

# THE *upbeat* REPORTER

WINTER 2023



## *Living a Life of Purpose*

**Lisa Blake**  
Leadership  
Amarillo

**Traci Rogers**  
No Boundaries  
International

**Margie Netherton**  
National Alliance  
on Mental Illness

**ALSO  
INSIDE**

**RANDALL & DONNA SIMS**  
*A Dream with a Purpose*

*Joy Uselton* TESTIMONY  
FCA VOLLEYBALL COACH

Master Electrician  
License #11809

# CHAMBERS ELECTRIC

LICENSED AND INSURED  
**COMMERCIAL**  
**RESIDENTIAL**  
**INDUSTRIAL**  
**ELECTRICAL SERVICES**

SERVING SINCE 1998

**ROBERT  
CHAMBERS**



*FOR FAST COURTEOUS SERVICE*

CALL **806.373.2600**



# LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

**I-40 WEST**

**HELIUM /  
LOOP 335**

**1 ACRE LOTS FOR SALE**

**806-236-3090**

**BARNDO DR**

**34TH ST**

 **RICK LOOBY HOMES**

# LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

## RICK LOOBY HOMES AT LOOBY ACRES

The three famous words that are still true today are  
Location, Location, Location.

Country living on a one acre lot and only three minutes  
to shopping and the medical center.

One acre lots with paved and guttered streets in a private development. Designed and developed to give you the beauty and well maintained living of a city lot with room for all your needs. Minimum sq. ft. living area 2,000 sq. ft.; detached garages and shops allowed.



*For more information or to view  
your new home, contact*

**RICK LOOBY HOMES  
(806) 236-3090**

[www.rickloobyhomes.com](http://www.rickloobyhomes.com)



 **SCAN ME**

# THE *upbeat* REPORTER

Letter from the Publisher  
Mary Kay Kuhrts



Dr. Aaron Hunt, Cathleen Tyson-Day, Mary Kay Kuhrts, Janet Byars

**2023** has been a great year for The Upbeat Reporter! **By the grace of God**, we are celebrating our fifth year as the essential inspirational outlet in the Texas Panhandle. It's been an awesome journey with lots of changes and growth, and I wanted to thank the many people who have contributed to bringing you the good news of the love and hope of Jesus Christ.

Let's give a BIG shout out to the **Upbeat Reporter Team!**

- **Dr. Aaron Hunt**, Pastoral Advisor of The Upbeat Reporter. Dr. Hunt is the Chaplain for Fellowship of Christian Athletes at WTAMU. He has been a contributing writer of FCA uplifting articles since the beginning of The Upbeat Reporter in June, 2019.
- **Cathleen Tyson-Day**, "Cat," is without a doubt the best graphic designer I've ever worked with. When I finally found Cat working at Panhandle Presort Services, I discovered that she is multi-talented. She designs the whole magazine in addition to The Upbeat Reporter website, social media posts, and is also a great contributing writer!
- **Janet Byars**, my sister and Editor, proofreads every story and every advertisement that goes into the magazine. She's great at making sure our magazine is error free! Her love, all-around support and ideas are priceless.
- **Kurtis Kuhrts**, my husband and business manager. His support has been essential since the very beginning of The Upbeat Reporter in 1999!

Many thanks to our **Contributing Writers** for their inspiring stories. The words they write make a positive difference in people's lives, focusing on local stories of unsung heroes, ministries, nonprofit organizations, and people that are sharing their talents in a way that will make the most impact in our community. The writers are a vital part of the mission: Bringing Good News, Hope and Direction to the Texas Panhandle!

I want to thank all our **Advertisers/Sponsors** for their generous support in advertising and the important role they play in the success of The Upbeat Reporter. I've always believed the Upbeat Reporter should remain free to the public. This is made possible only with support from our Advertisers. Be sure to check out the services offered by these awesome business sponsors!

Thank YOU, the **Readers!** My prayer is for you to enjoy reading the stories and be inspired and filled with hope. I appreciate your feedback! Send your testimony and story ideas to [marykay@theupbeatreporter.com](mailto:marykay@theupbeatreporter.com). Here's what one reader emailed me:

*"I find the Upbeat Reporter one of the most uplifting publications that comes into my hands. It introduces organizations to those who desire to give of their talents and funds. Best wishes to you and your staff on your endeavor!"* Dee Wells, Amarillo

Living a life of purpose means being willing to take that next step. Even though I may not always know exactly the direction God will lead The Upbeat Reporter, I can peacefully rest in His promise,  
**"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."** — Jeremiah 29:11

*Here's wishing you a very Merry Christmas  
and a multitude of blessings in 2024!*

Be sure to check out [www.theupbeatreporter.com](http://www.theupbeatreporter.com)  
Find and Like us on Facebook, and Invite friends!  
Please leave a review on Google, we would greatly appreciate it!

# in this issue [theupbeatreporter.com](http://theupbeatreporter.com)



**16 FEATURE**  
**No Boundaries International**



**6 FEATURE**  
**Where Purpose and Passion Walk Hand-in-Hand**



**10 FEATURE**  
**Leadership with Purpose**

- 6 | Where Purpose and Passion Walk Hand-in-Hand
- 10 | Lisa Blake - Leadership with Purpose
- 12 | FCA Volleyball Coach
- 14 | Live Boldly
- 16 | Traci Rogers. No Boundaries International
- 20 | Staying on Purpose
- 24 | Mark Reynolds, A Dream with a Purpose
- 26 | Joy Uselton Testimony
- 28 | Randall & Donna Sims, Service with a Purpose
- 30 | Determined Discipline

## contributor

- Pastor Richie Brown
- Amy Crowley
- Mike Haynes
- Amber Howe
- Dr. Aaron Hunt
- Sharon Miner
- Tammi Scoggin
- Cathleen Tyson-Day

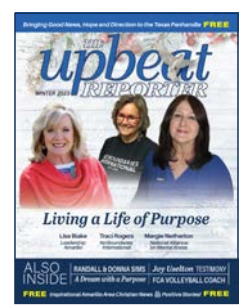
### Pick up your copy FREE at these convenient locations:

- |                          |                  |                       |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| All Toot'n Totums        | Home Plate Diner | Youngblood's Café     |
| All United Supermarkets  | Belmar Bakery    | Spicy Mike's Bar-B-Q  |
| Market 33                | Joe Taco         | Green Chili Willie's  |
| Drug Emporium            | Blue Sky         | Tacos Garcia          |
| Northwest Texas Hospital | Malcolm's        | Acts Community Center |
| WTAMU Activities Center  | Café Marizon     |                       |

## UPBEAT REPORTER

P. O. Box 20555, Amarillo, Texas 79114 | 806.590.7002  
Story Ideas and Advertising Opportunities: [marykay@theupbeatreporter.com](mailto:marykay@theupbeatreporter.com)

**Publisher:** Mary Kay Kuhrts  
**Editor:** Janet Byars  
**Pastoral Advisor:** Dr. Aaron Hunt  
**Magazine Designer:** Cathleen Tyson-Day



**ON OUR COVER**  
Lisa Blake  
Traci Rogers  
Margie Netherton





# Where purpose and passion walk hand-in-hand



*Margie Netherton Certified Family Support Group Trainer*

Her crisp blouse and blunt haircut clearly signal a woman in charge, yet her warm eyes and soft voice nod toward her compassion and empathetic nature. She is an intelligent woman, a recently retired college English professor and author, a voice for the unheard and an advocate for various sides in the same story. She is Margie Netherton, a three-term President of the Texas Panhandle chapter of The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for the last eleven years.

Thirteen years ago Margie faced a crisis: a long-struggling family member was diagnosed with a serious mental illness. As the long months swept by and she waded through the slog of the mental health industry, disappointment welled up inside of her. How could there be no local support for families trying to navigate these seas? Undeterred, Netherton set out to find hope in what felt like a hopeless situation. With persistence she discovered that there used to be a local affiliate of NAMI but it had been defunct for years. Margie's courageous response was to wield her passion like a sword, cutting through opposition and red tape to re-open NAMI's local chapter. Her driving sense of purpose to help people enhance their lives through support, connectivity and education gifted our city with this thriving non-profit.

Unfortunately, there is no navigation app for life with a loved one who suffers from mental illness. State hospitals have four to six month waiting lists, local psychiatrists have waits as long as eighteen months, suicide rates are skyrocketing, and doctors are so overworked that they don't have time to sit down and really get to know their patients. NAMI helps bridge a few of those gaps and offers support where the struts are weak.



## Story By Amber Howe

Amber Howe is the Children's Ministry Leader at her church, MORE. She loves writing, reading, camping, photography and doing anything artsy, but her favorite pastime is traveling with her musician husband and their husky, Bowie.

*"We still have a way to go with overcoming stigma and misunderstandings. Old ways of thinking have backed us into a corner of misconceptions around mental illness, like ideas that the family is to blame or it's a result of weak character or we're not praying hard enough. Some mental illnesses can and do improve with proper treatment. "There is hope and people do recover," Margie encourages.*

 **NAMI Texas Panhandle**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness



*2016 Mental Health Walk*

NAMI focuses on extending a hand to individuals living with mental illness and their families through support, education and advocacy. The nonprofit has a long list of resources that help with mental health screening, housing, jobs, affordable counseling and more. They offer regular support groups and affiliate meetings with speakers, an annual Family to Family class for family members and also Bridges of Hope presentations to area churches to help them support members of their



*Gerri Whittington*

congregations living with mental illness. "It's a place for people to feel supported and to meet their needs where they are. It's what NAMI leaders are trained for," Margie explains. Support groups are vital and "you don't know how relieved people have been [to join a group]...it's been the first time they've told anybody because... they've been alone and judged, because people don't understand mental health conditions."

"You can't always control everything but you can do some things to help other people-to give them some tools," Margie shares. Her Zoom support group tool box includes communication strategies, how to handle a crisis, creating healthy boundaries and self care. She encourages her community to "cross divides" by educating others. Sharing stories helps us to not feel alone. "If we're in our own bubbles, we're never going to heal," she claims.

When people finally feel heard, understood and supported, advocacy becomes a common fruit. A popular occurrence after receiving support is for family members to feel empowered to help others. "When you help other people, I mean, that's so rewarding," Margie shares. It brings "so much purpose and meaning to people. They can help something in their community that's mental health-related."

While NAMI supports families and individuals living with mental illness, Amarillo's Agape Center concentrates on directly supporting the mental health consumer. The two organizations have long worked side by side in spirit, but now also in physical proximity as they've both recently moved their offices to St. An-

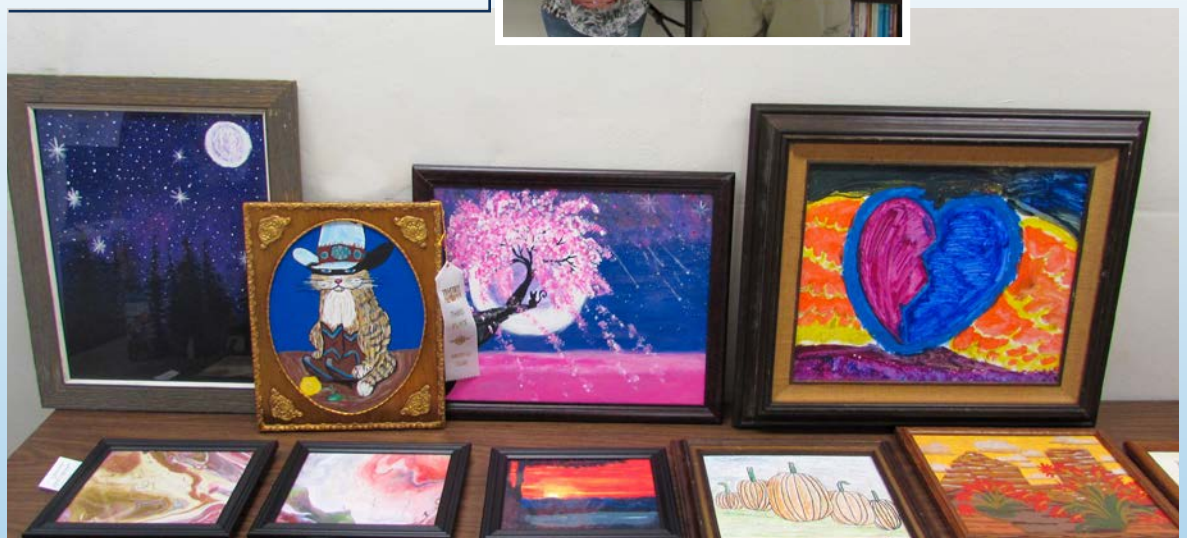
drew's Episcopal Church. Margie has trained Agape leaders to facilitate NAMI Connection groups at the Agape Center. The Agape Center's Director, Gerri Whittington, served on the board at NAMI because she felt it was important for the nonprofit to have access to the perspective of an actual mental health consumer. Together, these two organizations host an annual fundraiser walk for mental health which helps them both continue to offer FREE mental health services to hundreds of people in the Texas Panhandle.

If you're not already familiar with the AAMHC's (Amarillo Area Mental Health Consumers) Agape Center, it's an independent peer support recovery center that encourages and trains mental health consumers to be productive and functional citizens of their community. Gerri Whittington is the Center Director and makes sure things like weekly lunches, art classes, outings, GED classes, support groups and other programs run smoothly. She knows how important this support is because she too is a mental health consumer.

Gerri walked into the Agape Center years ago as someone who needed support. She was so touched the first time she visited Agape. She says, "I found my purpose, my meaning in life, for the first time in my *Story continues on page 8*



*Gerri Whittington and Tony Foster*





Story continued from page 7

life." Part of her healing came from all of the people who believed in her. Before long she was flourishing under the love and encouragement she encountered and decided to become an advocate and give back (*sound familiar?*). Her volunteer secretary position eventually led to the Center Director position. The powers-that-be saw love, compassion and "someone that was willing to be there and help other people. It's all about the members," says Gerri.

After more than five years of experience in this position, Gerri knows just how important the center is to its members. And guess what? Gerri has a toolbox too! She has been through so many different situations in her lifetime that she too has a unique way of helping in the healing process. Each member at the center is "going through something different than another person" and that calls for a unique tool. People "depend on [Agape] to help them through their mental health issues." And that's why Agape exists. She says it's a place for mental health consumers to feel accepted and to "feel like they're loved. Maybe for the first time in their life."

You can't feel anything but a heartfelt admiration after talking with these women and understanding the dedication and passion they've poured into these organizations. Margie saw a need in her community and took action. Gerri benefited from the support and in turn became an advocate. When asked if she felt like God had finally shown Gerri her purpose, she choked back a "yes ma'am... 'Agape' means LOVE. I try to give that to everyone who walks in the door. I don't just try. I DO it." ❖

#### NAMI (Amarillo office)

806-567-1372  
namitexaspanhandle@gmail.com  
namitexas.org/nami-texas-panhandle

#### The Agape Center

806-373-7030  
aamhcagape@gmail.com  
www.aamhc.us



**Margie Netherton** is the author of three books. Her latest publication, *Bearing Witness in a Broken World* shares many of the tools she keeps in her toolbox. It is available on Amazon and at Amarillo's Burrowing Owl Books.

# Accent Embroidery

## Let Us Help You Make Your Mark!

Bring Christmas Orders ASAP - We Will Cut Off By End Of Month!

HATS / BEANIES
OUTER-WEAR

WEARABLE BLANKET/BLANKETS
STOCKINGS

Accent-Embroidery.com  
Let Us Bring Your Vision To Life,  
Call Us To Start Your Order!

@AccentEmbroidery  
**806.352.3600**

mayfieldroofinginc.com

806-352-5649

# MAYFIELD ROOFING INC.

## Best Roof Under the Sun Since 1961

COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL • GUTTER & SIDING • WINDOWS & SKYLIGHTS

We are family-owned and operated. Our entire team is dedicated to providing trustworthy, reliable services and support. As a Christian company, we strive to be professional and honest in all aspects of business and life. We always put our customers and their needs first.

OVER 60 YEARS OF ROOFING EXCELLENCE





**REV REALTY GROUP**  
of Fathom Realty

**REAL SERVICE.  
REAL RESULTS.  
REAL ESTATE.**

[www.revrealty.net](http://www.revrealty.net)

**Frances Frost**  
License #0679680

or contact  
**(806) 626-2298**

# Welcome To Your New Office Suite!



**DTEOS**

UPTOWN | DOWNTOWN | COURT REPORTING

- Executive Office Suites
- Day Office
- Plug & Play CoWorking
- Conference Rooms
- Virtual Office
- Virtual Assistant

806.350.7410  
 6900 W I-40, Amarillo, TX  
 1001 Main, Suite 600, Lubbock, TX  
 600 S. Tyler Suite 2100 & 1800, Amarillo, TX



**Professional  
Friendly  
All Inclusive**

**727.318.7322**  
[downtownnexecoffice.com](http://downtownnexecoffice.com)  
[cathy@downtownnexecoffice.com](mailto:cathy@downtownnexecoffice.com)

# Leadership with Purpose

Lisa Blake has this infectious positive attitude that draws people to her. Let's look at Lisa's banking career, which started in 1991 at the First National Bank of Amarillo, working with Don Powell. Under his leadership, a new financial institution was created, and she played a significant role. Don Powell moved to Washington, DC, to be the chairman of the FDIC. Wells Fargo acquired First National Bank in 2002. Lisa Blake then became their District Manager. She was responsible for effectively managing 12 branches throughout the Texas Panhandle. Her position encompassed both Market Management and Human Resource Management while focusing on customer relations and community support, continuing for 15 years.

Lisa's favorite part of her job was working with the community and building relationships. She was led to make a change in her career. Her banking and relationship-building skills were true assets in finding a new position. Most importantly, her love for community involvement with non-profits and city government rounded her skills to make her perfect for her role as Executive Director of Leadership Amarillo & Canyon; she joined in July 2012.

Amarillo beats with a heart for philanthropy. There are over 1,400 non-profits in Amarillo alone. Through the direction of Lisa Blake, Leadership Amarillo & Canyon continues to search for the incredible forward-thinking people who reach out to help others in this growing community. The program conducts monthly classes for adults and teens that span a full business day, hearing speakers and touring, opening the eyes of even long-time Amarillo residents to services they did not know existed. Attendees leave with a better understanding of how to be more compassionate, match needs with services to solve problems, and offer guidance when the issue arises. Lisa Blake said, "The organization's growth and success is my motivation. Amarillo is always changing and evolving, new areas to explore, so much to learn."

The LAC Board of Directors understands the vision and mission of LAC and works well together with Lisa. She stresses accountability, genuine care for the community, and transparency of life itself. These incredible leaders connect with her love and compassion for others.

In the spring of 2016, Lisa was asked to consider being a candidate to fill the remainder of Dr. Brian



## Story by Cathleen Tyson-Day

PPS Design Dept. Team Leader, graphic/web designer, singer, music lover, writer, wife to Billy Day, mother, Nana, designer of The Upbeat Reporter, advertising consultant/designer of the Downtown Women's Center, Leadership Amarillo/Canyon and Estancia Community Development.

Eades' Place 2 position on the Amarillo City Council. In agreement, she was brought before the council to answer questions through interviews.

***"Knowing the many successes and obstacles in our community, I am passionate about strong and effective leadership, which I will provide," Blake said. "I will also bring perspective from a female who understands business, family, and community. I am a relationship builder, and a connector of people. I will bring positivity and professionalism to the council. I believe we can disagree professionally and positively."***

Lisa was notified to fill Place 2 position beginning July 2016. After fulfilling the term, she chose not to run as a candidate again. The knowledge she gained in this role brought a new understanding of city government; she added this knowledge to benefit LAC classes.

Leadership Amarillo classes span ages from teens to adults of all ages. Pulling candidates from Amarillo and Canyon, applications are taken from high school students recommended by teachers and counselors who recognize excellence and leadership poise. Most adult participant fees are paid for by their company or organization. Knowing the cost was too high for schools, students, or their families, the board decided to find a way to get this cost sponsored.

In 2016, Leading with IMPACT Summit was created,



Lisa and Ron Blake with their eight-year old daughter



a luncheon gathering of leaders from all over the community to absorb the cost of providing teen scholarships. The summit recurs annually in February.

During COVID, we have all learned we need connection; lockdown was painful for the community. Lisa Blake

specializes in speaking engagement topics on transparency, accountability, personal growth, and development. Recognizing we all have a story to tell, raw truths in our lifetime. Even when you feel your world is falling apart, it's best to be authentic and let others know your lives are not perfect. In the process, your message helps others know they are not alone.

Sometimes, the pain is too raw and hard to share, but you can still be joyful through the pain; God is with us, and our prayers are heard. Lisa only recently shared about the loss of her daughter to a drug overdose. Having that hardship so close to your family is a deep pain. God's continued love surrounds Lisa as He gives her that reason to get out of bed in the morning.

Lisa has been married to Ron Blake for 42 years. They have three grown daughters, a recently adopted eight-year-old daughter, and seven grandchildren who keep them positive and involved.

Lisa Blake is a true asset to our community and someone I am proud to call "friend."

**To contact Lisa Blake:**  
lisa@leadershipamarillo.org  
Leadershipamarillo.org



ESTATE SALES SIMPLIFIED,  
*Real Estate Perfected*



ONLINE  
ESTATE SALES  
+  
REALTOR  
EXPERTISE



Call Us for a FREE Consultation!  
806-452-9100  
www.doublesauctions.com

6513 Storage Drive | Amarillo, TX 79110

TX#12580

DESIGN • PRINT • MAIL

*Merry*  
**CHRISTMAS**  
&  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

*from*  
**PPS**  
zipprint  
*Your Printing Solution.*



# Head West Texas A&M Volleyball Coach Kendra Potts has Munificence: Largesse Generosity

Since 2019 I have had the privilege of working with current WTAMU Head Volleyball Coach Kendra Potts by serving her teams as the Athletic Chaplain. She has led the program from a middle of the pack squad to the pinnacle of collegiate volleyball, winning the 2022 NCAA Division II national championship. From my observations, what separates her is the personal touch. Her players have no doubt that she deeply loves and cares for them and for that reason, they are willing to be pushed beyond the limits of what they thought possible.

I was able to interview Kendra and below are her responses:

*We were seated in the volleyball hospitality room after the team meeting where the athletes eat a pregame meal, go over their daily gratitude and intention, an athlete gives a POD or phrase of the day, followed by myself or Katie (WT female chaplain) where we share a message of motivation. Coach Potts graciously sat down with me without hurry to answer my questions in preparation for this article.*

## **Me: When did you get into volleyball?**

**Kendra:** I had two older sisters who played volleyball, so I was always around the game. I watched them play and was always in a gym. I really followed in their footsteps. Coach Pott's sister won a national championship at WT in 1997 and Kendra played at Amarillo High School and then went on to be a three-time All-American setter but fell short of national title as a player. When WT won last year, her sisters were in Seattle as super fan witnesses!

## **Me: What makes you different?**

**Kendra:** I don't assume that I am any different from anyone else. We as volleyball coaches have so much access to information and the X's and O's and preparation is most likely the same. One thing I do attempt to accomplish with my team outside of thorough preparation is to really get to know each of my girls and who they are as people. I have witnessed Kendra on numerous occasions give specific love and attention to her players. They call her momma Kendra.

## **Me: How did you create this amazing culture of acceptance and dedication at WT Volleyball?**

**Kendra:** I was blessed to see amazing culture cultivating coaches in Jan Barker at Amarillo High



Story by Dr. Aaron Hunt

Aaron has been the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Athletic Chaplain at West Texas A&M University since 2016. Before that he was a high school Spanish teacher and coach, a junior high Asst. Principal and an Asst. Professor of Education at WT. Dr. Hunt also serves as our Pastoral Advisor.



(31 years with 10 state championships), and Tony Graystone (Current Head Volleyball Coach at Texas Tech University). I consistently watched them check in with us as players and make sure we were right and cared for.

Kendra fiercely protects her athletes, and we all know, don't get between a mama bear and her cubs.

## **Me: Lastly, how do you balance mom life and coaching? Being a mom of three young children and fully caring for your athletes must present a challenge.**

**Kendra:** My job is not a typical 9-5. I can be fully present with my children when I am at home. From rides to school to evenings at the house, I focus on being present whether at home or here coaching. Additionally, my kids are welcome at WT. Our athletic director does a great job of supporting us and making our families feel accepted. My kids are very much a part of this program.

We closed our interview and Kendra sat with me in no hurry. We conversed like two old friends catching up and she had nowhere to be. It was game day against the number two team in the conference and she was as cool as a cucumber and completely present. That is what makes her different. She is cool under pressure and has a beautiful ability to be so very present where her feet are. It helps all of us normal folks out there do likewise. ❖





# Seniors Real Estate Specialist

As a SRES (Seniors Real Estate Specialist) I specialize in helping our 55+ community. My team and I will guide you through a real estate transaction with the patience, professionalism, respect and expertise you and your family deserve.



**Cathy Wood**  
Realtor | GRI | SRES



3955 Soncy Rd  
Amarillo,  
TX 79119

You'll receive a customized approach to your real estate needs. I will counsel you through the major financial and lifestyle transitions involved in relocating, refinancing, or choosing to age in place.

**Choose2MoveForward.com**

CathyWood@kw.com Office: 806-731-4230

**Mobile: 806-433-2687**



**Need to de-clutter your home or office?  
We can help!**

**50% Off  
First 2  
Months**

*Rent 2 or more  
small units  
Get an additional  
10% off at move-in!*



- Self Storage Units and Parking Spaces available for Rent
- Conveniently located off Highway I-27
- Fenced and Gated Facility with Security Cameras & Security Alarm

**Call Us Today!**

5411 Camp Lane  
Amarillo, TX 79110  
**806-358-0309**  
camplaneseelfstorage@gmail.com  
www.CampLaneSelfStorage.com

# LIVE BOLDLY



Story by Amy Crowley

.....  
Amy Crowley, a resident of Amarillo, Texas, is the author of Live BOLDLY. Weekday posts can be found on the Facebook group "Live BOLDLY." Send questions or prayer requests to: [liveboldly2023@outlook.com](mailto:liveboldly2023@outlook.com)

Recently, my youngest daughter, who is the third of mine and my husband's adopted foster daughters, turned fourteen. We had never met until late one dark winter night. She had just flown into Amarillo from Indiana. She had never been here before and we had never seen a photo of her.

She and her case worker met us in the cell phone lot of the airport. A spry little six-year-old ran to greet me with a pronouncement; she had already determined what her new name was to be. I drove home with her talking nonstop the whole way. It was as if she had always been one of us. Six months later she did indeed have that new name and it was my name now.

Every time we celebrate the birthday of one of my adopted daughters, I give thanks for their biological parents; parents who could have so easily chosen an outcome other than life. While her life with her biological parents was not good, it is part of her beautiful story.

When asked by my husband what words of

wisdom she had to share on her birthday, she responded with "always try to live every day with an attitude of gratitude."

Let me tell you - she practices what she preaches. The significance of where she is now to where she could have been is not lost on her. With regularity, I am thanked by her for simply

being her mom. With regularity, I am reminded of the joy Christ has given me because of this gift of a child.

She does not look like me. I have pasty white skin; she has brown skin. She is tall and I am short. But then again, perhaps she reflects me and the things I have taught her. The hope and joy I have tried to instill in her. The love of her Savior. The "attitude of gratitude" that tells of all He has done.

When you are feeling gloomy or down, remember His joy, then employ your "attitude of gratitude." He

has pulled you up from the muck and mire and given you reason to praise. You may be in a season of hardship, but there is still reason to praise.

Take the words of a wise 14-year-old. "Always try to live every day with an attitude of gratitude." ❖

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.  
Psalms 9:1-2

# A home for every chapter.

SECURITY. COMFORT. LOVE.

## A place for *community*.

From the friendships formed among our residents, the loving staff with years of longevity, and the incredible meals and surroundings, **Park Central** is a very special place for senior living.



## Continuum of care

### INDEPENDENT LIVING

- Park Place Towers
- The Continental
- The Harrington
- Plemons Court
- The Talmage

### LONG-TERM CARE

- The Ware

### MEMORY CARE

- The Sycamore

### ASSISTED LIVING

- The Moore

For more information please call (806) 337-5700 or visit [ParkCentral.org](http://ParkCentral.org)

Locally owned and lovingly managed by Baptist Community Services, a part of the Texas Baptists Family.





# NO BOUNDARIES

On a hot August Sunday afternoon 10 years ago, Traci Rogers and her daughter, Kaytlin, cruised an area near Amarillo Boulevard with cases of bottled water in their car. When they saw someone on the street, they pulled over, rolled down a window and asked, "Would you like a cold bottle of water?"

The temperature was more than 100 degrees, so most of the women who came to the window gladly accepted the drinks. They didn't know when they started, the impact that it would have and the relationships it would build.

"There were so many being street prostituted that afternoon. They were getting picked up so quickly we could barely get our car whipped around," Rogers recalled. "We knew it was time to begin street outreach."

Dr. Traci Rogers is executive director of No Boundaries International - Amarillo (NBI). Locally and internationally, NBI reaches out to provide hope to those the world would say are hopeless. Whether it's the prostituted person, at-risk child, or those struggling with brokenness and addiction, NBI reaches out on a street level to provide realistic solutions to those in need.

Dr. Traci has a master's in theology with a Christian counseling focus and a doctorate in sacred studies. Daughter Kaytlin, now a licensed social worker, is on the NBI Amarillo leadership team along with Amber Coppock, Mark Stuller, Bernie Venhaus, Courtney Paschal, Ashlynn Howell and Kenny Rogers, Traci's husband and pastor, who preaches at the NBI facility every Saturday night. NBI is 100% staffed by volunteer missionaries. They also have a large number of additional team members that work diligently to serve the community.

Dr. Traci began the Amarillo base of No Boundaries International (NBI) in 2013.

Traci had been the children's minister at Coulter Road Baptist Church, where she had led some women's events. After one event, she said, a woman told her, "This is the second time human trafficking has come up" as they continued talking the woman said, "You know God is trying to tell you something."

That night, Traci had an email from NBI in Oklahoma City, which began in 2006 and was looking to expand. The email led to a meeting, which led to a trip to Oklahoma to observe the ministry there.

"Within a few hours, I knew God was calling me to come home, quit my job and start the Amarillo base. So I called my husband to talk with him about what God was calling me to."



**Story by Mike Haynes**

Mike Haynes taught journalism and mass media at Amarillo College for 25 years and was an adviser of student media at Texas Tech University for seven years. He is co-publisher of Panhandle-Plains Basketball Magazine and writes a Faith column in the Amarillo Globe-News. He and his wife Kathy attend Hillside Christian Church.

Traci has always been careful to ensure Kenny is on board with what God calls her to. Just like he confirmed that she was supposed to come home and quit her job, he confirmed that it was time to start giving water out on the streets that day to Traci and Kaytlin.



Traci Rogers

Traci and Kaytlin interacted with more than the girls on the street that day. "We see these three pimps, and we can tell they're waiting for their girls to get back," she said. "We pull around the corner, and Kaytlin and I look at each other, and we knew we had to stop and offer them some water. When I rolled down the window, one of them came over and bent down to take the water and called Kaytlin by name."

The young man had been a high school student with Kaytlin the previous semester. Traci said it was an example that prostitution and trafficking affect all societal groups. Traci informed us that they have had "situations involving every high school in Amarillo." She also told us that pimps not only recruit in big cities, but also in small rural towns.

Traci said some attribute sex trafficking in the area to the fact that Interstates 40 and 27 run through Amarillo. She disagrees. "We have a problem in Amarillo with sex trafficking because we have buyers in Amarillo," she said.

From that first encounter, NBI grew to include visits to high-risk motels, strip clubs and outreach to anyone in hard places. The staff started decorating the lobbies of some Amarillo Boulevard motels at Christmas time. Traci said that a few years later, a woman who had been prostituted for 26 years was at the NBI facility, helping sort Christmas items. She reminded Traci that they first had met when NBI people were decorating a motel.

Traci recalled, "Our friend smiled, and told us how she had watched us from her motel room window crying while we decorated for Christmas because we had brought Christmas back to her."





Some of our team at the 2023 Vision Dinner



Some of our team serving at a Place of Hope in Minnesota

Some of our team in the Dominican Republic



Some of our team after participating in the Juneteenth Walk with our ministry partners, 101 Elite Men



Our team carrying the statement and hanging it on the cross. Once they gave their "sign" up - they were given a new sign that said something like I am loved, I am forgiven, I am redeemed.



Traci Rogers speaking at our 2022 Vision Dinner - the cross in the background is covered with quotes and/or snippets of those that we have worked with in Amarillo.



In addition to building relationships, NBI helps people escape human trafficking. The ministry has contacts across the nation where they take victims so they can try to start new lives. She said "if a woman wants out but stays in the city, it's difficult for her to avoid her trafficker or others from her previous life."

When a trafficking victim was ready for a change in her life in her 30s, the NBI team gladly helped her. When she was 11, she had been locked in an Amarillo Boulevard motel to provide sex. "She didn't come from a broken home," Traci said. "Her mom was a nurse. They were professional people. So many people think, 'Oh, that's just a bad family.' No. On the outside, it's a great family. We just don't know what goes on behind closed doors."

With NBI's help, the woman got her first legal job as a carhop. But after three days, some of her former clients showed up and harassed her. "She called us crying because they wouldn't leave her alone. She ended up back with her pimp and back on the streets because they wouldn't leave her alone," Traci said.

Traci said the ministry has worked with thousands of victims across the world. She also trains various groups about human trafficking, from law enforcement to church groups. The NBI team travels globally to do trauma healing conferences, sometimes called brain boot camps. "Anytime we are traveling, we still have a team here doing the work, because we'll never overlook our own city or our own community to go help somewhere else. We believe if we're not doing the work here, we're not honoring what God's put right in front of us."

The ministry does personal counseling from a pastoral standpoint. "Everything we do is ultimately centered around Jesus," she said.

NBI operates solely on donations, and one woman who has endured sexual exploitation and violence was asked to talk about the ministry in a video. "The ladies here are just awesome," she said. "If it wasn't for them, I probably would be dead or back in prison. They never judged me, they helped me, they were there for me no matter what. Some of these girls just need a place to go, a chance to start over. That is what No Boundaries does, they give women like me a chance to start over and a place to feel safe." ❖



VISIT  
[theupbeatreporter.com](http://theupbeatreporter.com)

Visit the website to ...

- download other magazine issues
- watch video interviews
- read past articles
- submit story ideas

**CELEBRATE**  
*life with dessert*

**Belmar**  
BAKERY

**YOU DESERVE**  
*something sweet*



*Dine in or Walk in for Take Out*

3325 Bell St.  
Amarillo, TX


**ORDER ONLINE**  
[www.belmarbakery.com](http://www.belmarbakery.com)

806-355-0141  
Open Mon-Sat

**ARCHSTONE**  
HOME INSPECTIONS

**GET TO KNOW YOUR HOME**

Finding Hidden House Secrets  
**SINCE 2007**



Professional Real Estate Inspector  
TREC Lic# 9676  
806.640.2199  
[inspectamarillo.com](http://inspectamarillo.com)

**2023**  
THE OFFICIAL  
COMMUNITY'S  
**CHOICE**  
AWARDS  
Best of Amarillo  
**FINALIST**

**MyPortion Nutrition**  
Mark Abesamis, RD, LD, CPT

**\$50 OFF**  
Mention this ad for \$50 off any pay-per-month package!



1901 Medi-Park Drive  
Suite 214  
Amarillo, TX 79106

Providing packages in:  
Sports Performance, Weight Management,  
Medical Nutrition Therapy, and Proactive Wellness.

**(806) 337-0906**  
[myportionnutrition.com](http://myportionnutrition.com)

CLASSIC CLEANING

**Clean Means Clear!**

Call or Text  
**806-316-7834**  
to book a Classic Cleaning

Scan Me!




# When it comes to Medicare...

## you have choices!

Let me help you find the best plan that fits your healthcare needs.

- Medicare Supplement
- Medicare Advantage
- Prescription Drug Plans
- Dental-Vision-Hearing

**DOUG TICE**  
SENIOR MARKET SPECIALIST  
*Changing Lives & Creating Legacies*

Call for an appointment today.  
Office 806-418-2259  
Cell 806-576-7788  
Email dticeins@gmail.com



# PRO ★ TECH AUTO BODY

*"The best decision after your collision!"*

- Collision Repair • Expert Color Matching
- Hail Damage • Paintless Dent Repair
- Towing & Rental Car Arrangements



(806)322-3900  
3405 Stapleton • Amarillo  
www.protech-autobody.com



*Celebrating 14 Years, Serving the Texas Panhandle*

**FARMERS INSURANCE**  
**Leslie Massey**  
Insurance and Financial Services Agent  
**806-352-7388**  
*Auto • Home • Life • Business*  
*Specialty Insurance for your travel trailers, boats, motorcycles and ATVs!*  
Registered Representative • Farmers Financial Solutions,LLC

2700 S. Western, Suite 700 • Amarillo, Texas 79109

*Open 7 Days A Week!*

BRING COUPON IN  HOME PLATE

**Christmas Special**

**\$5 Off**

**\$25 Gift Certificate for just \$20!**

Coupon expires **2/28/24**

*Save \$5 with each purchase!*

**5600 S. Bell • 359-4444**





# Staying on Purpose



By Pastor Richie Brown

Richie Brown is the founding pastor and has been the Lead Pastor of Amarillo Fellowship Church from the beginning, in 2003. His wife, Pam, is the Executive Creative Pastor. They are thankful for what God has done in the church and in the lives of others and can't wait to see what more God has in store for Amarillo Fellowship and this city. Pastor Richie and Pastor Pam have 2 sons, Richie and Christian, 2 daughter-in-loves, Briana and Jenna, and 4 granddaughters, Nealy, Nora, Poppy, and Bonnie.

All of us face things from time to time that challenge our faith in God and the purpose for our life. Whether it's a challenging relationship, a setback in our finances or some kind of a loss... it challenges us. We immediately begin to ask God "Why?" "Why am I going through this?" "Why am I dealing with this?" "Why is this happening to me?" And it challenges our faith in the goodness of God. But it can also challenge our life's purpose.

When things go wrong, Satan, who is the accuser, accuses God and accuses us for the thing that is going wrong. If we're not careful, we can buy into Satan's lies and begin accusing God and accusing ourselves. We ponder thoughts like, "if God really loves me then why would He allow this?" Or thoughts like, "if this is really what I was created to do, then why did I fail?" If we're not careful, we can find ourselves becoming filled with doubt, fear and unbelief. Doubtful of God's ability to save us and our ability to succeed. Fearful that things are always going to fail. Unbelieving in God's goodness or in the purpose that God created us for.

So how can we tell when the train of our lives has jumped the tracks? How can we tell when we're heading in the wrong direction? For Christ-Followers it's simple; it's the absence of peace. Anytime that peace is missing in our lives, it's a sure sign that we have allowed the enemy to get us off focus and off the purpose for our lives. That's why Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."

So it all begins with peace. Peace is the guide in our lives that lets us know if we're on the path of life that God has for us. So when peace is absent, we have to ask ourselves, "What am I focused on?" "Is my mind focused on or 'stayed on' Jesus?" Most of the time it isn't when peace is absent. We're focused on the problem, circumstance or situation.

So we're faced with a choice. Do we want to continue to focus on the challenge or focus on Jesus. **Of course it's Jesus.**

**So what do we do?** We go back and place our faith and trust in Him. Knowing that He's good and that He has created us on purpose for a purpose. We start declaring out loud over our lives how good God is and who we are hidden in Christ. As we begin to declare these things over our lives, we begin to be loosed from the chains of doubt, fear and unbelief. It's replaced with an inner peace that lets us know that what we're going through, we're going through. That we're going to come out the other side victorious.

So don't let the devil steal your peace or your purpose. Don't allow him to get between you and God and you and your purpose. The Bible says that we are not unaware of the devil's schemes. So when the devil comes to try and steal your purpose by attacking your peace, refocus your heart and mind on Jesus and place your complete trust in Him. It will cause you to not only weather the storms in your life, but to stay on purpose and accomplish all that God has created you for. ❖



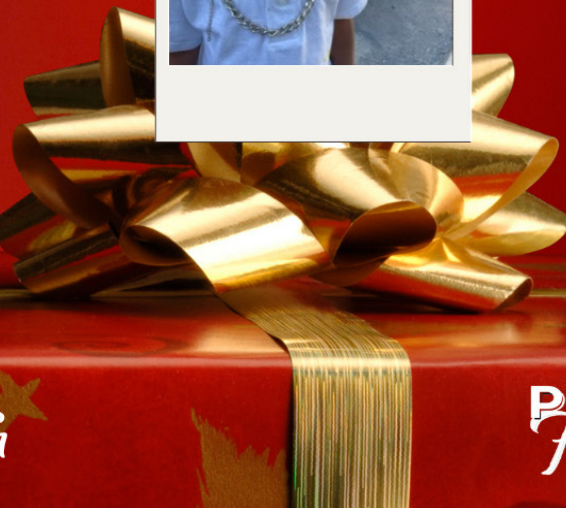
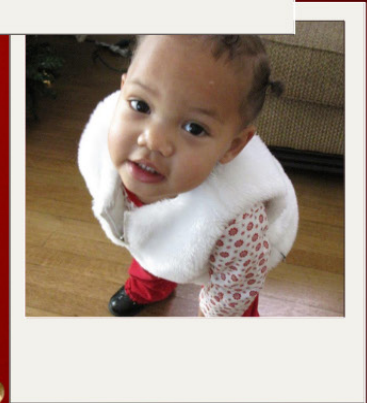
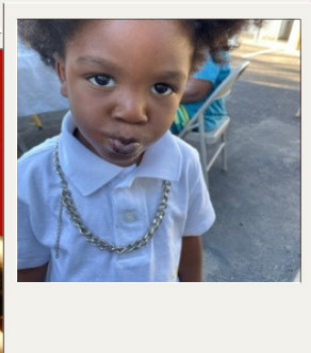
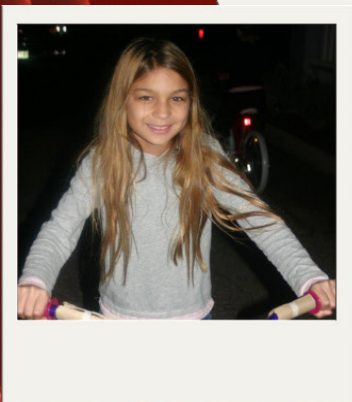
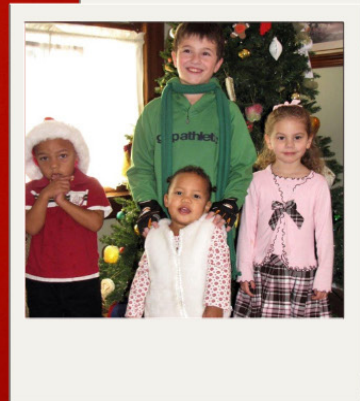
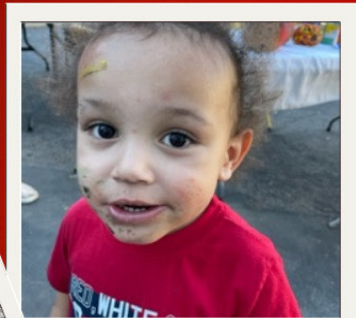
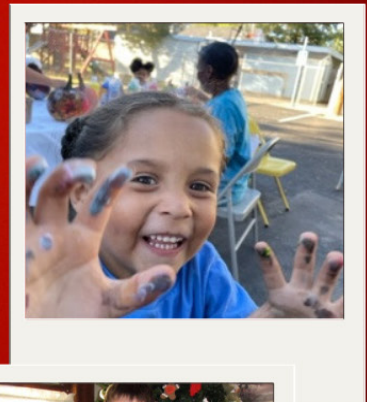
Pastors Richie and Pam Brown

PURPOSE



# MERRY CHRISTMAS

THANK YOU FOR  
SUPPORTING  
MARTHA'S HOME



MARTHASHOME.ORG

PRESENT NEEDS  
*Future Success*  
MARTHA'S HOME



# Ingrams Flooring

*Premier*  
FLOORING CENTER

7200 SW 45TH AVE., #9  
AMARILLO TEXAS 79109  
(806) 355-4416

Two exceptional  
hardwood products  
are on SPECIAL!  
They can be installed  
with glue, nails,  
staples or floated.

Call today for a  
quote on these and  
other products!

## Special Offers

**WESTON**  
3/8 INCH THICK  
HARDWOOD

**\$3.99** SQ FT



**MONTROSE**  
1/2 INCH THICK  
HARDWOOD

**\$5.99** SQ FT



[ingramsflooring.com](http://ingramsflooring.com)



## Display Concepts Inc. PARTY RENTALS

1979-2022

*Providing quality  
party rentals for over 40 years*

**806.374.1135**

**Come Visit Our Showroom!**  
**212 N. Fillmore**  
**Amarillo, TX**

Rentals

Wedding Specialist

Dance Floor and Stages

Convention and Tradeshow

Casino Equipment

Concessions

Theme Party Props


Pipe and Drape

Linens



Tents, Tables and Chairs

*Winter is the time for comfort,  
for good food and warmth,  
for the touch of a friendly hand  
and for a talk beside the fire:  
it is the time for home.*

Edith Sitwell



**CROSS POINTE AUTO**  
2501 S. Georgia, Amarillo, TX 79109  
**806-351-AUTO**

# ★ Assurance Group

**YOU HAVE ???  
WE HAVE ANSWERS!**

**MEDICARE**  
*"All Plans in Amarillo"*

- Turning 65 Soon
- Moved to Amarillo Recently
- Retiring Soon
- Loss of Employer Coverage
- Gain or Loss of Medicaid



**Dianne McClish**  
*Comforting the Confused*

**MARKETPLACE**  
*"All Plans in Amarillo"*

- Loss of Employer Coverage
- Household Changes
- Moved to Amarillo Recently
- Gain or Loss of Medicaid
- Citizenship


Office: 806-803-9028  
Cell: 806-679-8655


6900 I-40 West, Suite 140  
Amarillo, TX 79106

Special Enrollment Periods Available  
(60 Day Deadlines)

[dmcclish@safeins.biz](mailto:dmcclish@safeins.biz)  
[www.assurancegroupamarillo.com](http://www.assurancegroupamarillo.com)

600 S Tyler, Suite 1800  
Amarillo, Tx 79101  
[www.patricklee.work](http://www.patricklee.work)  
806-570-7712







*Changing  
the way  
you look  
at  
Amarillo  
Real  
Estate*

*Patrick Lee Group*

Real Estate



# A Dream with a Purpose

It has been said ‘time heals all wounds’ but maybe the saying should be ‘time heals all wounds and through the suffering dreams are birthed.’ That is what happened to Mark Reynolds. Through adversity and trauma, God was building a strong and humble spirit in Mark and developing a long-time dream with a purpose.

In 1993, as a sophomore at Palo Duro High School walking back from a pep rally, Mark witnessed a school shooting in the hallway of a place that should have been safe. Confused, stunned, scared and unsure of what he had just seen, the image of that horrible violence was burned into his head forever. The seed of trauma found a space to take root and would soon grow to change his life forever.

Not knowing what to do, as a teenager he gravitated to the rap music that had always brought him a little comfort when life didn’t make sense. Underneath the headphones he could bury himself in the music and dull the pain that had become a part



Story By Sharon Miner



Sharon is the director of development and public relations for Martha’s Home. She has worked with homeless women and women in recovery for over 20 years. Her professional career includes politics, business and non-profit organizations.

of his life that he never asked for. “When you see a person being shot in the chest from 20 feet away it does something to you. At 15 I had never heard of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. There were no words for what I was feeling at the time. I soon began to self-medicate to numb the anxiety and stress I felt,” Mark said. Trauma was his gateway drug.

Several years of numbing the pain, a 10-year marriage ended, trouble with the law, substance abuse and ultimately an attempt to end it all, had taken up residence in Mark’s life. “That was my rock bottom and when I had to look my mom and dad in the face the next day, I realized how selfish I had been in wanting to end my life and I knew I had to change,” he commented.

*“Music is a gift God gives you so you can share your life with others.”*

“Sometime later I went to sleep and in a vivid dream I walked past a group of people, and I heard someone say ‘Jesus’. I stopped, turned around and asked if someone had said Jesus. I saw a blurry figure without features, just a silhouette of a man and he asked me if I would like to join them. They were standing in a circle and as I gazed upon the figure, he opened his arms and light poured out of the circle. The light permeated through every cell of my body and I became saturated with overwhelming peace and love. At that moment, I knew everything was going to be okay,” Mark said with a sensitivity. He continued, “I woke up not sure if what had happened was real or a dream. I felt like I had been dropped into pure love.” From that point on Mark didn’t want to hear, see, or read anything that didn’t have to do with Jesus. It set him on a path to understand the Bible and he knew the transformation from darkness into light had begun.



Mark Reynolds





Since age 17, Mark has written about his life experiences from his heart in songs. Music was his way to temper all the PTSD and anxiety he dealt with in his life. Over the years music became proof to him of the Creator. "Music is a gift God gives you so you can share your life with others. Music gave me a sense of community and I am compelled to give that gift back to people. For me, music tied up all the negative experiences in my life and helped me regain my sense of purpose," said Mark.

Mark's dream is to create a monthly gathering in the community, where people can come and begin their own journey of songcraft. He believes creating music can bring unimaginable peace and understanding into our lives. The process of writing has helped him better understand who he was meant to be and has brought him closer to God. He desires to share that gift and give local musicians and songwriters an opportunity to express their lives in song.

Mark expresses it like this, "I want to create a community where songwriters can come to a safe place and share their experiences and advice in the songwriting process. All instruments would be acoustic. This would facilitate the monthly gatherings being portable and acoustic instruments are quite a bit more organic and personal. I would teach things like changing strings, alternative tunings, and songwriting basics. I would have guest songwriters who could teach whatever they felt added value and insight to budding songwriters. It would also be an opportunity to share songs and get feedback in a safe and sober setting. Eventually, twelve workshops would culminate in an annual songwriters showcase, where the students get a chance to go and perform for the community."

"I once ran into a woman that said she had her children taken away. Three girls all under the age of ten. I asked her why she continued to do drugs

knowing that her children would be taken away? She looked at me right in eyes and said, "Meth is the best thing that has ever happened to me." That response rang a bell within me that has yet to stop ringing. I want to be able to help people deal with their suffering with honesty, humility and with the Lord's help. When you write a song that captures your pain and a stranger says it made them know they weren't alone, it lets you know there was a reason for the pain. Her pain was so deep it made her unable to love. I just want to let people know Jesus loves them. Everybody has a song in their story."

Ephesians 3:21 is the hallmark scripture Mark lives by: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Now at age 47, Mark is keenly aware of his songwriting gift that is from God which allows him to purge all the hurt and pain from his soul and set it to the side. He is no longer locked in a mindset of believing he is defined by his past. He is excited about his future because it is defined by Jesus Christ. ❖

**Contact Mark Reynolds for lessons, song circles, or donating instruments:**

markdavidreynolds@gmail.com  
Instagram is @markdavidreynolds  
youtube@mdavidreynolds

*"Everybody has a song in their story."*



# Joy Uselton

## TESTIMONY

*“I see Jesus standing at the Father’s right hand  
I see Jesus over in the Promised Land  
Work is over now I’m coming to thee  
I see Jesus standing waiting for me”*

These words to the chorus of the old gospel song, “I See Jesus” seem quite appropriate as I begin to write.

Faith is “the assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition or statement for which there is not complete evidence.” Belief in Jesus Christ requires faith as He is not walking among us today. But then, there are those who experience the presence of Jesus in very real and profound ways. Indeed, there are some who “see Jesus standing waiting for me.”

It was January 2023 when 89-year-old Joy Uselton was facing surgery. A few years earlier she had undergone two separate hernia surgeries and recovered from them very well. Her doctor was, though, watching a growing hernia in her esophagus. Due to its progression, it was again time to undergo surgery.

Although it was a simple day surgery and nothing too serious, Joy decided she would be more comfortable spending the night in the hospital. However, that one night turned into many more.

Surrounded by family, Joy’s recovery was unexpectedly difficult; she eventually had to be placed on a feeding tube. Further still, she remained foggy, unable to communicate well.

While her other children had to return home, daughter Angela, who lives in Midland, Texas, stayed with Joy. Talk of finding someplace else to care for Joy began. Joy recalls the conversations about hospice and thinking to herself “that doesn’t sound good.”



Story By Amy Crowley



Amy Crowley resides in Amarillo with her husband, Johnny, and is mom to five daughters. She enjoys writing, painting, volunteering in the community, and time spent with family. She can be reached at: amylcrowley@hotmail.com.

Her medical team and family searched hard for a facility to receive Joy. Eventually, a place was located in Midland. At this time, she was still on a feeding tube, taking nothing by mouth, including medicine.

Once she settled in Midland, Joy’s family wanted to stay with her. She remembers insisting they go home, though, as she just wanted to rest. Husband DeRay stayed to meet the night nurse but then left with the other family.

Joy was standing by her bedside when the nurse returned with her medication. Joy, still not fully aware of things, swallowed her pills and realized instantly what had occurred. She began to choke, her throat immediately filling with mucus. She was choking, crying, and very upset.

Somehow, Joy was back in her bed. It was then she saw Jesus and thought to herself, “I’m going to heaven.” That’s when she found herself at a gate. She vividly recalls Jesus standing by her side, as close to her as He could get, saying things like, “It’s beautiful here,” “You’ll love it,” and “Your friends are waiting.” Joy then turned to Jesus and asked, “am I going to die?” His reply was “not yet.”

She then remembers being driven around Amarillo when Jesus said, “Look what’s out there for you.” Joy looked and saw big, colorful hearts, each bearing a cross and the words “Pray for Joy.” These hearts were staked all over Amarillo.

She then awoke to find her husband DeRay by her side asking how her night had been. Joy’s response was immediate as she exclaimed, “I spent all night with Jesus!” She shared her story with DeRay. Unsure what to think, DeRay believed Joy to be dying so he called in all the kids. However, by the end of the day Joy had begun to “come back.” She had loved her time with Jesus, but she realized, “God’s not through with me.”



Three days later Joy was discharged to her daughter's home. She was still somewhat "zombie like," sleeping a lot, and receiving nutrition through a tube. Joy remained at her daughter's house in Midland for two months as she mended; she still felt somewhat "fuzzy" through this time but nonetheless began to share her incredible story with anyone who would listen.

Looking back now, Joy feels like "God gave me time to finish things." One of those things is sharing His love. She has always had a strong love for people, and she knows she is here still to "do something."

This petite, lovely, and now quite healthy red head, is a bundle of energy and a pleasure to be around. Her name, Joy, is no coincidence. She is indeed a joy to be with as she has a joyous story of her amazing Savior to share, a story I, for one, am certain to remember for a long time to come. I left our time together clutching a precious painted rock bearing a heart and a cross. Not only is it a reminder to "Pray for Joy," it is a sweet reminder that "Jesus is standing waiting for me." ❖



Joy Uselton

Cindy Rowley has been a licensed pastor for almost 24 years and has served at Cox-Rowley Funeral Home for almost 12 years. Cindy loves visiting with and getting to know individuals and families so that she can ensure their wishes are in place. It is important to her that she be there pastorally for families when they experience the loss of a loved one. Cindy pledges that she and the capable staff at Cox-Rowley Funeral Home will care for those they are blessed to serve, will maintain the highest in moral and ethical standards, and that every funeral service will be a true "celebration of life."



Managing Partner



# COX-ROWLEY

FUNERAL HOME *we celebrate lives*

4180 Canyon Drive • Amarillo, TX 79109 • [www.coxrowleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.coxrowleyfuneralhome.com)

**806-354-2585**

- Privately Owned and Family Oriented
- Personalized Funeral/Memorial Services
- Pastoral Aftercare and Grief Support
- Filing of Insurance and all Reporting
- Veterans and First Responder Discounts
- Always treated with dignity and respect



# SALT

## SPICES & SPECIALTIES

2625 WOLFLIN VILLAGE  
AMARILLO, TEXAS  
006-350-7440



Offering over 200 top quality, FRESH, salts, spices, olive oils, vinegars, and so much more!



# IDEACOM®

[ideacom-ama.com](http://ideacom-ama.com)



# Service with a Purpose

## A Thank you to Randall C. Sims

Often, we spend our moments criticizing elected officials and never giving thought to the positive outcomes that are achieved through their sacrifice. Sometimes it is a quiet service with a purpose that goes unnoticed.

For 38 years, Randall C. Sims has sought justice for the people in the Texas Panhandle as a prosecutor. As Amarillo's 47th District Attorney and the 100th District Attorney from Wellington, he has approached his responsibilities with a seriousness and integrity that is hidden behind the headlines of the numerous criminals that are no longer able to disturb the peace communities desire to live in.

He has always been a prosecutor and if you look up the word prosecute in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it describes a secret characteristic of Randall that may not be on display – to follow to the end: pursue until finished. Randall sets his mind to finishing everything he starts.

A Panhandle native, born and raised, Randall graduated from Wellington High School and ventured on to West Texas State University and received a bachelor's degree in business administration. He continued his pursuit to be a criminal prosecutor at Texas Tech University and earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence in 1984.

Randall has an identical twin Richard, and growing up, his parents taught the boys the importance of hard work and serving the community. Because of his parents' influence and political involvement, Randall has always been exposed to the good things that can come from serving the community.

On September 30, Randall was selected unanimously by the Texas District and County Attorney Association (TDCAA) and the State Bar Criminal Justice Section Board, to receive the well-deserved honor of the 2023 State Bar Criminal Justice Section Prosecutor of the Year.



### Story by Sharon Miner

Sharon is the director of development and public relations for Martha's Home. She has worked with homeless women and women in recovery for over 20 years. Her professional career includes politics, business and non-profit organizations.

*"It is very important for us to serve. It is what God expects us to do."*

His illustrious career includes many accolades that are too numerous to list. The TDCAA July-August 2023 Issue says it best, "It would take up way too much space to detail all of Randall's service to prosecutors through TDCAA. His career of service to the profession has been outstanding, but here is why we are so indebted to Randall: He always answered the call in a crisis."



Randall and Donna Sims

Faith is important to Randall and his beautiful wife Donna. They attend Hillside Christian Church and support multiple organizations in the Panhandle with their time, talent, and treasure. They never boast about it. Their service is not a resume filler. It is just simply what they

believe they should do. "It is very important for us to serve. It is what God expects us to do," said Donna.

On June 30, 2023, Randall retired from the 47th Judicial District Attorney's office and plans to enjoy time with his family after a lifetime of service with a purpose. The Upbeat Reporter would like to take a moment to say thank you.

Thank you for your countless prayers for direction to do your job to the best of your ability. Thank you for the decisions you made that kept our community safe. Thank you for supporting the countless organizations that serve the arts, the homeless, the addicts, the children and the many other non-profits that create a better future for the Panhandle. Thank you for living a life of service with a purpose. ❖

We'll keep your home running smoothly year-round.



**Uh Oh!**  
Better Call  
**SCOTT**

Call **355-4663** or visit **scottco.com** today!

HVAC: TACLA 28389 C Plumbing: M-18615 Electrical: TECL-22865

A TEAM OF SERVICE EXPERTS

**GLASS DOCTOR<sup>TM</sup>**

a neighborly company

- HOME & BUSINESS GLASS
- WINDSHIELD REPLACEMENT
- WINDSHIELD REPAIR
- AUTOMOTIVE WINDOW FILM
- PATIO DOORS
- MIRRORS
- HEADLIGHT RESTORATION
- G12 GUARANTEE



2515 Britain Dr, Amarillo, TX 79109

[www.glassdoctor.com/amarillo](http://www.glassdoctor.com/amarillo) - 806.358.7684

AMARILLO BOTANICAL GARDENS

Weddings Fundraisers  
Special Celebrations Networking Events



1400 Streit Drive 806.352.6513

[AmarilloBotanicalGardens.org](http://AmarilloBotanicalGardens.org)

GREG LUSK, Executive Director

CATHY SCHICK 727.318.7322

Director of Business Development



**Guild**  
mortgage



Find your true home. Finance it with Guild.

- Easy application, quick pre-approvals and prompt closings
- Loan programs tailored to meet your needs
- Customer service for the life of the loan
- Local loan experts in your community

Questions? Let's talk.

**Amarillo Branch**

6900 I-40, Suite 270

Amarillo, TX 79106

O: 806.356.9559

[branches.guildmortgage.com/tx/amarillo/amarillo-528.html](http://branches.guildmortgage.com/tx/amarillo/amarillo-528.html)

Guild Mortgage Company; Equal Housing Opportunity; NMLS# 3274. Branch NMLS #2157311, [nmlsconsumeraccess.org](http://nmlsconsumeraccess.org); for more licensing info [guildmortgage.com/licensing](http://guildmortgage.com/licensing).





# Determined Discipline

What is a life of purpose for a believer in Jesus Christ? Deana Brown gives a succinct answer. "The term 'living a life of purpose' for us as Christians is based in the Biblical principles we live by. My life as a Christian isn't about performing for God by trying to live some amazing life; it is the opportunity I have to honor Him by living according to His principles, and in so doing, I am totally blessed. Being determined to know the Lord better and doing what you are drawn to, gifted for, and love doing is what I call our opportunity to live a life of purpose for the Lord. To seek the Lord, improve in health areas of our lives, focus on relationships, and commit ourselves to our various areas of responsibility, with a 'determined discipline,' would help us stay focused in living a life of purpose."

Brown's desire to know the Lord grew from seeds planted by Christian parents, Harold and Mona Pickens. Faithfully involved in church children's programs, Deana testifies that she "understood my need for Christ and at seven gave my life to Christ." When her family moved to Plano, Texas, Brown continued to grow in her spiritual life under the leadership of Pastor Travis Berry. He and his wife, Bernice, served as International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries in Brazil prior to their ministry at First Baptist Church in Plano. Deana relates, "His burning desire to share the Gospel through missions flowed through his sermons and fueled a number of us at First Baptist to enter the mission field. At a Lake Lavon missions camp when I was twelve, Bro B (as she affectionately called him) was speaking, and I committed my life to missions." Her pastor further encouraged her with timely wisdom. "God is just as much in love with your preparation as He is with your service." With that in mind, Deana enrolled at Baylor as an education major, with a sociology and counseling minor. Upon completing her degree, she moved to Ft. Worth to attend Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where she married Harry in 1981.

After reading *To The Golden Shore*, a biography of Adoniram Judson, the first Baptist missionary, Harry made a commitment himself to missions, and several years later, after the birth of their three children, the couple moved to Eritrea as IMB missionaries, where they served until the communist immigration office issued them a "get out or else option." However, after the closed door in Eritrea, God opened a new door, as related by Deana. "I felt led to begin a 501 (c)(3) organization to help the believers we knew in Eritrea who were imprisoned, suffering, and being persecuted." Freedom Seekers International (FSI) became a reality. Their mission statement clarifies their overall aim. "Freedom Seekers



*Deana Brown at Dallas Baptist University where several college-aged Mayflowers took a tour of the campus.*



*Deana Brown visiting Mayflower in Thailand, where a sweet family named their newborn baby after her.*

## Story by Tammi Scoggin

Tammi Scoggin, an Amarillo resident for over thirty-two years, enjoys all forms of writing. She aims to share the gospel of Jesus Christ through all of her communication and encourage others to pursue a personal relationship with Jesus, especially through Bible literacy.

is a Christian organization that exists to rescue the most severely persecuted for their religious faith in hostile and restrictive countries. Through collaborative partnerships we deliver those who are persecuted to safety and freedom, saving their voices and allowing the Gospel to continue through their lives."

Brown testifies of how God has used FSI in the lives of suffering Christians. "In these sixteen years we have helped hundreds escape/resettle and now have over 100 Afghans we are working to rescue." The organization has aided those in Eritrea, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia, Korea (North and South), Thailand, Turkey, and elsewhere. She recounts the amazing recent liberation of the internationally-known Mayflower Church. "We partnered with a Midland-based organization, China

Aid, led by a good friend, Bob Fu. Together we helped The Mayflower escape, and they arrived on Good Friday this year in Tyler, Texas."

Praising God for sustaining her commitment to the Lord's purpose for her as well as FSI, Deana cites Psalm 71:17-18 - "Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come."

Through Deana's initial connection with friends/supporters in Canyon, Texas, others in the Amarillo area are now aiding FSI with the same desire to see God glorified throughout the world, the ultimate purpose for Brown and all believers, as she joyfully declares. "I love how I am privileged to see Him work in ways that make all of us stand back and be in awe of Him." All glory to God!

### Contact Information for Deana Brown/FSI:

dbrown@seekfreedom.org  
www.seekfreedom.org (sign up for newsletter)  
www.facebook.com/freedomseekersinternational

# ARE YOU BORED WITH YOUR CURRENT FITNESS ROUTINE?

## Conquer Aerial Silk Skills and Experience Aerial Arts with Zero Commitment Required!

and **NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**



“ I couldn't even fathom climbing those aerial silks. But just six weeks into the intro course, I not only conquered the climb but also unlocked a newfound sense of confidence and joy. The weekly classes have become more than just a workout; they're the highlight of my week that I always look forward to. I've not only climbed the fabrics—I've reignited the spark in my fitness journey and in my life. ”

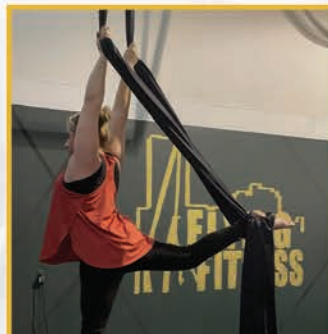
- Sara F.



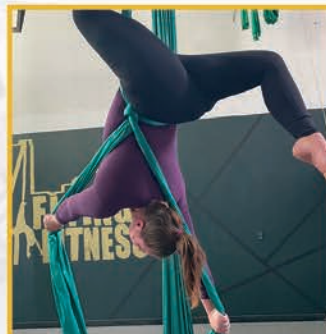
### THE BENEFITS



Discover Your New Passion and Hobby.



Revolutionize Your Fitness Game: Say goodbye to monotonous gym routines and hello to a full-body workout that's as fun as it is effective.



Sculpt Lean Muscle: Engage and tone every muscle group as you lift your own body weight in a series of intricate poses and sequences.



Boost Flexibility & Balance: Develop a dancer's flexibility and an athlete's balance as you navigate the silks.

### WHO IS THIS FOR?

- Those looking for an exciting fitness alternative
- Beginners curious about aerial arts
- People who want to make exercise fun again

### WHO IS THIS NOT FOR?

- Those looking for a traditional gym experience
- People not open to trying new things

**100% GUARANTEE**

#### The Flying Fitness Promise

If you complete all five classes and don't feel a renewed sense of joy and fitness, we'll refund your money, no questions asked. Yes, this guarantee makes us a bit uneasy, but we stand by it.

For 10 years, Flying Fitness transformed lives through **10,000+** aerial arts classes, making fitness exhilarating and accessible

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

The 5-Day Intro Package

**\$89**

- Value \$175** 5 Aerial Classes of Your Choice
- Value \$49** Free 20-Minute Consultation with an Aerial Instructor
- Value \$35** Bring a Friend for Free Pass
- Value \$199** Entry into a Raffle for a Free Month of Classes
- Value \$159** Entry into a Raffle for a Free Fitbit
- Value \$97** A comprehensive nutrition guide featuring personalized meal plans for various fitness stages, encompassing fat loss, muscle building, and maintenance.



GET STARTED TODAY WITH ZERO COMMITMENT

SCAN ME



USE DISCOUNT CODE AT CHECKOUT FOR \$15 OFF CODE: 15OFF

**\$15 OFF with the Code: 15OFF**

# 1



## Love the Music • Love the Memories

For 100 years, the **Amarillo Symphony** has been committed to inspiring, educating, and uniting our region through the power of music with exciting performances and programs each season.

Join us for our **Centennial Season** as we continue our tradition of spreading music throughout the Panhandle!

Scan below to view our whole season and purchase tickets to our concerts!




**HAPPY HOLIDAY POPS**  
**Friday, December 15 - 7:30PM**  
**Saturday, December 16 - 2:00 & 7:30PM**

Come share your favorite holiday music with family & friends. A sparkling celebration with carols, classics, & a sing-a-long – an Amarillo holiday tradition!

**HAPPY HOLIDAY POPS TICKETS ARE 20-50% OFF WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!**

*It's not too late for a season subscription! Call 806.376.8782 today!*

**BACH TO BARTÓK**  
**Fri./Sat., January 19 - 20 // 7:30PM**

**Mahan Esfahani, harpsichord**

FRANCISCO COLL - *Himnica*  
 BACH - *Concerto in d minor*  
 BARTÓK - *Concerto for Orchestra*



**MAHLER'S FIFTH SYMPHONY**  
**Fri./Sat., February 23 - 24 // 7:30PM**

**Amarillo Master Chorale**

NATHAN FRYML - *Novae Laudis*  
*(100<sup>th</sup> Season Commission)*  
 MAHLER - *Symphony No. 5*

