 3.** Cook mixture on medium heat until it bubbles and potatoes are soft. Liquids

should cover rest of mixture; if the liquids are absorbed before potatoes are softened, add more water.

- 4.** When mixture is done, serve it over toasted bread.

Chicken Casserole

- 1 lb. chicken breasts, boneless and skinless**
- 1 26-oz. can cream of chicken soup**
- 1 26-oz. can cream of mushroom soup**
- Corn tortillas**
- Shredded cheddar cheese, to taste**

- 1.** Boil the chicken; shred. Preheat oven to 350 F.
- 2.** In a bowl, mix the chicken with both soups.
- 3.** Cut tortillas into strips; cover the bottom of a casserole pan with the strips.
- 4.** Cover the strips with a layer of the chicken mixture; sprinkle with cheese.
- 5.** Alternate additional layers of the strips and chicken mixture until all the chicken mixture is used; top with a layer of cheese.
- 6.** Cook in the oven until all cheese is melted.

Baked Berry Oatmeal

- 2 cups quick-cooking oats**
- 1 tsp. baking powder**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1/4 tsp. salt**
- 1/3 cup brown sugar, packed**
- 2 cups milk**
- 2 eggs**
- 1/2 Tbsp. vanilla**
- 3 Tbsp. honey**
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. butter, melted**
- 2 cups frozen mixed berries (divided use)**

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 375 F. In a bowl, mix the oats, baking powder, cinnamon, salt and brown sugar; set aside.
- 2.** In another bowl, whisk together the milk, eggs, vanilla, honey and butter.
- 3.** Layer half the berries in a 2-qt. baking dish; top evenly with the dry mixture.
- 4.** Pour the milk mixture over the dry mixture; top with the remaining berries.
- 5.** Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until the oats have absorbed the liquid.

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

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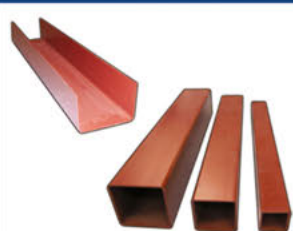


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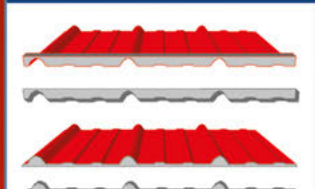


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