# NEW TERRITORY monthly

# Keepin' It Renal 2017

Annual walk fundraiser will raise awareness and funds for kidney cancer research & it will honor the memory of the man who inspired the event

### SPECIAL FEATURE Lizzie Rule

is proving age has nothing to do with community service

**ENTERTAINMENT:** The Avett Brothers, 'The Composer is Dead,' and a free performance by the Houston Grand Opera



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After losing her son to kidney cancer, this mother started a foundation to help others and support kidney cancer research

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Through her community service works, this 10-year-old girl has gained the attention of an inspiring national program and she hopes to inspire others in Fort Bend.

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**LOOK WHO'S COMING** Plenty of entertainers will perform in Sugar Land this month. Plus get the details on a Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra April 1 performance.

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**NONPROFITS** Sweet moments from the Lunches of Love and Fort Bend Cares nonprofit benefits that kicked off the year.



#### 4. NEW TERRITORY Monthly

### NEW TERRITORY

monthly"

GENERAL MANAGER Lee Hartman leehart@fbherald.com

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR Marquita Griffin mgriffin@fbherald.com

COMPOSITION & GRAPHICS MANAGER Alfred H. Dubé adube@fbherald.com

**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS** 

Melinda Maya mmaya@fbherald.com

Ginger Garza ggarza@fbherald.com

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If you are interested in advertising in the New Territory Monthly, please call 281-342-4474 and ask for Stefanie Bartlett, Ruby Polichino or Samantha Alaniz. We'll be happy to send rates, and deadline information to you.

#### **PHOTO & ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS**

We are looking for fresh story ideas and enjoy publishing your articles in the New Territory Monthly. If you have an story idea or photo to publish please send your information to mgriffin@fbherald.com with "Monthly" in the subject line.

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Tell us how we're doing! Email: mgriffin@fbherald.com



### Registration Now Open for 13th Annual Impact a Hero 5K

Registration is now open for the 13th Annual Impact a Hero 5K, one of Impact a Hero's major fundraising events of the year. This year, the race will be held May 20, 2017 at the Constellation Field and will feature the traditional 5K Run/Walk/Wheel and Kids 1K.

The 5K registration is \$25 for untimed and \$35 for timed. The 5K wheel is \$25. The Kids 1K is \$15. Prices increase on May 13, and again on race day. Cash prizes will be awarded for the Men's Open, Men's Master, Women's Open and Women's Master categories. Top fundraisers will also be awarded prizes. Every registration will include an Impact a Hero 5K shirt, free fundraising page, and entry to the post-race party. Online registration is available on their website: www. impactahero5k.com.

Historically over 50 veterans and their families participate to engage with one another, promote emotional well-being by building camaraderie, as well as receive their much-deserved support from those they serve - our community. The funds raised during this event will provide funding for the resources for the Impact a Hero programs and financial aid given to our heroes.

"This is also a wonderful time for our community to engage with and thank our wounded heroes," says Laurel Goodroe, Business Director at Impact Hero. "The 5k is an emotionally moving event for everyone - for our contributors, our supporters, our team, and most importantly, our veterans."

For more information about our organization, registration or sponsorship opportunities, please contact: Laurel Goodroe at lgoodroe@impactahero.org.

### **Caladium Sale**

The Garden Club Of Richmond is holding its annual Caladium Sale.



Red Flash Caladiums are used in the pool landscape where Peyton and Hunter Hinton swim.



Bryson Rain "mows" in front of his family's Variegated caladiums.

Bulbs can be pre-ordered and will be available for pick-up from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 5 and 6 and 10 a.m. to noon on April 7 at Jospeh's Coffee Show, 202 Morton Street in Richmond.

Prices are: \$25 for 25 bulbs, \$50 for 50 bulbs and \$95 for 100 bulbs.

Order by calling 281-341-0588 or email nrain@comcast.net. Orders have to be paid for in advance. The last day to purchase is March 24.

The bulbs are No.1 "fancyleafed" caladium bulbs and are available in the following colors: Red (Red Flash), Pink (Carolyn Whorton), White (Candidum) and Variegated (Trapestry).

Native to the banks of the Amazon River in South America, Caladiums are tropical plants that are grown from a tuberous root often called bulbs.

They come in a variety of colors and combinations that include red, pink and white. Adding a lush, exotic touch to summer gardens in our area, most caladiums are at home in shade or partial shade, but varieties recommended by the Garden Club of Richmond, Red Flash, Carolyn Whorton and Tapestry, tolerate full sun.

Candidums thrive in shade or filtered sunlight and mix beautifully with ferns and impatiens. Caladiums are a wonderful way to enhance shady areas, provide a focal point for a sunny garden, or show off in stunning patio containers.

Easy to care for, the bulbs are ready to be planted when all danger of frost has passed and the temperature reaches 70 degrees Fahrenheit, usually late April or early May.

#### **ENTERTAINMENT**

#### **The Lumineers**

Two time GRAMMY nominated artist, The Lumineers, announced that they'll be embarking on their first ever North







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9430 Oberrender Rd • Needville, TX 77461 Jacqueline McCroskey Call (301) 646-3200 needvillehorse@gmail.com website www.needvillehorseriding.com American arena tour in 2017, stopping at Smart Financial Centre on March 2 at 7 p.m.. This news comes just days after the act performed at the esteemed Americana Music Awards, and on the coattails of a current sold-out North American leg of the Cleopatra World Tour. Icelandic band, Kaleo with #1 hit "Way Down We Go", will join The Lumineers as direct support. In addition the band welcomes Susto as opener. Visit www.smartfinancialcentre.net for more information.

#### 'Elvis Lives'

Award-winning theatrical attraction Elvis Lives® "The Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Event" will come to Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land on Friday, March 3 at 8 p.m. ELVIS touring cast of Elvis Lives during

LIVES will kick off the 2017

touring season. Elvis Lives is a

journey across Elvis' life featuring

winners and finalists from Elvis

Presley Enterprise's (EPE) annual

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stages of his career. The tour marks

the third time in the production's

six-year history that all three Elvis

tribute artists are top winners of the

contest. Bill Cherry, Dean Z and

Jay Dupuis from 2009, 2013 and

2014 have reunited as the featured

the initial leg of the 2017 tour. For more information, visit http://www.elvislivestour.com/.



#### An Evening with Bill Maher

Political comedian and talk show host, Bill Maher, will bring his stand-up comedy tour to the brand new Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land on Saturday, March 4 at 8 p.m.. For more than 20 years, Maher has entertained the masses with his political humor on the television screen, including Comedy Central's "Politically Incorrect" and HBO's "Real Time with Bill Maher," which has featured many high-profile guests. His combination of unflinching honesty and big laughs have earned him 38 Emmy nominations, as well as an Emmy win in 2014 for his role as executive producer of HBO series, "VICE."

#### The Illusionists

On the heels of a highly successful multi-city tour and run on Broadway, the world's bestselling touring magic show, The Illusionists - Live From BroadwaY will play Smart Financial Centre on March 11 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. as part of its current North

#### Continued on page 8



#### IN AND AROUND NEW TERRITORY

#### Continued from page 7



#### American tour.

Full of hilarious magic tricks, death-defying stunts and acts of breathtaking wonder, The Illusionists has shattered box office records worldwide and thrilled audiences of all ages with a mind-blowing spectacular showcasing the jaw-dropping talents of seven of the most incredible illusionists on earth. Visit www.theillusionistslive.com for more information.

#### **Tony Bennet**

Smart Financial Centre at Sugar Land proudly presents Tony Bennett, the 19-time Grammy Award-winning musician whose music spans over six decades, on Tuesday, March 14 at 8 p.m.

With worldwide record sales in the millions, and dozens of platinum and gold albums to his credit, Tony Bennett has a long list of achievements, spanning over 60 years, includes nineteen Grammy Awards, including the prestigious Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.



#### Duran Duran Paper Gods on Tour 2017

Duran Duran has announced additional dates for their Spring



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2017 World Tour, in support of their current album Paper Gods. The new U.S. and South American dates include shows in Texas, Florida, Georgia and Belo Horizonte, Brazil. They will perform at the Smart Financial Center in Sugar Land at 8 p.m. on March 22. Paper Gods was released in September 2015 and entered the Billboard 200 chart at No. 10, earning the iconic British band their highest charting album in 22 years. Produced by Grammy Award-winners Nile Rodgers and Mark Ronson, along with Mr Hudson and Josh Blair, the band's 14th studio album features collaborations with Janelle Monáe, John Frusciante, Kiesza, Jonas Bjerre (of Mew), and Lindsay Lohan.

#### **The Avett Brothers**

The Avett Brothers come to Smart Financial Centre on March 31 at 8 p.m..

During 2009, The Avett Brothers made mainstream waves with their lauded major label debut, I and Love and You. It landed at #16 on the Billboard Top 200 and garnered unanimous critical acclaim from Rolling Stone, Paste, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Time, who even dubbed it one of Top 10 albums of the year. The Avett Brothers' newest album, True Sadness [American Recordings/ Republic Records], achieved the group's highest career debut to date



and dominated multiple charts. The Rick Rubin produced album arrived at #1 on Billboard's Top Albums Chart, #1 Top Rock Albums Chart, #1 on the Digital Albums Chart and #3 on Billboard's Top 200 Chart.

#### The Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra Presents The Annual Childrens' Concert "The Composer Is Dead!"

It's an April Fool's Day celebration as FBSO's annual children's concert peeks into all corners of the orchestra, looking for the culprit in this high-spirited murder mystery. The concert features words by Lemony Snicket in this work by Nathaniel Stookey.



Similar in feel to "Peter and the Wolf" and "The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra", "The Composer is Dead" introduces young audience members to the different instruments of the orchestra in an engaging, entertaining production. It's a perplexing murder mystery where all the participants seem to have alibis, all certainly have motives – and all are musical instruments!

Also on the concert is Micha Namenwirth's "Divertimento for Toys and Orchestra". This engaging selection is performed with toy trumpets, recorders, percussion instruments and the orchestra. FBSO will hold an instrument petting zoo following the performance. Other activities are being planned for the day; please check the website for more details.

This is an entertaining, family activity – and a great way to foster a young child's love of music.

To encourage family attendance, the FBSO children's concert is free of charge, and there are no tickets required. More information is available online at www.fbso. org or by calling 281-276-9642. The concert will be held Saturday, April 1 at 2 p.m. at the George Memorial Library in Richmond.

#### Children's Opera: 'The Barber Of Seville'

Fort Bend County Libraries' Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton

Branch Library will present a special performance for children by Houston Grand Opera's "Opera to Go!" of The Barber of Seville, on Wednesday, March 15 at 3 pm, in the Meeting Room of the library, located at 8100 FM 359 South in Fulshear.

This family-friendly light opera, sung in English and Spanish, is recommended for children in grades 2 through 8. Music is by Gioachino Rossini, and the adaptation/libretto is by Kristine McIntyre.

In this new bilingual adaptation of Rossini's beloved comic opera, language divides a young couple as much as a stubborn uncle. Opera's most famous barber, Figaro, plays the role of translator as Rossini's sparkling, witty score takes center stage.

The program is presented with the generous support of the Friends of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library. Proceeds from the Friends of the Library book sales and annual membership dues help to underwrite the costs of special programming and various cultural events at the library.

The performance is free and open to the public. A free handstamp is required for admission, and will be available one hour prior to the performance. For more information, call the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library at 281-633-4675 or the library system's Public Information Office at 281-633-4734.



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#### **LIBRARY NEWS**

The University Branch Library, 14010 University Blvd in Sugar Land, on the UH campus. 281-633-5100

### Culinary Club--It Ain't Easy Being Green

Do you love food or have a love of cooking? Whether you're someone who is just starting out as an at-home cook or someone who would love to share their cooking experience, there is something for everyone. Join the University Branch Library on March 15 from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. for fun featuring food. This month's theme is "It Ain't Easy Being Green."

### Free AARP Tax Assistance

AARP representatives will assist in the preparation of income tax returns from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. March 4, 11, 18 and 25. This service is free and offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please bring the following items: 1) Last year's tax return; 2) Photo ID; 3) Social Security cards for all persons to be mentioned in tax return; and 4) Current 2016 tax documents such as W2s, 1099s, etc.

### Learn How To Design And Create Objects For 3d Printers

Fort Bend County Libraries' George Memorial Library will have demonstrations and instructional sessions on the use of different online resources to design and create objects for 3D printers in March. The classes will take place in the Computer Lab of the library, located at 1001 Golfview in Richmond.

The class "Introduction to Thingiverse" will take place on Tuesday, March 7, at 10 am. Learn how to use this website to search for and download design files to print 3D objects.

The class "Introduction to Tinkercad" will take place on Monday, March 20, beginning at 7 pm. The class will be repeated on Tuesday, March 21, at 10 am. Learn how to use this online program to create objects for 3D printing.

The classes are free and open to the public. Seating is limited, however, and reservations are required. To register online at the library's website (www.fortbend. lib.tx.us), click on "Events," select "George Memorial Library," and find the program. Participants may also register by calling the library at 281-341-2604, or by visiting the library.

For more information on 3D printers at Fort Bend County Libraries, call the library system's Public Information Office at 281-633-4734.

### Celebrate Superheroes And Animé At George Memorial's Young-Adult Cosplay Event

Fort Bend County Libraries invites comic-book lovers, costume enthusiasts, and animé superfans to a "Young Adult Animé Cosplay" at George Memorial Library on Saturday, March 25, beginning at 10:30 am, in the Meeting Room of the library, located at 1001 Golfview in Richmond. The event will feature a costume contest and movie.

Older teens and young adults will have an opportunity to highlight their creativity and show off the hard work and imagination they put into fashioning fantastic outfits representing their favorite video game, animé, manga, SciFi, or comic-book superheroes.

Prizes for 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rdplace will be awarded for animé or manga cosplay participants. Cosplay based on video games adapted into manga or animé are also eligible. Costumes must be family-friendly and not contain any profanity or weapon props. Entries can be handmade or storebought, but those that are purchased must have at least one new addition made to the ensemble.

The movie to be shown is an animated feature released in 2001 about a young girl named Chihiro and her parents who are moving to a new house in Japan's countryside. When they take a detour down a wooded path, they encounter an abandoned town that is strangely full of restaurants with delicious meals waiting to be eaten. While her parents do not hesitate to gorge themselves, Chihiro decides to investigate the mysterious town. She encounters a young boy named Haku, who cautions her to leave town before nightfall. When she runs to warn her parents, she finds that they've been turned into pigs. Haku helps Chihiro survive by working in a bathhouse for Japanese gods and spirits while she tries to find a way to save her parents before they become the main course on a dinner platter. This movie is rated PG.

This event is free and open to the public. For more information, call George Memorial Library at 281-342-4455 or the library system's Public Information Office at 281-633-4734.

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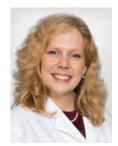


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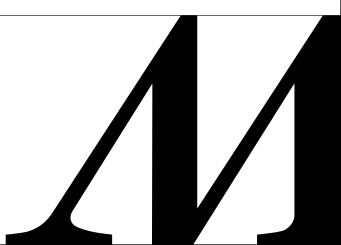
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#### FEATURE STORY



# It's Time To Pay Attention One mother is

## pushing for increased kidney cancer awareness

#### BY MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

Every year Ritchie Johnson develops new ways to bring attention to kidney cancer, and this year, she has decided to host the Annual Keepin' It Renal 5K Run/Walk in March considering this month is Kidney Cancer Awareness Month.

osted by The Chris "CJ" Johnson Foundation, Inc. — which Johnson founded the year after her son, CJ, passed away from renal medullary carcinoma — the Annual Keepin' It Renal 5K Run/Walk raises funds



to support the foundation's goal to raise money for kidney cancer research.

Although this year's event is being held earlier than it had been in the past, Johnson said its focus is still to bring awareness to what is called "America's quiet epidemic" — kidney cancer.

Last year's event drew nearly 360 participants and donors and Johnson said she expects an even larger turnout this year because with each passing year the scope of The Chris "CJ" Johnson Foundation expands.

"Last year's event did not just honor Chris, who loss his battle to renal medullary carcinoma in September 2012, just 15months after diagnosis, but also Sandra Prevost," Johnson said.

"A total of 26 family members

and friends walked in memory of Fort Bend County's Sandra Prevost, who died in March 2016 from renal medullary carcinoma."

#### **Lending Support**

While the The Chris "CJ" Johnson Foundation Inc. advocates renal cell carcinoma research, it also provides donations and grants to assist uninsured clients with the cost of diagnostic testing.





After discovering that renal medullary carcinoma is linked to the sickle cell trait, Johnson said the foundation is also focusing on those individuals with the sickle cell trait who may potentially be at risk for this rare and aggressive kidney cancer.

In March of 2016, due to the funds raised at the walk, the foundation donated \$3,000 to MD Cancer Center and Johnson said "it is [the foundation's] desire to

#### FEATURE STORY

#### "We recognize those individuals that are still fighting for their lives."

- Ritchie Johnson, founder of The Chris "CJ" Johnson Foundation



donate on an annual basis."

For the past four years the foundation has partnered with the Heart Of Kids Social Services and provided gifts during Christmas to many children that are in foster care.

"Last year, we were able to donate \$500 scholarship to Divinshia Jackson, a 2016 graduate of B.F. Terry High School," Johnson added.

Through the foundation's fundraisers, as well as partnerships with primary care physicians and urology specialists, Johnson said the foundation also provides educational and financial support



to several individuals who have been diagnosed with RMC and their families.

"We recognize those individuals that are still fighting for their lives," Johnson said. "This rare cancer is rarely researched due to lack of funds and the limited number of reported cases."

#### Keepin' It Renal Details

This Annual Keepin' It Renal 5K Run/Walk will be held on Saturday, March 25, at the Sugar Land Memorial Park- Large Pavilion, 15300 University Blvd. in Sugar Land, Texas.

On-site registration begins at 7:30 a.m. and the race will began promptly at 8:30 a.m.. The entry fee is \$30 but children 10 years old and younger may walk for free. T-shirts, however, are \$10.

Balloons will also be released in memory of all the adolescents and young adults that loss their life to renal medullary carcinoma.

To learn more about the journey of Chris Johnson, Sandra Prevost and others, please visit our website at

#### chrisjohnsonfoundation.org

### Getting to Know Chris "CJ" Johnson

**By Ritchie Johnson** 

hristopher Sean Johnson was born in November 1972 to Charles and Ritchie Johnson. He passed on September 20, 2012 at the age of 39.

He has an older brother, Marc Johnson and two children, Marquise Montoya of Albuquerque and Gabrielle Hayward-Johnson of Houston.

Chris graduated from Clements High School in 1991 and while there he played football.

Chris was a talented athlete and made a significant contribution in basketball, football and track, lettering in both football and track.

He decided to focus on football and was awarded All-District Running Back in his junior and senior years in high school.

After graduation he attended Southwest Texas State University for one year where he was recruited to play football at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. He played both tailback and fullback for the Lobos.

Chris graduated from The University of New Mexico in May of 1997 with a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree.

Chris worked for several corporations in the Houston area, but found his niche at Shell Oil. While working for Shell, he



became an accomplished world traveler. He visited Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Dubai, Cabo San Lucas, Amsterdam and other global destinations.

He was always eager to learn as much as he could about the different cultures, ethnic foods, oil and gas and the stock market.

He cherished his family and friends and was always the life of the party —he kept people laughing.

Chris was always willing to help others, whether it was giving advice or cooking for a special occasion. Chris had a special aura about him —his eyes and his smile was like a magnetic force that drew both children and adults to him.

He loved his children and loved being a father. He would use every opportunity to educate them on various subjects and life in general.

Photography, fishing, flying model helicopters, cooking and playing golf were his favorite hobbies. He founded CSJ Photography and began taking pictures and did several photo shoots.

He also enjoyed watching football and always looked forward to the Houston/Dallas game.

Chris rooted for the Texans and his brother, Marc, for the Cowboys. You can just imagine the excitement in the house.

#### CENTERPIECE

# **Lizzie Rule:** a Little Girl on a Big Mission One Fort Bend child volunteer has been named a nominee for the National Youth Activist Awards

BY MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

Seeing Lizzie walking around Needville, Texas neighborhoods collecting food donations or hosting food drives is a common sight.

he video is less than two minutes long, but that's more than enough time to make your stomach drop. Microphone in hand, a teary-eyed teenage girl shared in a wavering voice a stark and scary confession.

"I literally tied the rope and was about to hang myself," she said.

At her confession, the music playing in the background of the YouTube video intensifies, and a chill snakes up your spine.

"You better learn to speak to your children," said Tiffany Love, founder of MAN UP Against Bullying, anti-bullying nonprofit that has reached communities nationwide.

"Do not ignore the signs of bullying."

Based in Nashville, Tennessee, the MAN UP Against Bullying program falls beneath the umbrella of Tenacious Teens 4 Christ, Inc., which was also founded by Love. MAN UP Against Bullying, however, was started to "teach youth about the importance of putting an appropriate end to bullying with non-violent method," Love said. Along with Love, her husband Ahmad Rashad Harden is involved with the nonprofit as the co-founder, production manager and Anti-Bullying Rally host.

MAN UP Against Bullying essentially encourages anti-bully messages and action through interactive anti-bullying rallies, suicide-bullying and drug-alcohol prevention programs as well as self-esteem building programs.

"[We teach the youth] that bullying is not cool, how to put an appropriate end to bullying and how to effectively inform someone of a bullying situation," Love explained.



Tiffany Love became the first African American Tennessee USA Mrs. and is also Mrs. Georgia USA, which provided her the opportunity to build self-esteem in youth through the nonprofit she founded called MAN UP Against and Bullying its subgroup, the National Youth Activist Awards.

"We became tired of the media highlighting teen and youth violence, so we came up with a positive approach and way to highlight our youth." - Tiffany Love, founder of National Youth Activist Awards

As part of their campaign to create awareness about MAN UP Against Bullying, Love and Harden host anti-bullying rallies across the nation and have had videos created to provide snippets of the horror stories bullying victims share.

0

"We choose our rallies where ever there is a need," Love said.

One of the rallies made its way to Houston, Texas and the nonprofit even has a proclamation from the mayor for implementing the rallies. What is important to note about the rallies is those who brave the stage range in ages, races and backgrounds.

Bullying knows no bounds, Love said. It does not discriminate. It can affect anyone.

One of the other inspiring aspects of the MAN UP Against Bullying organization is it also recognizes youth who are contributing to their communities and working to make society a better place.

"Everyone wants to point out the negative of youth, not the positive," said Love, which is why she and her husband also founded the National Youth Activist Awards three years ago.

"The National Youth Activist Awards is a part of MAN Up Against Bullying," said Love. "It's our unique way of awarding youth who are doing positive things in the community, classroom and playing field while making a positive impact to put an end to bullying.

"We became tired of the media highlighting teen and youth violence, so we came up with a positive approach and way to highlight our youth."

The awards program has the following categories: Outstanding Achiever Award; Inspiring Arts Award; Community Ambassador Award; Triumph Award; Athletics Award; Environmental & Health Impact Award; Helpful Humanitarian Award; Academic Excellence Award; Social Justice Award; and Youth Impact Award.

An awards ceremony to announce the winners is held at the Omni Hotel & Resorts Nashville every year. This year's ceremony is set for April 2 and a Fort Bend County girl — Lizze Rule — has been named one of the 100 nominees for this year's awards.

Continued on page 16...



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#### Continued from page 15...

# Honoring Top Youth in The Nation

#### On the road to be a Community Ambassador

Ten-year old Lizzie Rule is a little girl with a big smile and even a bigger heart, and her intentions to serve her community has earned her a nomination for the 2017 National Youth Activist Community Ambassador.

"Lizzie is devoted to serving others," said her mother Eden Rule, who added that her daughter spends almost every weekend volunteering throughout the Fort Bend and Greater Houston area.

The young Rule hopes her works can inspire other children around Fort Bend to take up the cause and serve their individual communities.

"It is nice to help others and my family has always been volunteers since I was a little baby," Lizzie Rule said. "Even though I am a little kid, I can make a difference. Young people should help because it would encourage big people to help and then everyone will help. "Young people are the future and if we want a better future, then we have to work hard to make it better," she added.

#### A Little Girl with a BIG heart

In her Needville, Texas community Rule started her own local organization — the Lunch Brunch — in efforts to end childhood hunger by traveling throughout her community collecting donations and organizing food drives within her school and neighborhood.

Her three older siblings — Annie 15, Rosalan 13, Mark 11 and her two younger cousins — Lisa, 7 and Eliana, 3 — are members of her of the Lunch Bunch and travel around with their wagons as well to help Rule in her goals. Through a united effort, Rule, her siblings and cousins have collected hundreds of pounds of food and regularly volunteer with the Houston Food Bank,



The Salvation Army is no stranger to the Rule children: Lizzie and her siblings Annie, Rosalan and Mark.

Lunches of Love, Mercy Tree, Second Mile, Kids' Meals Houston and other food drives and meal-providing programs.

"She learned about Lunches of Love a few years ago and couldn't stand the thought that little kids like her had to suffer because their parents couldn't afford to feed them," said Rule's mother. "She



Lizzie Rule said she is motivated to volunteer by her family: Her parents: Caleb and Eden Rule; her siblings: Annie 15, Rosalan 13, Mark 11; and cousins: Lisa, 7 and Eliana, 3.

#### 16 • NEW TERRITORY Monthly

became very determined and wanted to do more than just help pack lunches so she began asking for donations for her birthday, and then asked our neighbors, and then before we knew it, she had planned an entire organization and gathered her siblings to help her."

And while she is a child, her age doesn't stop Rule from tackling other efforts to help improve the lives around her.

"I want others to know that little hands can make a big difference, as long as you have lots of love," she said. "If one person helps, no matter how big or how small, then one more person will help, and one more, and one more, and so on, until everyone is helping everyone and the world will be a much better place."

#### Embracing high waters, the police and the elderly

Rule's ambitions don't end with



Lizzie enjoys visiting and playing Bingo with senior citizens.

the fight against childhood hunger; she also regularly visits senior centers to converse with residents and lead Bingo games. And in a time when there is substantial national tension surrounding police officers, Rule showed her support and respect for the force through sweets — as captain for the Fort Bend County Cookies for Cops team, Rule baked and delivered more than 1,000 cookies



Last summer Lizzie held a book drive for Books Between Kids and was able to donate nearly 1,000 books to cause.

to local police agencies.

When high waters hit Fort Bend County in June of last year, devastating homes, properties and communities, Rule did not sit idly by just watching the latest on local news. Instead she organized a clothing, toiletry, and cleaning supply drive and helped put together thousands of "Blessing Bundles" for the Brazos River Flood Recovery Center, which was an assistance program put in play to aid the families affected by the Brazos River flood.

"She volunteered regularly at the Flood Recovery Center in Rosenberg during her summer break," said her mother.

Rule also coordinated a book drive this past summer and donated almost 1,000 books to Books Between Kids, plus she "Young people are the future and if we want a better future, then we have to work hard to make it better."

 $\phi$ 

- Lizzie Rule, 10



volunteers at charity run events, the Salvation Army, Autism Speaks, animal shelters and toy drives.

Tiffany Love said the nominees for the National Youth Activists

Continued on page 18...

#### Specializing in Adult and Geriatric Medicine

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#### Continued from page 17...



In her own unique way Lizzie wanted to let police officers know she values them, so she baked and delivered more than 1,000 cookies to local law enforcement.

Awards are chosen through a committee of dignitaries, celebrities, community officials and community leaders and Rule definitely fits the qualifications for the Community Ambassador Award. Love also said Rule is the only nominee from Fort Bend County and is vying against 15 other nominees for the Community Ambassador title.

Eden Rule hopes her daughter earns this year's award because she feels Rule could inspire others in her community and beyond.

"Being the National Youth Activist would be an honor because it would show that even little kids like me can make a big difference in our world," Eden Rule said. "I think it would encourage grown ups to get involved too and then more families like mine would volunteer and donate and before you know it, everyone would and our world be a much better place."

Rule also has high hopes for receiving the award, not for the prestige, however, but rather to expand her community service.

"Being the National Ambassador would open up many doors for my organization, The Lunch Bunch, and help me to receive more sponsors and donations to help the organizations I work with, such as Lunches of Love, Second Mile, and the Mercy Tree," the enthusiastic 10-year-old said.

#### The Impact of the National Youth Activist Awards

While any parent would be proud of his or her child being recognized for their works, Eden Rule said she also respects the message Tiffany Love is trying to share with the nation through the National Youth Activist Awards.

"I believe we have become quite content with just 'making it,' and have gotten lazy over the years and many do not want to put forth extra effort in working hard for things," Eden rule said. "I also believe a lot of people are so busy with trying to get through their own situations, that they don't have the time to notice when someone else may need a little extra help, however, it doesn't take much time to offer a



Lizzie through her own volunteering efforts and social media encouraged others to join the cause to donate goods to the Brazos River Recovery Center.

smile and a word of encouragement to someone else."

That is what the National Youth Activist Awards brings to the

#### **About Lizzie Rule**

#### **Age:** 10

#### Parents: Caleb and Eden Rule

Activties: UIL creative writing and oral reading, straight As, mini-cheer camp, and outside of school, she is in 4H, Girl Scouts, and community theatre.

#### Favorite subject: Reading

**Favorite Pastimes:** Reading and writing, theatre, dancing, singing, crafts, and of course, volunteer work

**Lizzie Rule**, a 10-year-old Fort Bend County girl has caught the attention of the National Youth Activist Awards nonprofit through her community work that ranges from trying to end childhood hunger to serving the elderly. Lizzie was nominated for the National Youth Community Ambassador Award after competing in the National Princess of America Ambassador competition in August. She won 1st runner up last year, 2nd runner up this year, and hopes to return next year and win the overall national title.



#### **National Youth Activist Awards Nominee categories:**

forefront: That anyone has the ability — financially or by volunteering — to better their communities.

"You never know someone's current situations or what they are battling and sometimes all they need is to know someone else cares," she said. "You may not be able to offer monetary assistance, but you can offer something to show you care. When children are doing their part to help others, it can really motivate the adults around them to do their part, too. If every family helped another family out in some way, then we would all be covered."

Rule agrees wholeheartedly with her mother:

"I want people to know that my family is very busy with lots of activities but we still find time to



Inspired by the Rosenberg-based Lunches of Love nonprofit, Lizze started her own small organization — The Lunch Brunch — to collect food for disadvantaged children.

volunteer and help others, it just takes a little bit of hard work but it is worth it," she said. "The Bible says we should be the hands and feet for the Lord and so that is exactly what I will do."

#### OUTSTANDING ACHIEVER AWARD: ENVIRO

Has exemplary skills in making a difference in the lives of others, while implementing innovative ways to improve society

**INSPIRING ARTS AWARD:** Using creative methods of inspiring others through the arts to change society (music, dance, instruments, poetry, makeup artist, beauty, and hair)

**COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR AWARD:** Taking action in the community through volunteering and completing acts of kindness through community service

**TRIUMPH AWARD:** Overcoming tragedy, a difficult situation in society or disability, while using life experiences to improve the community

ATHLETICS AWARD: Has exemplary athleticism and using athletic abilities to inspire others to achieve goals through healthy living in the community, or classroom (may play multiple sports)

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL & HEALTH**

IMPACT AWARD: Creates innovative methods of improving society and health through recycling, agriculture, healthy living, or exercise/fit initiatives

HELPFUL HUMANITARIAN AWARD: Organizes events, special occasions, or programs that help others be the change that is needed in communities (one who organizes health clinics, food drives, toy drives, walks, runs, etc)

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD: Has overall exemplary skills in a subject or subjects, and using academics to become future leaders of tomorrow

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD:** Standing up for a cause or difficult social problem in society to improve the lives of others

**YOUTH IMPACT AWARD:** A group of youth making a difference in today's society working collaboratively to solve an issue or help others (dance team, school club, organization, singing group, church group)

To nominate someone you know visit www.manupagainstbullying.org/national-youth-activist-awards.html

Want to know more about MAN UP Against Bullying & the National Youth Activist Awards? Visit www.manupagainstbullying.org

The National Youth Activist Awards, sponsored by Omni Hotel & Resorts, will be held Sunday, April 2, 2017 at the Omni Hotel & Resorts Nashville, Tennessee. Nominations are ope to youth and young adults ages 8 - 27 years old.



#### **NONPROFITS**

#### Lunches of Love Taste of Fort Bend 2017

Photos by Diana Nguyen dnguyen@fbherald.com

The Briscoe Manor ballroom in

Richmond was filled with satiated guests in January for a good cause — to raise money to feed underprivileged children in Fort Bend County.

The event — Lunches of Love's second annual "Taste of Fort Bend" underwritten by Briscoe Manor — gave guests a chance to sample a variety of Fort Bend County's popular food establishments while bidding on both live and silent auctions. A total of \$92,000 was raised, \$27,000 more than last year's benefit.



From left: Missy Lyons, Keesha O'Brien, Shelly Munoz, Myrna Gonzalez, Hope Frabieter, Marina Roberts, Rosie Kuhar and Roberta Hall enjoy a night out at the Briscoe Manor supporting Lunches of Love's second annual "Taste of Fort Bend" event. The proceeds will go to help feed underprivileged children in Fort Bend County.



#### Greatwood Veterinary Hospital

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Marina Roberts, Missy Lyons and Rosie Kuhar of Richmond, share a laugh at the Lunches of Love "Taste of Fort bend" fundraiser event Thursday night at the Briscoe Manor.



From left, Tom and Jill Davis, Lauren and Fort Bend County Fire Marshal Mark Flathouse, enjoy a night out at the Briscoe Manor to support the Lunches of Love second annual "Taste of Fort Bend" fundraiser.



Lunches of Love volunteer Becky Schultz holds up a rifle to be auctioned off at the Lunches of Love second annual "Taste of Fort Bend" event at the Briscoe Manor. The fundraiser raised a total of \$92,000 this year, an increase of \$27,000 from last year's event.



From left, Pam and Robert Blasingame of Needville, James Duke of Rosenberg and Norma Cavozos of Richmond, share a high five and laughter at the Lunches of Love second annual "Taste of Fort Bend" fundraiser event at the Briscoe Manor.



Former NFL and Houston Texans offensive lineman Wade Smith, and wife, Rita, place the winning bid for a hand-crafted swinging bench, at the Lunches of Love "Taste of Fort Bend" fundraiser event at Briscoe Manor in Richmond Thursday night.



Beth Macintyre and Amy Sareen of Harvest Church in Sienna Plantation enjoy the Lunches of Love second annual "Taste of Fort Bend" fundraiser at the Briscoe Manor. The event -which benefits to feed underprivileged children in Fort Bend County -- raised a total of \$92,000 this year, an increase of \$27,000 from last year's.



Graham Anderson and Heather Phenicie of Harvest Church in Sienna Plantation, enjoy Lunches of Love's "Taste of Fort Bend" at the Briscoe Manor in Richmond Thursday night. The church hopes to take after the organization's charitable services and help feed south Fort Bend County.



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### NONPROFITS

#### **Child Advocates of Fort Bend**

Exchange Club of Sugar Land and OCuSOFT, Inc. will be Ringmaster Sponsors for Child Advocates of Fort Bend's 17th annual gala - Le Cirque, a whimsical, fantastical ball on Saturday, April 29 at 6 p.m. This fun, adult event will take place at the Sugar Land Marriott Town Square and will feature Cirque du Soleil style entertainment, a live auction, silent auction, raffle, wine pull, dinner and dancing. Michele Fisher will emcee and Ray Aguilar will serve as auctioneer. Black tie and costumes are optional. Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are available ranging from \$2,000 to \$15,000. Individual tickets are available for \$150. To attend the Gala, become a sponsor or for more information, go to https://www. cafb.org/events/gala/sponsorship-opportunities/ or contact Lisa Moore at 281-344-5108 or Imoore@cafb.org.



Shown (L to R) are: Exchange Club of Sugar Land Board Members Nick Landoski, Duyen Le, Exchange Club of Sugar Land President Carlos Perez, Scott McClintic, Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford, Kevin Barker (in the back), Rod White (kneeling), Child Advocates of Fort Bend Board President Jim Lockwood, Leslie Woods, Jaime Williams and Ray Aguilar. Photo courtesy of Gregory Kramer. The agency's annual gala and auction raises much needed funds to support its programs for abused and neglected children.



Members of Youth in Philanthropy's "Dream Team" show off canvases that they painted.

### The George Foundation's Youth In Philanthropy

### Youth in Philanthropy Making a Difference for Child Advocates of Fort Bend

On Saturday, Jan. 14, 17 students from The George Foundation's Youth In Philanthropy (YIP) Program helped Child Advocates of Fort Bend (CAFB) with several critical projects.

The YIP "Dream Team" painted canvases for the interview rooms in the Children's Advocacy Center at CAFB, sorted, catalogued and organized donations for the agency's children's care room, organized toys and games in the children's play area, labeled envelopes for their upcoming Gala mailing and participated in interviews and PSAs for the agency's social media efforts. "We love participating in the YIP Program. Not only do the projects that they do for us help us and save us money, I think we learn as much from the students as they do from us," stated Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford. "The canvases they painted will not only brighten the space, but the colors and shapes they painted will be used by the agency's forensic interviewers in assessing young children who are being interviewed to determine their cognitive level.

Organizing and cataloguing donations and toys is such a huge help toward helping us to identify what we have for the children and what our needs are. Their help with the labeling will enable us to get our mailing out on schedule and on budget as we would otherwise have to find volunteers or have paid staff get the project done. Furthermore, their help with the social media piece is invaluable. We anticipate that not only will it help us get our message about child abuse and internet safety out to and heard by youth but it will greatly assist in extending our social media reach."

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#### **NONPROFITS**

#### Fort Bend Cares 12th Annual Road Trip to the South Pacific

Photos by Diana Nguyen dnguyen@fbherald.com

Hula dancers for entertainment, piña colada drinks, endless Hawaiian shirts, casino games, various dishes from restaurant sponsors, online and live auctions and colorful leis.

Guests were in for a tropical treat at the Fort Bend Cares 12th Annual Road Trip to the South Pacific, presented by The Pub Fountains, at the Fluor Building in Sugar Land at the end of January. Proceeds raised from the event go to various organizations that help disadvantaged children in Fort Bend County.



Ali Burrows, Derek Cardno, Simon Gaffney, Patty Ward and Caroline Cardno.



Malia's Hula Hut Manager and dancer Bernadette Staples hula dances for the audience.



Event co-chairs Cheryl Brown, Melinda Henry and Terri Nieser.



Melinda Henry.



Helen Gaffney and Allison Burrows share a laugh while enjoying the tropical festivities at the Fort Bend Cares 12th Annual Road Trip to the South Pacific fundraiser at the Fluor Corp. in Sugar Land.



Fire eater Denise.



Event Co-Chair Terri Nieser and KPRC Channel 2 News Anchorman and emcee Khambrel Marshall enjoy the Fort Bend Cares 12th Annual Road Trip to South Pacific tropical fundraiser.



Helen Gaffney and Sue Stokes



Tyler and Kathlyne Williams with Malia's Hula Hut dancers.



Colleen Flint and Gail McClendon



Auctioneer and Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls hugs Nancy Beck-Deane with sister Debbie Beck, both platinum sponsors, for their generous bids at the Fort Bend Cares 12th Annual Road Trip to the South Pacific fundraiser.



Judi Williams and Melinda Henry

#### HEALTH ROUND-UP

### Oakbend Medical Center Renames The Jackson Street Atrium In Honor Of Joe And Doris Gurecky

A s the crowd gathered in the atrium of the Jackson Street Campus to honor two of the community's most well-known residents, the words that could be heard most often were amazing, dedicated, caring and kind. The guests were describing Joe and Doris Gurecky.



Joe and Doris Gurecky

"We are here tonight to really honor two people that have mean so much to the community in so many ways and have done so much for this hospital. Joe Gurecky is a former Board Member and a Former President of the Board of Trustees of the hospital and a former Mayor of Rosenberg. And we are here tonight to honor them in naming this Atrium the 'Joe & Doris Gurecky Atrium'. It is a great honor for the hospital," said Jeff Council, the current president of OakBend Medical Center's Board.

The program began with Joe Gurecky reminiscing about the first time he saw the "new" hospital. Joe's parents were sharecroppers on the George Ranch in Richmond. One weekend his family came to Richmond to see the new hospital, named at that time, Polly Ryon Hospital. One of the doctors giving the tour wanted to show Joe about the fabulous new lighting that had been installed. A light that would cast no shadows.

"Look how far we've come," stated Gurecky, "That was my first experience with the hospital and never in my wildest dreams, when I was that age, when I was the son of a sharecropper, did I ever think that Doris and my name would be on this wall. I thought today how fortunate we've been, God has been good to us."

According to Joe Freudenberger, CEO of OakBend Medical Center, "The renaming of the atrium in our historical home hospital campus in Richmond to the 'Joe & Doris Gurecky Atrium' is the largest renaming project to date



Front Row: Tama Dorman, Kylie Dorman, Kellen Dorman, Joe Gurecky, Doris Gurecky, Pam Koepke, Blair Koepke; Back Row: John Dorman & Ken Koepke

under our Vision 2020 capital campaign. We are extremely honored that the Gureckys chose to support OakBend's efforts to transform healthcare right here in Fort Bend County, so that we might provide the highest quality medicine available to our community. Joe and Doris are amazing people. Joe has been an in integral part of OakBend for many years. Besides being a past board member and President, he and Doris were the 2014 Honorees at the Patchwork of Life: Precious Memories event designed to raise money to expand our Senior Behavioral Unit. He is an important part of our Health Exchange Advisory Board Executive Committee, meeting with us on a quarterly basis to advise and support us."

### **Oakbend Announces Annual Stroke Walk**

O akBend Medical Center will hold its annual "Stepping Out Against Stroke" 3k walk on Saturday, March 25 with registration and t-shirt pick up beginning at 8 a.m. and the festivities beginning at 8:30 a.m. Registration is free and the event will include activities for children, music and information on stroke prevention and awareness.

The walk will be held at the Seabourne Creak Nature Park at 3831 State Highway 36 in Rosenberg, and the 3K route will wind through the park with opening and closing activities at the pavilion.

Fort Bend County businesses, organization and individuals are invited to partner with OakBend on this event.

Participates who register by March 15 will receive a free T-shirt. To register for the walk and to request T-shirt sizes please call 281-341-3093 or email bjanak@obmc.org.

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#### SCHOOL NEWS

### **CALVARY EPISCOPAL PREPARATORY** Paul Lazarou named a National Qualifier

By MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

ach one of the Calvary Episcopal Preparatory students who competed in the Texas State Thespian Festival in Dallas held December 2016 were deemed "excellent" - that was the rating these young artists earned at what is called one of the largest thespian festival and competition in the nation.

"We chose to have Calvary students compete this year because we believe in the quality of our students and their talent," said Krista Kuperus, Calvary's director of admissions and advancement. "We were one of three middle schools in the state to compete against high school students at the festival."

Kuperus said the students performed monologues, solo musicals, group musicals and dance.

Considering the competition was a first for the Calvary students -32middle school students and six high school students - the recognition the school received is a source of

pride for parents, teachers and, of course, the competitors themselves.

"The competition was intimidating at first, but once I had performed I realized it wasn't that hard. In fact, it was fun," said Lizzie Richey. "I learned about the wide community of theatre, and how close-knit it is."

The Texas State Thespian Festival is an annual event held by the Texas Thespians, one of the largest chapters in the nation of the Educational Theatre Association which sponsors the International Thespian Society. Each year, Texas Thespians holds a state-wide festival, open to any active Texas Thespian Troupe. The festival is a 3-day event with more than 180 workshops, 30 performances, and more than 20 different theatrical competition events which allow students to qualify to compete at the International Conference.

"The competition at the Texas Thespian convention was tough," said Katelyn Benoit. "Everyone was so talented and very prepared. I



Teacher Paula "Cookie" Smith was extremely proud of all of her students' performances at the Texas State Thespian Festival. She said she hopes all of her students "build lifelong happy memories, become patrons of the arts and learn to be fearless in front of others." From left to right, back row: Kase Boettcher, Brian Wu, Reese McBride, Ali McCroskey, Sarah Williams, Lena Lowry, Paul Lazarou, Trampus Marek, Ryan Mullen, Demauria Stovall, Dylan Villarreal, Anya Gerdes, Sarah Nguyen. Second row: Mia Rios, Amelia Wang, Grant Fortune, Lizzie Richey, Max Evans, Connor Steenbergen, Garrett Curry, Maddie Iversen, Ike Okafor, Katelyn Benoit, Sam Wheeless, Kendall Sullivan; and front row: Angel Hugo, Crisana Deshazo, Isabel Beale, Grace Stewart, Maya Lenderman, Lilly Matta, Stacey Smith, Genesis Griffin, and Paula "Cookie" Smith.

learned good techniques for singing and acting as well as make up tips and yoga exercises."

Fellow Calvary student Genesis Griffin echoed Benoit: "I loved it. I learned a lot about what directors expect [and] how to act better and how to be myself."

#### The Arts Alive and Well

Calvary has a Junior Thespian troupe for sixth grade through eighth grade and a Thespian troupe for ninth grand through 12th grade and both of the groups found themselves among more than 7,000 students showcasing their performing skills at the festival. According to the Texas Thespians, there are more than 500 troupes throughout Texas in private, public and charter schools.

"Calvary is probably best known as an academic school with high achievers. Although this is true, we firmly believe that well-rounded students are those who are exposed to and appreciate the arts," said Headmaster Malcolm Smith, Jr. "At Calvary students can experience vocal music, visual arts, theatre, band as well as arts competition. We have most recently ventured into exposing our students to Texas Thespians, an organization that promotes the love of theatre beginning in middle school [and] where [thousands of] students shared their love of performing."

One of Calvary's students, as it turns out, earned a higher rank than his peers at the festival. Superior, he was called, and his performance earned him a place as a national qualifier - the youngest in the state,



Paul Lazarou, son of Jacob and Rebecca Lazarou, loves math and music and theater at Calvary Episcopal Preparatory, where he also plays on the soccer team. In December 2016 he was named a national gualifier for the International Thespian Festival, which will be held at the University of Nebraska in June.

in fact. And that doesn't come as a surprise to anyone who knows the 11-year-old Paul Lazarou, who has been in theatre for five years.

"This brings such personal recognition for Paul, but also for our school," Headmaster Smith said. "And while many schools are cutting their arts programs, I say the arts are alive and well at Calvary."

In June Lazarou will perform "When I Get My Name in Lights" as a national qualifier at the International Thespian Festival at the University of Nebraska, which is the highest level of competition for thespians.

The festival will be held from June 19 - 24.

"I feel very nervous because I am representing a school that I have been to ever since I was 4 years old in prekindergarten and I'm representing the state of Texas where I've lived all my life," Lazarou said. "I feel honored as well, because I am the youngest qualifier."



When he was announced as a national qualifier at the Texas State Thespian Festival in Dallas held December 2016, an excited Paul Lazarou received praise and love from his Calvary peers.



# PHOTO CONTEST

Who doesn't love a good photo? We definitely do! And what's more, we would love photographs submitted by you, our cherished readers. With a new year upon us, the *New Territory Monthly* is introducing the New Territory Monthly Photography Contest. Amateur photographers of all skill levels are invited to submit **original** photographs that depict a certain theme, which we will reveal each month.

### *The next theme of 2017 is:* Athleticism. *The deadline to submit is:* Monday, April 3, 2017 at 5 p.m.

While we will leave the creativity up to you, please do not submit any photos that are sexual, violent or graphic in nature. Just keep in mind entries will be seen by the general public, so they should be appropriate for all ages to view.

Additionally, the photographer — who must identify themselves by first and last name and age — is also responsible for obtaining verbal or written release for public use of the photo from all identifiable individuals in the photograph submitted. The photographer accepts all liability from the use of a photo where this release has not be obtained.

All entries must be digital, original, unpublished and the work of the person submitting it, and only one photo may be entered per person. The photographs, which can be in color or black and white, must be at least 4x6 inches and have a resolution of at least 300 dpi.

Entries need to be emailed to Marquita Griffin at mgriffin@fbherald.com. Please write "New Territory Monthly Photography Contest" in the subject line.

A 1st place and 2nd place winner will be identified, with the first place winner receiving a free copy of the magazine that showcases his or her photo. Winners will be contacted by email. Additionally, all photographs will earn recognition on the magazine's Facebook page and on The Fort Bend Herald website.

Winning photographs will be determined by members of the magazine team, who will base their rulings on the following criteria: relationship to theme, composition, focus, lighting and creativity. Photographers will be anonymous until after the judging is complete.

There is no fee for entering the contest.

If you need more information or have any questions email Marquita Griffin at mgrif-fin@fbherald.com.





### FORT BEND ISD



### More than 50 Fort Bend ISD football players recognized during National Signing Day event

Fort Bend ISD celebrated the success and accomplishments of 53 of the District's football players during National Signing Day.

The Fort Bend ISD Athletics Department, in conjunction with the Professional Football Player Mothers Association (PFPMA), hosted a National Signing Day Ceremony on Feb. 1. Parents and family members filled the Wheeler Field House to watch students take part in the signing ceremony. Former and current NFL players were also in attendance to show their support to the athletes.

During the ceremony, head football coaches from each of 11 FBISD's high schools took a moment to congratulate each of their players and offer words of encouragement. The coaches then recognized each player and the college/university they will attend.

**Austin High School** 

Tyson Carter –

University of Texas Permian Basin

Marcus Garcia – Trinity University Darryl Layton – Texas A&M Kingsville Orryn Wesley Nicholson – University of Texas San Antonio Eric Townsend, Jr. – Texas Wesleyan University Moses Johnson – Sam Houston State University

### FBISD Police Department named a "Recognized Law Enforcement Agency"

At the Jan. 23 Regular Board meeting, the Fort Bend ISD Police Department received the "Recognized Law Enforcement Agency" award from the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Recognition Program. The FBISD Police Department



becomes the fifth school district police department and the 133rd agency overall in the state to be recognized with this distinction.

"The Fort Bend ISD Police Department has always considered itself to be one of the best in the state," said FBISD Police Chief David Rider. "This process provided for an independent review of the department's operations and should assure our students, staff, parents and community that your school district police department is conforming to the current best practices in law enforcement."

Begun in 2006, the Recognition Program evaluates a police department's compliance with over 166 Best Business Practices for Texas Law Enforcement. These Best Practices were carefully developed by Texas Law Enforcement professionals to assist agencies in the efficient and effective delivery of service and the protection of individuals' rights. They cover all aspects of law enforcement operations including use of force, protection of citizen rights, vehicle pursuits, property and evidence management, training, and patrol and investigative operations.

Additionally, proof of compliance with these best practices must be submitted on a yearly basis to show the police department's ongoing commitment to this program and style of conducting business.

This voluntary process required the Fort Bend ISD Police Department to conduct a critical self-review of the agency's policies, procedures, facilities and operations. Beginning in February of 2016, the department began the lengthy process to become a "Recognized Law Enforcement Agency" by preparing proofs of compliance for each of the Texas Law Enforcement Best Business Practices.

Upon completion of the internal review, an outside audit and review was conducted for two days in November 2016. The onsite review is conducted by trained Police Chiefs from other areas around the state. The result of this review was then sent to the Texas Police Chiefs Association's Recognition Committee for final analysis and decision to award "Recognized" status.

"I would like to say thank you to our Board of Trustees and Dr. Dupre for their support and allowing us to pursue this accreditation. I would also like to thank the men and women of the



Fort Bend ISD Police Department for their hard work, dedication and professionalism," Chief Rider said.

The department will be recognized at the Texas Police Chiefs Association annual conference in April.

More information and a description of the program may be viewed on the Texas Police Chiefs Association website at http://www.texaspolicechiefs.org.



### Fort Bend ISD hosts winter conference for Executive and Administrative Assistants, Office Managers

FBISD's Talent Management and Development Department hosted an informational conference at the FBISD Administration Annex for District executive and administrative assistants, and office managers. The conference included a keynote speaker and breakout sessions offering tips and tools for success.

"I am so appreciative of the time and effort that everyone put into this event, and I am especially thankful to the District for recognizing us as a valuable group of individuals," said Clair Thomas, executive assistant at Palmer Elementary. "It is such a nice feeling to be valued and appreciated."

Director of Talent Management/ Development, Dr. Yolanda Young, welcomed the employees to the conference and introduced guest speaker Allison Blankenship, author and president of Precision Speaking. Blankenship's topic – Real Women Have Chipped Nails – gave tools and strategies on how to build resilience and increase productivity in your professional and personal life.

### 30 Fort Bend ISD students selected as 2017 Texas All-State Musicians

Thirty Fort Bend ISD student musicians will perform with the Texas All-State Band, Choir and Orchestra as part of the 2017 Texas Music Educators Association Clinic/Convention. The event was held Feb.8-11 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio.

The FBISD students are among

approximately 1,780 high school students who qualified for this prestigious honor after competing in the TMEA Texas All-State competition. All-State students will participate in three days of rehearsals, directed by nationally recognized conductors during the TMEA Clinic/Convention. Their performances, before thousands of conference attendees, bring the convention to a memorable close.

#### 2017 Texas All-State Band, Choir and Orchestra students:

2017 All-State Band students include:

Austin High School – Christopher Courtney and Ryan Schroedter

Clements High School – Jason Eric Ancheta and David Quiazon

Elkins High School – Mauricio Franco and Ryan Hunter

Kempner High School – Michael Ojo and Dong Pham

### 2017 All-State Choir students are:

Dulles High School – Jane Cloninger and Swara Mukkamala

Elkins High School – Faith Eapen and Courtney Stelzer

Ridge Point High School – Kathryn Anthraper and Serena Jacob

### 2017 All-State Orchestra students include:

Austin High School – Yvette Tiffany Chang, Lexie Livingood, Elizabeth Zhang, Cameron Ahmed, Daniel (Yung-Ju) Cheng and Asher Lee

Clements High School – Neo Scott, Randy Tan, Archer Wang and Jonathan Wing

Dulles High School – Omar Haffar, Paul Li, Ian Vetter and David Worstell

Hightower High School – Robert Gonzalez

Travis High School - Loren Li

Each year, the Texas Music Educators Association sponsors the competition that welcomes more than 68,000 Texas high school students who seek the honor of performing in one of 15 All-State band, orchestra and choir ensembles.

The competition process begins with students attending statewide auditions hosted by 33 TMEA regions. During auditions, individual musicians perform selected music for a panel of judges who rank each instrument or voice part. From this ranking, a select group of musicians advances from their region to compete against musicians from other areas in seven TMEA area competitions.

The highest-ranking musicians judged at the TMEA area competitions qualify to perform in a TMEA All-State music group. Only the top 2.6% of musicians who initially audition become All-State musicians.



#### BUSINESS FEATURE

The Gibbs family of Waterside Estates in Richmond love their moonwalk business, The Moonwalk Man. It's common for customers to meet the entire family — Kevin and Jennifer Gibbs along with their children: Jaxson, Madalynn and Kody — when renting a moonwalk.

# Modiwalk Mali

### A Family Business with Superior Customer Services

"We strive on

customer service

and response

time, and one of

our perks is that

we do not require

a deposit."

Kevin Gibbs

#### BY MARQUITA GRIFFIN | mgriffin@fbherald.com

evin and Jennifer Gibbs of Waterside Estates in Richmond know there's just something special about a moonwalk. While primarily intended for children, the vibrantly colored and creatively designed bounce houses have the ability to bring out a childish joy in anyone. A moonwalk as a centerpiece for a party, or as a surprise feature for a get together, has the ability to take fun to another level - and the Gibbs believed a moonwalk business would be a charming addition to their community.

As it turns out, there were right. "We saw a high demand for this type of business so we decided to test the waters," said Jennifer Gibbs. "Our friends would rent from us then they would start spreading our name and what

originally started out as a hobby of a side business has taken off and exceeded our expectations."

Found in Richmond, Texas, The Moonwalk Man offers customers from around Fort Bend

County the opportunity to rent moonwalks, waterslides, tables and chairs for any type of event. "Whether its a graduation party, birthday party, company picnic party, reunion, etcetera, we can provide entertainment for almost

> any event," said Kevin Gibbs. "We strive on customer service and response time, and one of our perks is that we do not require a deposit."

When a customer contacts The Moonwalk Man, he or she

will choose a unit and date for delivery, and all that is required is the address of the event and a contact phone number so the Gibbs can call the night prior to the event to confirm delivery.

Deliveries occur between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. and pick-up happens between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. but delivery and pick-up times are flexible with regards to weather and party times. The family business also features different packages depending on what the customer is looking for. Teachers, law enforcement and veterans automatically receive 10 percent off a rental, and while the offer differs from campus to campus, schools receive discounted rates as well.

"We work with our customers to

accommodate their needs," stressed Kevin Gibbs. "And we always try our best to exceed their expectations."

#### Community Consideration

Customers aren't the only population the Gibbs keep in consideration. The husband-andwife team is also on the lookout for great causes to donate to.

"There's a sense of comfort having a small business in a community you were raised in," said Jennifer Gibbs, who is a Pecan Grove native. "And it's exciting to see the support we continue to receive.

"We have donated to Oakland Elementary several times for different festivities, as well as Pitts Park Trunk or Treat, and also to private events for families and sponsorships," she said. "We choose to donate in order to show our support and give back to this wonderful community we are a part of."

#### Putting the 'Family' in Family Business

The Gibbs, who have been married for six years, have three children — Jaxson, 3, Madalynn, 7 and Kody, 13 — and together they make up the "Fab5," as Kevin affectionately refers to them.

"Kevin refers to us as the Fab5 because this family business takes everyone working together for it to succeed," Jennifer said. "We truly communicate and put forth 100 percent whether it is with family responsibilities or business responsibilities.

"We come together as a team and always put each other first. It's very seldom you see just one of us delivering or picking up; everyone

wants to contribute whether it's Jaxson turning off the blower and picking up stakes or old Kody helping roll the moonwalk, or Madalynn rolling up the extension cord. "This business has the true meaning of what it takes for a family to love each other, respect each other, learn the value of hard work and support one another respectfully."

### The Moonwalk Man Quick Facts:

Opened: 2015 Owners: Kevin and Jennifer Gibbs Phone: 832-368-9016 Social Media:

www.facebook.com/themoonwalkman

Be sure to check out The Moonwalk Man ratings and reviews on Facebook!

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### New Territory Business Directory













### HOUSTON METHODIST SURGICAL ASSOCIATES DR. ALI MAHMOOD

Dr. Ali Mahmood, board-certified colon and rectal surgeon, provides patients in Fort Bend and surrounding areas with specialized care for a range of surgery needs, including laparoscopic and minimally invasive surgical procedures. His primary interest is in colon and rectal cancer, along with benign conditions such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, diverticular disease, hemorrhoids, fissures, and pilonidal disease. Plus, he is supported by the state-of-the-art technology, resources and staff of Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital.

Highly respected in his field, Dr. Mahmood delivers individualized, compassionate care, ensuring each patient's unique needs are met.

To schedule an appointment, call **281.668.9824**.

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