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September 2009

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**Sarah Drew
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Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

I hope you will enjoy this issue, which is dedicated to the many ways we can lift up our spirits in spite of many of life's circumstances. Whether it is finding an enjoyable hobby like local lady Stephanie Welch did, or celebrating major life achievements with single mom, Sarah Drew Watson, celebrating and encouraging each other is really what makes our community so special.

Maybe there is someone you can reach out to and encourage today. However, if you find yourself to be the one needing a good "spirit lift," then may this issue offer help, hope and possible positive ideas for the future.

Sincerely,
Diana Merrill Claussen
Red OakNOW Editor



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Road to Renewal

— By Diana Merrill
Claussen

From a very young age, Brenda Elledge knew she wanted to help people. It all began when Brenda was in junior high school. “One day I was watching *The Cosby Show*,” Brenda recalled. “That’s when I realized that not every family got along like the Cosbys did. So I decided I wanted to help people and families learn how to have happy and healthy relationships.” Brenda graduated college in 1992 and has since earned her master’s degree in counseling education and is a licensed professional counselor, or LPC. After graduation, Brenda found herself on a journey, following her dream of helping others and becoming who she was meant to be.

In 1999 Brenda spoke with one of the leaders at the Oaks Fellowship Church and started a local counseling program. “I had really good [information] about pre-marital training and they suggested I start the counseling program,” she said, explaining that her background in counseling helped bring the idea to fruition. The program soon grew from just one counselor, Brenda, to six part-time counselors.

As the director of the church’s counseling center, Brenda is thankful for the opportunity to help and encourage others. Her program works with people of all ages who find themselves experiencing a variety of life circumstances. “We see adults, teens and children who may be experiencing situations like divorce, ADD, addiction, family matters, abuse and depression,” Brenda said. “I mainly work with adults, individuals and

couples. One of the most common situations we see nowadays is a person dealing with depression. The thing about depression is that it can become one of those things where people don’t realize they have it as badly as they actually do because they have lived with it and gotten used to it.”

The symptoms of depression range from a loss of energy, feelings of sadness or hopelessness, changes in weight, appetite or sleep or even concentration problems. The one to first notice the depression is usually a family member or friend. Once a person realizes they might need to seek Brenda’s assistance, there are often a few misconceptions that need to be addressed. “There are still a lot of stigmas about what people call mental illness, anxiety, depression and stress-related illnesses, which are all actually very common [situations],” Brenda noted. Unfortunately in today’s society, these stigmas keep people from seeing a counselor, who is at times the only person who may be able to assist them in navigating through their dilemma. Brenda offers encouragement to those who are apprehensive when it comes to seeking counseling. “Counseling is not for everybody,” Brenda said, “but for some people it is [necessary].”

Circumstances in life affect each of us in different ways. Our history, experience, emotional state and even our physical condition contributes to our ability to work through the trials of life. “People react differently. You can’t control



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hereditary, genetics, pre-disposition — and those factors all come into play when you are dealing with the stressors of life,” Brenda said, explaining that these factors are often why some people are able to handle certain situations and work through them and others are not. “Things like divorce will rock someone’s world,” she added. “Some people might pick themselves up and keep on going, but for others it can be so devastating and hit them extremely hard. The aftereffects are different for everyone, and we don’t always know the reason why.”

Often, the most difficult first step toward wellness for Brenda’s clients is admitting they need help and cannot fix the problem on their own.

“Sometimes, it is hard for a person to realize there is a problem because they have lived in that issue for so long that it becomes normal to them. They don’t realize things can be better,” Brenda explained. “When a client comes in to see me, I want to first find out what their goal is. I then let them know that I see us as a team working towards their goal.”

A common misconception Brenda has encountered from her clients is that a counselor will tell a patient what to do. “I just help guide and direct them towards ways that will help them meet that goal,” she said. “Telling someone what to do doesn’t bring about a lasting change. When a client/counselor work together as a team is when real change happens. Through my training and experience, I assist the person in navigating through their problem. The client is the one who has to put what they’ve learned into practice.”

Once the person is on the road to their new beginning, Brenda offers a few insights that will assist them on their journey. First, she encourages them to get out and exercise because, “it is important to one’s emotional well-being.” She also teaches her clients that it is helpful to learn their limits and choose healthy and encouraging people to be around. Brenda believes faith is another important aspect in a



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person's life, and she encourages her clients to grow in their spirituality. "I think about and am concerned for people. I even pray for them during the week," she shared.

Brenda's patients often discover that all they need to navigate through life's challenges are a few minor changes, such as changing the way a family interacts and communicates with each



"We see adults, teens and children who may be experiencing situations like divorce, ADD, addiction, family matters, abuse and depression."

other on subjects such as money and budgets. "Sometimes, those changes can help make life more manageable," Brenda said. "Other times, they might just need a third party to help them make the changes they are already ready to make."


In a world that is not always as easy as it appears, with issues that do not get solved as easily as they do on a 30-minute television show, Brenda is working hard to help those in need. "Living with depression, anxiety, family issues or any other issue is so painful and people need to realize that there is hope and things can get better — and [getting better is] worth fighting for," Brenda encouraged. "I love doing what I do because I get to see people make such positive changes in their lives. It's a real privilege to be trusted to work with people through some of their toughest times. It's also a real reward to be able to see them come out on the other side." **NOW**

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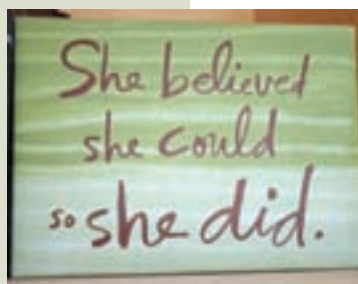
Where Their Story Begins

— By Amanda Madden Pitt

“She believed she could, so she did.’ This is my motto,” said single mom, Sarah Drew Watson, while sitting in her living room on “miracle” furniture, in the three-bedroom Red Oak home she purchased last year. “When we got this place, I decided I was not bringing ugly furniture to our beautiful new house,” Sarah said. After a few months of saving and using boxes as foot rests, they purchased furniture to match the cozy ambience of their new living area. “I never thought I’d be able to afford a house.” The children also had their part in the decision. “They looked at all of the houses with me and prayed about it with me,” she said.

Kiley, now age 9, Tyson, 12 and Tristin, 13, remind their mom daily that anything in life is possible. Six years ago, at 28, Sarah got to do something she feels was a gift. Newly on her own, with children then ages 3, 6 and 7, she went back to school and earned a bachelor’s degree in speech communication from the University of Texas at Arlington. “I used to say to the kids, ‘Guys, we are so blessed, because not many mommies like me get to go back to school and get this chance.’ They know and appreciate that we work really hard for everything that we have. They have seen that anything is possible, because they know how hard it was during those times that we cancelled cable and didn’t go out to eat. I think they appreciate that.” She remembered the day she graduated. “Tristin used to help me study my Spanish flashcards. She quizzed me every night. Tyson watched me do my performances and critiqued me. So it was this huge team effort, and when I graduated, they were just as excited, if not more excited, than I was because they felt ownership in it.”

When Sarah describes what makes each of her children unique, her joy and pride are evident. All three are in gifted



At Home With Sarah Drew Watson

and talented programs at school, but their character, strengths, weaknesses and personalities are the most important things to their mom. These are the attributes that make them special. “My daughter Kiley, who is going into the fourth grade next year, inherited my grandma’s love of rummage sales and auctions. So when my grandma passed away last summer, she got all of Grandma’s cardinals and snow globes. She has them all proudly displayed [in her bedroom],” Sarah said. “Kiley’s love language is words of affirmation, the same as mine. So we have what we call ‘love fests’ where we tell each other how wonderful we are. One time, Kiley gave me a massage and I asked, ‘How much do I owe ya?’ She replied, ‘You’ve already paid in love and dedication.’”

“Tyson has the best sense of humor of anyone, ever, and he’s super protective of us girls. He’s fearless, nothing embarrasses him at all.” Tyson will be the sports anchor for the middle school Hawk Eye News team this coming year when he starts seventh grade. One wall in Tyson’s room is a tribute to Texas A&M where he hopes to attend college and major in journalism.

“Tristin is like Snow White. Babies love her, little animals

Chris the King

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love her, and she loves to bake,” Sarah said. “During the school year, she wakes up at 5:30 a.m. She keeps us on time, and she has a great sense of direction.” Direction in life seems to also be Tristin’s forte, as “when she was really little, we were watching something on TLC about premature babies and she was like, ‘Mommy, I want to do that,’ about the neonatal nurses. She was 5 or 6, I mean really young,” Sarah said. “I can remember in third grade she was studying for a test and said, ‘If I’m going to be able



to save babies, I have to make a really good grade on this test.’ It’s funny, because she [Tristin] really likes science and math; whereas Tyson, Kiley and I read all the time. We always want to be in a book or writing a story.”

One of the greatest lessons her unexpectedly single life has taught Sarah is the value of every hour she gets to spend with her family. “Forever and always and no matter what” — that’s really what I want my kids to know. That’s how I’ll always love you, and that’s how I’ll always be there for

you,” she mentioned about the plaque that hangs in their living room.

The Watson family also enjoys helping people. “We volunteer for Meals on Wheels every summer,” Sarah said. “Tyson will go up to the older men and if they have a military flag, he walks up to them and shakes their hand and says something like, ‘Hey, are you a vet?’ They love having a young boy who shows them that respect.” As a tribute to both of her grandfathers who had Alzheimer’s disease, Sarah and her children also



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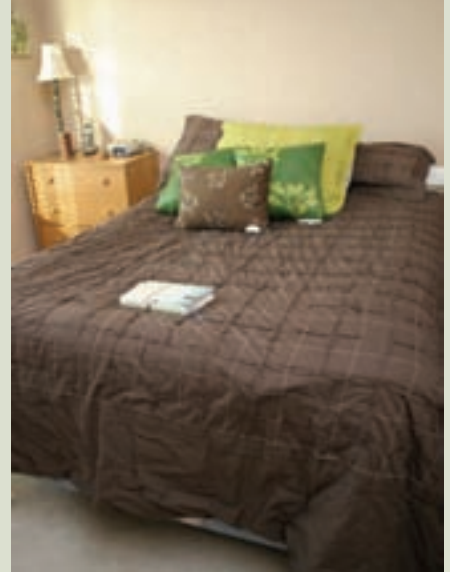
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walk in the Alzheimer's marathon every year. "In the things that we do together, really we are a team," Sarah said. "I like to think that we're not a statistic and that all of the things that we've gone through, we're going to be better for it someday."

Though her time is limited, this single mom does have one hobby of her own — teaching turbo dance and hip-hop classes at the local Zumba® studio called Dance A-Weigh. This activity has helped her lose 61 pounds since last October.

The Watson's story is inspirational proof that difficulties, mixed with faith, often make the people who go through them better, stronger and relationally closer in the end. "I'm lucky because I've been a single mom for six years now. Most people would kind of look at that and think [sadly], *Oh, she's a single mom.* But I feel lucky because I really get to have such a close relationship with the kids. They get to be my number one priority. We're a great team."

As she embarks on her newest

journey this upcoming year — to pursue an online graduate degree in health education from Texas Women's University — Sarah and her young family continue believing Sarah's motto: that they can, and then they do. "My dream is to one day work for the Alzheimer's Foundation, training their caregivers," Sarah said. "I can take my time getting my master's. So hopefully, this will be a start in the right direction." **YOW**

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Lucky Charms

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Whether changing your hair color or adding baubles to apparel to reflect your sense of style and taste, the art of self-expression can be accomplished in many ways. Local resident Stephanie Welch's interest in artistic self-expression began at a very early age.

Many of Stephanie's earliest memories of creating art involve her grandmother, Nana. "My grandmother was an artist and my inspiration even as a small child," Stephanie said. "She painted using oils and watercolors. I remember sitting at her kitchen table, and I would color a picture or paint any kind of object I could think of. Nana would always make me feel uniquely special and creative," she added.

Throughout her life, Stephanie has always been involved in creating and experiencing different aspects of art. It was not until a few years ago, however, that Stephanie came face-to-face with her artistic future. One day while visiting a craft show, she saw bottle cap jewelry. "I just thought they were the cutest little things," she exclaimed.

"When my daughter, Tori, saw them she wanted one of every piece she saw."

Stephanie was inspired by the baubles. "I thought I would try to figure out how to make my own bottle cap jewelry," she said. "I really thought I could figure out how to make them." Stephanie began creating her own original bottle cap charms and pendants by using many different materials, lacquers and adhesives. She even embellished many of the caps with ribbons, pictures, names and logos.

Since that pivotal moment, Stephanie has been making bottle cap jewelry for just about everyone. At first it was just for Tori's friends, but then, "I started selling them at pee wee football games, area craft shows and boutiques," she said. Her pieces just kept getting better, each one more creative and elaborate than the last.

Stephanie expanded her talents, creating cell phone charms, domino pendants, zipper pulls, key chains, hair bows, headbands, magnets and even flip-flops. Her flip-flops, popular with

just about any female, come adorned with decorated bottle caps, ribbons, feathers and just about anything she can dream up. Stephanie's shoes are seen on the feet of many cheer squads, pageant girls and even stylish grandmas.

Stephanie's crafts are not only fashionable; they are also fun. Having a teenage daughter helps keep her current on what is popular. "She gives me good feedback, too," Stephanie smiled. Tori sometimes accompanies her mom to craft shows, but she is not the only family member who assists in Stephanie's artistic pastime. "Some days when I'm at work, my husband, Skip, will be home punching holes in the bottle cap pendants," Stephanie said. "It's almost like we have a little assembly line." Skip also attends shows with Stephanie. "He's always had an interest in what I do," she smiled.

Stephanie is excited that her inspiration has turned into a big artistic adventure. "Designing the pieces is my favorite part," she exclaimed. She is able to create the designs via her computer. "Though, designing is the step that takes the longest, [it] is the most rewarding for me. It doesn't get old to me because the styles are always changing and there is always something new to make."

Many of Stephanie's art admirers

like to use her bottle cap creations to hang on their Christmas trees. "They make really cute tree ornaments," she said. "During the holidays, parents usually request bottle caps or dominos with their child's picture on it to give to family members as gifts," she added.

Stephanie's crafts are not just for girls or decoration. "I make items for guys also," she said. "Of course, the guys prefer their bottle cap necklaces on leather chains [as opposed to the Tiffany style preferred by girls]." She is also frequently asked to create custom key chains. "I have several guy friends who contribute to my bottle cap art," Stephanie said, referring to the men at



the Red Oak Fire Department with whom she works. "They will bring me their used bottle caps, but my jewelry is actually made from unused bottle tops," she laughed.

If not for the support of her friends and family, Stephanie believes her dream of creating bottle cap jewelry would have never come true. "At first I was afraid my husband would think he was going to be throwing in his 'man card' with the whole bottle cap, domino, flip-flop thing, but he has been my biggest supporter and has had a few ideas which have been pretty helpful," she smiled. **ARTS**



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Reaching Her Goals

— By Kate McClendon

Jaclyn Lauterbach was born and reared in San Antonio, where her family still lives. She moved to our area in 1999 to attend Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU). While there, she ran track for the SAGU Lions track team. She enjoyed athletic success in college, competing twice in national competitions. She now tries to help other students realize and accomplish those athletic goals.

Jaclyn was an education major, something she said she had always wanted to do. “It’s just what I’ve always enjoyed doing,” she said. “I’ve always liked working with children and it seemed like a natural fit.” Now Jaclyn calls the Red Oak area home, following graduation from SAGU in 2003. She lives here with her husband, Dennis, and her three stepchildren: Liana, Lexie and Luke, 12, 10 and 8 respectively. “I like its small-town feeling,” Jaclyn said about life in Red Oak. “Everyone knows each other, but it’s still close to Dallas.”

Jaclyn works at the Red Oak Life School, a charter school that began in 1998 in Oak Cliff as “a tuition-free school with the quality of an expensive private school.” Eventually, the Life School expanded to include a Red Oak campus, where Jaclyn has been teaching for six years. She loves the school and now teaches kindergarten. “I taught first grade for the first three years,” she recalled, explaining that she switched to the younger grade because she liked her fellow teachers in the kindergarten department and the challenge of working with the kindergarten age. “I love seeing how far the children come at the end of the year,” she said. She instructs through what she calls “love learning” — teaching the children to be loving, caring, respectful and patient. “It can be a lot of fun,” she added.

Jaclyn also serves double duty as the assistant varsity volleyball coach and the junior high track coach. She spends much of her time coaching the long-distance teams, such as the 400-meter and the mile-and-a-half relays. The previous school year was actually her first year as coach for both sports,



but it was not her first experience in athletics. “In college at SAGU I ran track for two years,” Jaclyn said. “As a team, we went to nationals both of those years. It was great.”

Her teams are coming close to helping Jaclyn meet her goals of finding success in both varsity volleyball and junior high track. Both the volleyball and track teams made it to district competitions this past year. For the volleyball team, it was the first year a varsity team had made the journey to district. The girls did even better than that, continuing on to win district and compete in the playoffs. “It was a pretty big deal, and it was a lot of fun,” Jaclyn said of their big success.

Though it was only her first year to coach, the students have already made an impression on Jaclyn. She has come to love being both a teacher and a coach, and she has gotten to know the team members really well. “I like being able to help the volleyball girls work together and teaching them to work as a team,” she said. “I get to help them in sports, but also in life as well. I’m just really enjoying it.”

Jaclyn does face challenges in her dual role as teacher and coach of two sports. She is usually busy with her kindergarteners, which is separate and much different from the high school students. “Right now the biggest challenge is that I only get to see the team members at practice,” Jaclyn explained. “I can’t really interact with them at school since I teach kindergarten.” The school is also increasing in student enrollment very rapidly, another issue Jaclyn and the other teachers and coaches have to face. Right now, the school has a little more than 1,000 students, a number that continues to grow every year. “There

are so many students coming through, it takes a lot more teamwork to ensure every student reaches their full potential," Jaclyn said.

When she is not busy teaching or coaching, Jaclyn enjoys working out — she goes to the YMCA at least three or four times a week — and teaching Sunday school at her church. During the summer, she also likes to volunteer for Meals on Wheels in the Waxahachie and Red Oak areas. Jaclyn will continue to serve as the junior high track coach



“I get to help them in sports, but also in life as well.”

this year. One important goal she has set for the team is to increase their distance and improve their times. She also has a few more general goals for both teams. “I want to continue to have the athletes work together and grow in strength as teams,” Jaclyn said, “and I’d like to go to district and playoffs again.” With such a dedicated coach who leads by example, these have a high chance for success. **NOW**

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Caring for Creatures

— By Diana Merrill Claussen



Growing up in the Red Oak area left a very memorable impression on Dr. Mark Stanfill. As a youngster, he remembers “the good community aspect where you are treated like family,” he said.

Once he became older, Mark graduated from Red Oak High School and later Texas A&M. While attending college at A&M to become a doctor of veterinary medicine, Mark met his wife, Karen. He was enrolled in veterinary school while she attended the school of engineering. From the time they met in 1986 to now, the Stanfills have not only supported each other, but they have supported families, the community and the animals within it. It was the wonderful atmosphere of the small town and the good community aspect which inspired

the Stanfills to move back to Ovilla and open a veterinary clinic.

When the couple first opened the Animal Hospital of Ovilla in May 1999, “We just took a step of faith to start the business here and we were very accepted,” Dr. Stanfill said. “We also have a good team who is part of our family. We have a lot of love for each other.” That caring atmosphere is extended to everyone who walks through the clinic’s doors.

When a client brings their pet to the hospital, both pet and owner are treated as if they are family. The bond between the client and their four-legged family member is understood as well. “Some people don’t realize the bond with their animal or how strong it is until the pet gets sick,” Dr. Stanfill said. “We focus on doing what is best for



the pet,” Karen added. With that goal in mind, Dr. Stanfill believes in the importance of helping a client to understand what is going on with their pet in order to aid them in deciding what treatment is in their best interest. The clinic strives to determine each pet’s lifestyle and customize a plan for its needs.

The hospital team is very caring and personal; they even give tours of the facility. From the kennel areas, lab and treatment rooms to the state-of-the-art surgical suites, the Animal Hospital of Ovilla team works on not only canine and feline clients but just about any type of animal imaginable. “We have seen hamsters, gerbils, reptiles, birds and exotics,” Karen said. Their patients are all housed in their own wards, and there is even a quarantine room for any potentially contagious cases.

Animal Hospital of Ovilla is not just in the business to provide general veterinary services such as exams, blood work, X-rays and dental. “We also offer complete monitoring during the pet’s surgery and even an oxygen cage if

needed," Dr. Stanfill said.

The Stanfill team is in the business to serve the community in a variety of ways, both professionally and personally. Both Dr. and Mrs. Stanfill serve on community boards and are involved in the Chamber of Commerce. Because the Stanfills and their team are so invested in the lives of their clients and their pets, they are also available to help their clients during emotionally hard times. "When you lose a pet, it is just like losing a human family member," Dr. Stanfill said. "We have



counseled many through [those] trials and deeply care for them. We will also minister to them with our hearts."

The Animal Hospital of Ovilla is located at 3357 Ovilla Road. Their hours are Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m. To contact the clinic, call (972) 617-9996 or log on to www.ovillavet.com. **NOW**



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Encouraging Education

— By Diana Merrill Claussen

Eileen Zelmanow enjoys helping people overcome obstacles and accomplish lifelong dreams. This local lady loves working with people of all ages and being the key that helps unlock many figurative doors in their lives. She has a passion for helping the public understand people with disabilities, and with multiple master's degrees in education, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders and math endorsement, Eileen has many unique ways of giving special care to her students.

Eileen has established a practice within our area to assist people with learning disabilities and visual perception, auditory, speech or language impairments. From helping those with dyslexia re-train their brain to taking the extra time to help individuals overcome more debilitating roadblocks, Eileen has the training, tools and means to help her students face and conquer serious obstacles.

With a background in education and education remediation, Eileen is experienced in testing and diagnosing many different learning disabilities. "I work with children and adults and change the way they take in, process and give out information," she explained. For those who might need additional testing, she works with a psychologist who does psychological testing. If necessary, educational testing is also conducted. "Then we put [the test results] all together to determine the person's weaknesses, strengths and disability," she added.



Due to inadequate funding, school systems are not always able to hire the number of special education teachers needed so that every child is given the necessary time to help them overcome their obstacles. This is where Eileen steps in. "I am hired mainly by parents, organizations and individuals," Eileen said. "I always tell the parents I can fill in the academic bricks, but they have to expose the child to general knowledge. If the child is shy or withdrawn, I'll suggest they enroll the child into tae kwon do. If a child tells me they are afraid of something, then I will stand behind them and make them [face their fear]. They have to know they have nothing to be afraid of." Eileen feels that her suggestions are especially important in cases when the client may suffer from low self-esteem. "I recommend tae kwon do because it helps to build self-confidence, self-control and self-respect," she added.

People discover they are able to overcome a tremendous amount of obstacles when they have someone like

Eileen in their corner to instruct, encourage and cheer them on. One of her current students is a 67-year-old man who is losing his hearing. When she first started working with him, he had a first-grade reading level. "After working 20 hours with me, he is now at a seventh-grade reading level, so he will be able to communicate even after his hearing is lost," she shared.

Although many of Eileen's cases might sound bleak at first, she addresses each student and their obstacle with the spunk and tenacity of a coach, cheerleader and friend. Regarding learning disabilities, she said, "The biggest thing I want to get out to parents and people is that whatever it is that you may face, it can be fixed if the parents and the child are motivated to help."

Eileen used to have an office in Dallas but now works out of her Red Oak home. Her Old English sheepdogs reside there as well and on many occasions, Eileen has been known to incorporate a dog or two to assist her students in opening up. The dogs help bridge

educational and even relational gaps. "I will use them to put a child at ease," Eileen said of her canine helpers. "I will only use one dog at a time, and I like for the client to bond with that one particular dog. Sometimes, learning disabled children don't have friends and have trouble making friendships, so the dog becomes their friend." Her sheepdogs help open the door to friendship, which in turn removes any barriers to learning. Eileen believes this process not only helps the child feel more at home but that it also "helps them to learn respect for animals because they watch how I treat the dog," she added.

Eileen's dogs often accompany her to schools where she conducts workshops for the students. "I have even taught the kids animal care [and] given home



training tips as well," she said. Because all of her dogs are reserve champions, Eileen is also well-versed in showing and training her canine friends. Her teacher's helpers have quite a pedigree; helpful Luther even won the first award of merit at the Madison Square Gardens New York Westminster Kennel Club Show.

Whether alone or accompanied by her four-footed friends, Eileen has bridged educational gaps in the lives of many of her students. "I love kids, and I love changing kids' lives," she said with passion. With a smile, she added, "In today's society we are not going to be able to leave our children with a large inheritance. So the best thing that we can do is give them the inheritance of a good education." **NOW**

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• Dr. Mark Stanfill, top left, gave Monty Renteria a drink at the 10th anniversary celebration held at the Animal Hospital of Ovilla. • A band, top center, recently performed at a local event. • One family, top right, spent quality time together before school started. • Wanda Johnson, bottom left, sold her gorgeous photographs during Waxahachie Trade Days. • A youngster from Ambassadors for Christ Church, bottom right, enjoyed his time at the park.



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Look Who's Cooking

— By Faith Browning

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MARY'S CHEESE BALL

8 oz. cheddar cheese, grated
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/2 medium onion, minced
2 Tbsp. chives, dried, or 3 Tbsp. freshly chopped
2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
1 cup nuts, chopped fine
Mix all ingredients together, except nuts; form into a ball. Roll ball in nuts until evenly coated. Chill for several hours. Enjoy!

BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER SALAD

8 slices bacon, fried and crumbled
1 head broccoli, chopped into bite-size pieces
1 head cauliflower, chopped into bite-size pieces
2 cups mild cheddar, grated
1 small onion, chopped

DRESSING:

1 cup sour cream
1 cup salad dressing
1 cup sugar
Toss together all salad ingredients. In separate bowl, combine dressing ingredients. Pour dressing over salad, coating evenly. Refrigerate at least 1 hour or overnight.

CORN CASSEROLE

1 16-oz. can cream style corn
1 16-oz. can whole kernel corn
1 cup sour cream

1/2 stick butter, melted
1 pkg. corn bread mix
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
Combine all ingredients except cheese. Bake at 350 F for 40 minutes, topping with cheese the last 5 minutes.

ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

1 lb. ground beef or chicken
1 14-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
1 14-oz. can cream of chicken soup
1 pint sour cream
1 soup can of milk
1 12-oz. can green chilies
2 cups cheddar cheese, grated
8-10 flour tortillas
Brown ground beef or chicken; drain. Combine remaining ingredients, except cheese and tortillas, with meat; stir well. Place a layer of mixture in bottom of greased casserole dish. Add a layer of tortillas, then a layer of cheese. Continue layering, ending with cheese. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour.

PEANUT OR PECAN CLUSTERS

1 oz. paraffin, grated or cut into small pieces
1 6-oz. pkg. peanut butter, butterscotch or white chocolate chips
1 12-oz. pkg. chocolate chips
2 tsp. peanut butter, creamy or crunchy
3 cups peanuts or pecans
In double boiler, melt everything together except nuts.

After melted, add nuts. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto wax paper to harden. Enjoy!

MARY'S CANDY

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1 stick butter, melted
1 cup peanut butter, creamy or crunchy
3 cups powdered sugar
9 oz. chocolate or chocolate chips
2 oz. paraffin, grated or cut into small pieces
toothpicks
Mix together butter, peanut butter and powdered sugar; roll into balls. In double boiler, melt together chocolate and paraffin. Place balls on toothpicks and dip into chocolate mixture.

PINEAPPLE AND ORANGE CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix
4 eggs
1 cup vegetable oil
1 8-oz. can mandarin oranges, including juice

ICING:

1 large tub Cool Whip
1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding
1 small can crushed pineapple, slightly drained
Mix all cake ingredients. Pour batter into greased cake pan of choice. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes. Mix all frosting ingredients; frost cooled cake.

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September is Life Insurance Awareness Month

— By Andrea Walton

If you were no longer there to provide for them, would your family be able to keep their home? Could your children attend college? If you answered “no” to either of these questions, it may be time to look at your life insurance coverage.

September has been designated Life Insurance Awareness Month by the Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education (LIFE). The Foundation is encouraging people to examine their life insurance policies to determine if they are adequately protected.

While your needs may vary, the 2004 Human Life Value study conducted by LIFE found that the average life value among U.S. citizens was \$803,788. A male's value, meaning the economic value to others, was nearly \$1 million, while a female's value was over \$660,000. While the life insurance need is not as high as those values, the average life insurance policy for males in the study was

closer to \$300,000 while women had \$165,245.

Life insurance can be the foundation of a sound financial plan, especially given the continuing need after the death of a breadwinner. Think of it as a safety net should a wage earner die unexpectedly.

In addition to that, permanent life insurance may accumulate a cash value that can be accessed while you are still living. While any loans from a policy will accrue interest and diminish the cash value and any subsequent death benefit,



the proceeds could be used for any number of reasons.

Life insurance can be one of the most important purchases you make. Take some time during Life Insurance Awareness Month to examine your life insurance needs. **NOW**

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Community Calendar

Every Monday

Celebrate Recovery meeting: First Baptist of Red Oak, 103 West Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-3591. www.redoakcelebraterecovery.com.

Third Monday

Ellis County Aggie Moms: 7:00 p.m., Waxahachie First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin. Call Cheryl Bell at (972) 723-0341.

First Tuesday

PrimeTimes Senior Group meeting: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Oaks Fellowship, 777 S. I-35 E. Fun, food and fellowship. (214) 376-8208.

Buffalo Creek Grief Recovery Group: 9:00 a.m., 1329 Brown St., Waxahachie. (972) 937-5999.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Alcoholics Anonymous meeting: 7:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 600 Red Oak Rd. (972) 617-9100.

Every Wednesday

Family Story Time: 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Red Oak Public Library, 200 Lakeview Pkwy. All ages welcome. (469) 218-1230. www.redoakpubliclibrary.org.

Wednesdays and Thursdays

Senior Citizens Club meeting: 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 207 W. Red Oak Rd. Games, exercise and activities. (972) 576-2777.

First and Third Thursday

Senior luncheon. Free for residents, \$5 for non-residents. Pre-register the Tuesday before each event. For information and to register, call Jennifer at (972) 576-3414.

Third Thursday

American Business Womens' Association meeting. www.abwa-empoweringwomen.org.

First Friday

Worship Jam: 6:30 p.m., Bubba Que BBQ's front porch.

Second Friday

Lonestar Cowboy Church of Ellis County play day: 7:00 p.m., 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. (972) 576-0900.

First Saturday

Red Oak Fire Rescue CPR classes: 9:00 a.m. Call early to register. (469) 218-7713.

Second Saturday

Lonestar Cowboy Church Motorcycle group ride: 1011 E. Ovilla Rd. (972) 576-0900.

September 1-10

Southwest Children's Chorus auditions. To schedule an audition, call (214) 649-3231 or visit www.swchildrenschorus.org.

September 10-12

Glenn Heights Family Fest: Heritage Community Park, 400 E. Bear Creek Rd. (972) 223-1690.

September 18

Red Oak High School homecoming game: 7:00 p.m., Goodloe stadium.

September 19

Red Oak Founder's Day: Red Oak City Park. Parade and festivities begin at 9:00 a.m. (972) 617-0906. www.redoaktx.org.

September 26

Ovilla Heritage Day: 9:00 a.m., behind the Ovilla fire department. (972) 617-7262.

September 27

Barkin' Bow Wow Luau, benefiting Ellis County SPCA: Hawaiian Falls Waterpark, Mansfield. Come out and play in the water with your dog.

Tickets on sale at the shelter or visit www.elliscountyspca.org. (972) 935-0756.

November 3

WRC Pregnancy Center of Ellis County annual Roundup 2009 benefit dinner: 6:30 p.m., Creekside Church, Highway 287 between Waxahachie and Midlothian. The guest speaker is Jody Dean, a journalist from North Texas and the *KLUV Morning Show* host. Tickets are complimentary, but reservations are required. For more information, call (972) 938-7900 or (972) 878-0784.



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