

THE JOURNAL RECORD 2018

BEACON AWARDS

Periodical Supplement to *The Journal Record* • July 12, 2018

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The Journal Record 2018

BEACON AWARDS

THE JOURNAL RECORD is pleased to present the 11th annual Beacon Awards event and magazine. This program is designed to recognize and honor the businesses that offer vital support to Oklahoma's nonprofit community. We are honoring 34 businesses and organizations this year that have played instrumental roles in supporting the nonprofit programs that help so many Oklahomans in need.

These companies not only provide generous financial support (Philanthropic Impact), they have also developed cultures of volunteerism within their organizations (Charitable Influence) that have a far-reaching impact on the communities where they operate.

In addition, nine nonprofits will receive recognition for their service to other nonprofits in Oklahoma.

We will recognize honorees in nine categories and present Beacon Awards to an overall winner in each category.

We would like to thank our presenting sponsor, First Fidelity Bank, which came to us with the concept for this event and has continued to be part of its growth through the years. We also thank additional sponsors the Chickasaw Nation and Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits for their support of this important program.

Congratulations to all our honorees. We hope you enjoy the event and the profiles of these organizations that work to make Oklahoma such a special place to live.



PROGRAM

Award Presentation and Luncheon

July 12, 2018
Embassy Suites Oklahoma City
Downtown/Medical Center

WELCOME

Ted Streuli

Associate Publisher and Editor
The Journal Record

PRESENTING SPONSOR REMARKS

Lee Symcox

President & CEO
First Fidelity Bank

Lunch is Served

AWARDS PRESENTATION

NONPROFITS SERVING NONPROFITS

Janetta Cravens

Vice President of Programs
Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits

PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT

Ted Streuli

Associate Publisher and Editor
The Journal Record

CHARITABLE INFLUENCE

Lee Symcox

President & CEO
First Fidelity Bank

Ted Streuli

Closing Remarks

The Journal Record 2018 BEACON AWARDS

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*Medium business finalists
51-499 employees*

*Small business finalists
50 or fewer employees*

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2018 SPONSOR PROFILES

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FIRST FIDELITY BANK is a locally owned full-service community bank established in 1920. As a family-owned, nationally chartered financial institution, the bank has 29 branches serving the Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Arizona markets. With total assets of more than \$1.5 billion, FFB provides commercial and retail banking, investment, insurance and trust services, mortgage origination and merchant services.

At FFB, high performance standards and industry-leading innovation are paramount. Professionalism combined with creative lending practices are how First Fidelity maintains its strong reputation. The bank's core values center on building lasting and meaningful relationships based on mutual trust.

First Fidelity Bank's hardworking and loyal workforce amounts to a staff of more than 400, and each employee is part of the First Fidelity family. FFB is dedicated to

hiring and maintaining quality employees for whom meeting the needs of the community is not a job expectation, but a passion. These employees take pride in knowing their clients by name, and enjoy giving their time and resources through nonprofit and charitable organizations, religious organizations, children's sports and more.

Every year, FFB offers service-based and financial resources to assist those in its local communities. The bank is a consistent supporter of nonprofit organizations, and an active United Way Pacesetter, helping to set giving trends and donating more than \$700,000 annually to local organizations.

With more than 90 years of support to neighborhood partners, First Fidelity Bank believes giving back to the community is an important responsibility, one that will foster growth and goodwill in our city for years to come – and in that spirit, we are proud to congratulate this year's Beacon Award nominees.

THE CHICKASAW NATION

*the
Chickasaw
Nation*

THE SEAT OF THE TRIBAL

GOVERNMENT is located in Ada, Oklahoma, and is under the leadership of Bill Anoatubby, who has served as the governor of the Chickasaw Nation since 1987. With more than 66,000 citizens, the Chickasaw Nation is the 12th-largest federally-recognized tribe in the United States.

The tribal government is a democratic republic modeled after the federal government of the United States. Registered voters elect a governor and a lieutenant governor, 13 members of the tribal legislature and three justices on the tribal Supreme Court.

Jurisdictional territory of the Chickasaw Nation includes more than 7,600 square miles of

south central Oklahoma, encompassing all or parts of 13 Oklahoma counties. The Chickasaw Nation employs more than 13,500 people.

Successful economic development is an integral part of the tribe's mission to enhance the overall quality of life of the Chickasaw people. The Chickasaw Nation operates more than 100 businesses in the areas of manufacturing, energy, health care, media, technology, hospitality, retail and tourism. Much of its business revenue is invested to fund education, health care, housing and other services which directly benefit Oklahomans and their communities.

For more information, visit www.Chickasaw.net.

2018 SPONSOR PROFILES

OKLAHOMA CENTER FOR NONPROFITS



FOUNDED IN 1981 by Pat and Ray Potts, the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits strengthens Oklahoma nonprofits and communities through state-of-the-art trainings, custom-tailored consultations, strategic discussions, membership, and a concentrated advocacy platform.

Guided and informed by its own proven sustainability model, OKCNP's goal is to equip Oklahoma nonprofits with the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively achieve maximum impact; therefore, strengthening the nonprofit sector and the hundreds of communities it serves. OKCNP's assiduous commitment to leading practices impacts Oklahoma's communities by assisting nonprofits of all types in accomplishing their missions. It is through the success of other organizations that its mission of "building better communities through effective nonprofits" is fulfilled.

OKCNP offers more than 250 workshops annually statewide and continues to pioneer new curriculum adapted to meet the needs

of Oklahoma's nonprofit sector. It now serves approximately 3,000 people a year through trainings, over 1,500 through private consultations, and has more than 1,000 members. There are currently more than 800 organizations that have completed the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits flagship Standards for Excellence program, which comprehensively addresses ethics and accountability leading practices.

Although OKCNP has made great strides in recent years, it continues to expand its reach statewide by increasing its resource output to nonprofits outside Oklahoma City and Tulsa. There are more than 19,000 nonprofit organizations in Oklahoma and OKCNP continues to offer its services with the intent to foster a unified and professional nonprofit sector operating according to leading practices and achieving maximum impact in their respective communities. In addition to its workshops, trainings, and consultations, OKCNP operates a free nonprofit helpline and its Shared Services department offers critical financial help to nonprofits of all sizes.

TABLE SPONSORS

AT&T Oklahoma

Concordia Life Care Community

Feed the Children

Junior League of Oklahoma City

LifeShare of Oklahoma

McAlester Regional Health Center

OG&E

OU Medicine

SDG Architects

Stingray Pressure Pumping

DALE ROGERS TRAINING CENTER

DALE ROGERS TRAINING CENTER'S

entrepreneurial spirit through the years has provided thousands of people with disabilities the training and employment opportunities they need to succeed. Now it's also encouraging the spirit of volunteering in those it serves.

Over the last year, Dale Rogers clients volunteered 1,700 hours and raised \$2,800 for other nonprofits. These volunteers help the community, while these activities give Dale Rogers clients activities to enjoy outside of work.

This volunteering, fundraising, serving as a resource and donating materials and equipment no longer in use to other nonprofits comes in addition to the Dale Rogers Training Center's primary training and employment mission.

"It's just amazing to see how involved they get in the community," said Michael T. Jones, public relations marketing manager.

Dale Rogers also has supported a chapter of the

community-service Civitan Club – the Happy Trails Civitan Club – to facilitate volunteering among its members. Locally, the group has participated in picking up litter as part of LitterBlitz, handed out Valentine's at assisted living centers and taken part in supporting other organizations. Staying involved gives these clients more productive things to do in their leisure time and more choices.

"People with disabilities are often at the bottom of state and federal budgets," said Executive Director Connie Thrash McGoodwin. "DRTC wants to share ideas and resources to other nonprofits based on our long experience and positive reputation."

Internationally, the DRTC has been involved since 2013 with My Hearts Appeal, an Oklahoma City-based group that is serving the disability population in Monrovia, Liberia. My Hearts Appeal and Dale Rogers have a mutual mission – to embrace, train and equip individuals with disabilities to become more independent.



DRTC volunteers helped palletize various kitchen items bound for Liberia, donated to My Heart's Appeal this year.

In 2015, Dale Rogers provided decommissioned vehicles to My Hearts Appeal in Liberia, and the group has sponsored several annual benefit dinners, prepared a large shipment of kitchen supplies and more.

Dale Rogers is making a huge impact by helping teach vocational skills to teens with disabilities, said Lovetie Major, founder of My Hearts Appeal.

"In celebrating over 65 years of serving our communities and our state, Dale Rogers Training Center continues to be a leader and resource for people with disabilities," Jones said.

Parents of local children with disabilities began the center in the 1940s when there were no programs for children or adults with special needs.



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FEED THE CHILDREN

Children in foster care received 6,000 gifts during the holiday season thanks to a collaboration between **FEED THE CHILDREN**, the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

When the opportunity to help OK Foster Wishes was presented, it was a natural fit for Feed the Children since the organization had already committed to feed 10,000 Oklahomans during its "No Hunger Holidays" initiative. The nonprofit was excited to grow its outreach to include the additional holiday effort to help provide gifts to Oklahoma children.

"We love our neighbors, and our team was happy to lend its assistance to a program we knew was going to bring the magic of the season to so many kids across Oklahoma," said Travis Arnold, Feed the Children president and CEO.

Over the holidays, Feed the Children got

involved with the Institute for Child Advocacy's Oklahoma Foster Wishes program, donating needed warehouse space and forklifts so volunteers could sort and store the gifts and providing studio and staff time to create a video to promote the program. Feed the Children also donated thousands of toys, books, school supplies and more in gifts totaling about \$67,000, and the employees got involved with this effort, too, and donated their own gifts to Oklahoma Foster Wishes.

"Feed the Children was honored to partner with the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to help the OK Foster Wishes program," Arnold said. "We know that when we combine our efforts we have a greater impact on the lives of families who need us most."

The Institute for Child Advocacy's mission of helping vulnerable children is a cause close to Feed



OK Foster Wishes brings smiles to the faces of people across Oklahoma like Dylan and his mom, Yvonna.

the Children's own mission, so the collaboration was a good fit for the two. Through its Homeless Education and Literacy Program, Feed the Children already provides backpacks filled with items for homeless children and those in foster care.

"Helping children who live in our community is part of the fabric of who we are and what we do as a nonprofit organization," said Arnold. "We are proud to have played a part and to have successfully touched the lives of children served through the Oklahoma Foster Wishes program last year."

SUPPORT

us in supplying food, education initiatives, essentials and disaster response across the U.S. and in 10 countries around the world.

Join Feed the Children in creating a world where no child goes to bed hungry.
feedthechildren.org



TINKER FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

A special program launched by **TINKER FEDERAL CREDIT UNION** has given newly enlisted airmen and sailors at Tinker Air Force Base a home away from home.

The program matches first-year airmen and sailors with local host families, who serve as friends and mentors to the airmen.

The credit union offers both financial and in-kind support to Team Tinker Home Away From Home, and many of its employees volunteer as host families for these new airmen and sailors. Support includes printing and marketing services, office space, information technology help and more.

Team Tinker Home Away From Home started in 2013 with a financial gift from Tinker Federal Credit Union that originated with TFCU President and CEO Michael D. Kloiber and his wife, Pam. After a car accident that resulted in the deaths of two airmen, the Kloibers asked Tinker Air Force Base leaders how they could help. The commander

of the 552nd Air Control Wing at TAFB shared with them an idea of creating an airmen support program. The Kloibers then helped make it a reality.

Tinker Home Away From Home began with the goal of making newly enlisted airmen and sailors feel at home while stationed away from home. Since 2013, it has served 576 military personnel through 84 host families. Currently, 272 active airmen and sailors are paired with families.

Airmen participating in the organization often eat dinner at the host family's home or take part in weekend activities with them. They also take part in service projects. In 2017, TFCU and the Air Reserve Component partnered with Team Tinker Home Away From Home to use a \$10,000 grant toward the repairs and enhancement of wounded veterans' homes in Oklahoma.

In 2015, Pam Kloiber, who serves as the program's civilian liaison, presented information



Mike Kloiber (front right) joined in the activities of the annual picnic held for airmen involved in the Team Tinker Home Away From Home program.

about the program to the Air Combat Command Commanders' Conference at Langley Air Force Base in Norfolk, Virginia. Since then, 18 other bases have implemented or begun developing similar programs. TAFB's program was the first one of its kind and was awarded the Air Force "Best Practice" Distinction.

"TFCU supports many organizations in the communities we serve, but Team Tinker Home Away From Home has a special place in our hearts," said Michael D. Kloiber. "Because of our strong history with the base, it made sense to partner with an organization designed to help the newest members of our military community."

NONPROFITS SERVING NONPROFITS - MEDIUM



Wanda, a Sunbeam shelter client, sits in her new apartment after receiving a furniture donation from Concordia Life Care Community.

As a nonprofit life care retirement community for seniors, **CONCORDIA LIFE CARE COMMUNITY** strives to offer its residents an engaging atmosphere that includes fitness programs, dining services, activities and nursing care.

But it also strives to help those outside its organization by coordinating the donation of thousands of dollars of furniture and durable medical equipment, or DME, to low-income seniors who otherwise would be sleeping on the floor and living in undesirable conditions.

Since 2013, Concordia's DME/Furniture Program

donations have gone to seniors served by Sunbeam's 11-bed emergency shelter for seniors transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing. During times when Concordia has excess furniture, the furniture benefits low-income senior residents at several Oklahoma City Housing Authority communities.

"There is no greater joy than hearing from a client how much it means to them to receive furniture, and to know that a complete stranger cares about them," Paige Mills-Haag, Concordia's director of fund development, said in an email. "I believe everyone who has participated in the DME/Furniture Program on any level has been deeply impacted by the experience."

Overall, the program has helped about 200 older adults and seniors, including providing furniture and medical equipment for 77 people at Sunbeam and 32 truckloads of donations to the Oklahoma City Housing Authority. The total value of donations is about \$100,000; Concordia staff members and volunteers have contributed about 1,800 hours to the program.

Concordia became involved when it launched three key outreach programs in 2013 to address unmet needs

for older adults and seniors. One of them was the DME/Furniture Program, which was born from a roundtable discussion with representatives from Concordia, Sunbeam, Home Instead and Right at Home.

Concordia rented an off-site storage unit to store the items and began soliciting Concordia residents, families, staff members, board members, donors and partner agencies for donations of used medical equipment and furniture in good condition. Concordia manages the project and its maintenance men deliver the furniture, with help from partner agencies Senior Transitions and Affiliated Movers.

One of the program's key goals is to provide care and restore the dignity of older adults and seniors, many of them disabled or suffering from serious illness.

"Individuals benefiting from this program are older adults and seniors who have experienced neglect, abuse, homelessness and in some cases been victimized at the hands of family members or friends," Mills-Haag said. "These individuals are quite vulnerable and need support and services to escape the cycle of poverty and homelessness."



Concordia is honored to be recognized by The Journal Record's Beacon Award in the "Nonprofits Serving Nonprofits" category.

Concordia is a senior living community in Oklahoma City, founded on the values of faith and friendship. Here, you can enjoy the freedom of maintenance free living which allows more time to do the things you love. Concordia also offers a Life Care Plan that provides financial protection for your assets, tax benefits and future access to on-site health care at a predictable cost.


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JUNIOR LEAGUE OF OKLAHOMA CITY

For the past 90 years, members of the **JUNIOR LEAGUE OF OKLAHOMA CITY** have focused on its mission to promote volunteerism, develop the potential of women and improve the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. The Junior League works to partner with community agencies throughout the metro. Members volunteer to work with these nonprofits planning and executing health-focused initiatives, programs and activities.

JLOC has partnered with the YWCA of Oklahoma City for the past 14 years helping victims of domestic violence. Since that time, League members have spent nearly 5,000 hours in service to the YWCA.

Junior League of Oklahoma City President Pam Campbell said the partnership with the YWCA is a great fit.

"League members are committed to building a better Oklahoma City," she said. "Not only are we training and developing the potential in our members,

but this project allows us to encourage, empower and help develop the potential of the YWCA's clients."

Since last August, 13 Junior League volunteers have provided weekly family-friendly, health-focused activities for shelter residents.

Project manager Nikki West said she works with other women who share her passion for volunteerism and interest in eradicating domestic violence and sexual assault.

"To me their mission is everything. I can't imagine not having it or being involved in some way," she said. "League volunteers provide comfort by letting the women know there are good people willing to help them get back on their feet."

The Junior League's work includes renovating the YWCA Thelma Gaylord Emergency Shelter's Meditation Room, thanks to a \$2,500 grant from Gwynnie Bee. Now the room has updated furniture, rugs, stress-relieving elements and a mural created by a local artist to offer shelter residents a peaceful and



2017-'18 Junior League of Oklahoma City project managers.

meditative space to help them heal.

In addition, Junior League volunteers have developed and implemented a program to educate survivors of domestic violence living at the shelter about healthy lifestyle choices, facilitating weekly classes covering topics such as food safety and nutrition and offering mental health exercises and stress-relieving techniques. Children at the shelter also take part in their own related activities. League volunteers regularly help find donated items, including clothing and comfort items, for these women and their children to make them feel at home.


"Our members are amazing," Campbell said. "They work with the women and their families with such kindness and grace."

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 JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
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LIFESHARE OF OKLAHOMA

More than 115,000 people are on the national transplant waiting list, of which about 800 are Oklahomans.

Because of **LIFESHARE OF OKLAHOMA**, nearly 500 people in this state received a second chance at life with new organs last year. That number has increased annually over the last four years.

The federal designated organ procurement nonprofit organization recovered 529 organs from 183 generous donors last year. These gifts have saved 481 lives. In 2017, LifeShare also broke its previous record and coordinated the donation of life-enhancing tissue from 789 donors; these gifts include bone donations to improve mobility, skin donations to heal burn patients, cornea donations to restore sight and heart valve donations to repair life-threatening defects.

The organization works closely with five

transplant centers and 145 health care organizations in Oklahoma to facilitate the recovery process of organs and tissue.

Also, the group offers public education to raise awareness about the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation. In 2017, LifeShare supported 123 public awareness events, and volunteers worked nearly 650 hours focusing on the public education component of its mission. Currently, 59 percent of adult Oklahomans have registered as potential organ donors, a rate that is increasing and higher than the national average.

"The core purpose of LifeShare is to save as many lives as possible through organ donation," said Jeff Orlowski, president and CEO of LifeShare.

In an effort to extend its philanthropic outreach, LifeShare publicly launched the LifeShare Foundation in October 2017 to focus on awareness of organ, eye and tissue donation, support for those



LifeShare staff members pay tribute to National Blue and Green Day by wearing blue and green to celebrate donations.

impacted by donations, and research and medical advancement in the donation field.

LifeShare strives to foster a culture of people who have a passion for saving lives and caring for those affected by donation – recipients, donor families, those waiting for transplants and the partners in the donation process.

"It is hard to put a monetary value on a lifesaving organ. If you asked the recipient of the organ and their family, they would probably say priceless," Orlowski said. "We give people a second chance at life, more time with their family and more time to make a positive impact on our community."

NONPROFITS SERVING NONPROFITS - SMALL

AMERICAN RED CROSS SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES DEPARTMENT



Service members from the Team Tinker Home Away From Home program take a break from rehabilitating Lewis Hoffman's house, which included a new roof and wheelchair ramp, to listen to life lessons from the World War II, Korea, and Vietnam era veteran.

Since 2016, the **AMERICAN RED CROSS SERVICE** to the Armed Forces Department has offered support, camaraderie and more to members of the U.S. military stationed at Tinker Air Force Base.

These service members get plugged into a special mentoring program that gives them opportunities for volunteering, developing life skills and participating in special events thanks to a partnership between the Central and Southwest Oklahoma Chapter of the Red Cross and Team

Tinker Home Away From Home. This program helps enhance morale and reinforces military values such as "Service Before Self" and "Excellence in all We Do," among other benefits.

"The Mentoring Our Nation's Finest program has impacted military, veteran and local communities throughout the Oklahoma metropolitan area," Red Cross Regional Service to the Armed Forces Director Richard Unda said in an email. "The program provides a fantastic example of mentoring young service members as they strive to become future leaders by providing them with resiliency tools to help with the challenges of serving our country and by also encouraging them to give back through community service."

Volunteer projects have included a home rehabilitation project for a World War II veteran and installing smoke detectors in high-risk communities, Unda noted.

The Red Cross plans and coordinates the events, offers volunteer support, facilitates classroom use and provides materials. Also included with the program are "Meet the Hero Nights" as part of the

Red Cross' contributions to the Veterans History Project. On these nights, service members and host families can watch videos and then meet the veterans featured in them.

The data from the program shows the service members stay connected to it and like the program, as do host families. The Oklahoma Red Cross chapter has contributed more than 12,000 volunteer hours to Team Tinker since July 2017.

"The Red Cross and Home Away from Home have been serving airmen nonstop, whether it is providing life lessons, mentorship, and even food. The opportunities we have been given are endless to absorb the knowledge and apply it by giving back through volunteer events, our peers on base and the local community," Senior Airman Kristina Song, who serves with Tinker's 72nd Medical Group in the Bioenvironmental Engineering Department, said in an email. "Everyone in the Red Cross and Home Away From Home is practically family, and that is the kind of love and care everyone needs when being so far away from their home."

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH OF MUSKOGEE

The list of free programs that the **CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH OF MUSKOGEE**

provides is long, but the impact on the community is even bigger. Thanks to its efforts, the church is feeding and clothing those in need, offering hope for addicts in recovery, providing free health services and advocating for health and wellness in the community – all by volunteers, “just people helping people,” said pastor Gary Smith.

Specifically, with just four employees and a congregation of less than 100 people, the church:

- Serves about 2,032 each Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. when its Clothing Pantry opens for people in need to shop, at no charge, for clothing, household goods, books, toys appliances and more.
- Hosts a meal and a meeting each Saturday night for those in Doorways of Hope, a faith-based, 12-step recovery program. Those who participate

regularly receive items from the Clothing Pantry, food from the Aldi’s Food Ministry and health care.

- Feeds the hungry through the Aldi’s Food Ministry – the grocery store donates food and other items, and the church picks it up.
- Operates three free health clinics – for dental, denture and vision care – open each month for people involved in one of the church’s ministries and other eligible community members. Since they began in 2013, the dental clinic has served 217 clients and the denture clinic has served 324 people. Since 2014, the vision clinic has helped 91 people.
- Supports health and wellness for the congregation and other ministry recipients with its Faith Community Nurse Ministry, a unique ministry that offers visitation, counseling and advocacy for health care needs in the community all thanks to one volunteer nurse, Catherine White. Each of these Central Baptist Church programs



A local dentist and dental assistant remove many teeth from a client as part of a free dental clinic.

started because single congregation members like White, whom Smith calls the primary mover and shaker, or pastors saw the need and took initiative.

The church also collaborates in the community with Gospel Rescue Mission, Baptist Free Clinic, Good Shepherd Clinic, Aldi, Salvation Army, the Connors State College nursing program, the Nonprofit Resource Center and Bridges Out of Poverty.

“The aim of all of the combined ministries is to bring healing to as many broken people as come our way and who know they need hope and love that blesses body, soul and spirit,” Smith said.



(L to R) Laura McDonald, an advocate with the YWCA, and Ladonna Crowder, a counselor with A Chance to Change, sit on a couch at Palomar.

For nearly 40 years, **A CHANCE TO CHANGE** has worked to help those affected by addiction and behavioral health disorders. Last year, this organization raised money and established a counseling program to help victims of assault at Palomar, Oklahoma City’s Family Justice Center.

Spence Carson, vice chairman of programs for the board of A Chance to Change, led the charge to employ a full-time licensed counselor to provide free counseling services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and elder abuse at Palomar. Carson personally raised \$21,500

to begin the project’s fundraising, and the project launched in July 2017. Total contribution from A Chance to Change is \$97,500.

Palomar Family Justice Center, which opened in February 2017, is an innovative venture that brings to one place vital resources for victims of abuse – there, they can apply for protective orders, receive legal aid and crisis counseling, get assistance with housing and child care, apply for state assistance and more.

Add the work by A Chance to Change’s full-time licensed counselor Ladonna Crowder to that list of Palomar services. A Chance to Change always has provided treatment to victims of violence. Collaborating with Palomar in this way is a natural extension of its mission, and its investment at Palomar is working to stop the generational cycle of violence, addiction, poverty and unemployment.

A Chance to Change’s leadership felt like this project, while expensive, would save lives. Over the last 11 months, the organization has served about

150 individuals – most of them are seen weekly for a number of months – and provided more than 1,000 direct and indirect service hours to victims and support personnel at Palomar. Some have fled life-or-death situations; all are learning skills to live a life free from violence and addiction.

“There is such a large need and demand for our services at Palomar, not only for the clients but also for the staff of the partner agency employees under the Palomar roof,” Carson said. “It has been a satisfying effort. Unfortunately, the demand is growing, and we hope to expand our presence at Palomar in the near future.”

Moving forward, A Chance to Change continues to work to raise money while underwriting the costs of it and studying it further.

“The board’s involvement and commitment to bettering the lives of Oklahomans outside of the agency is a testament to their (members’) philanthropic minds and hearts,” said board member Barbara Hill.

A CHANCE TO CHANGE

COMMUNITY BEARD CHAMPIONSHIP FOUNDATION INC.

More than 5,400 homeless youth were enrolled at the end of the 2016 school year, according to data from the Oklahoma City Public Schools. Eighty percent of those were couch homeless, meaning the youth were temporarily staying with a friend, relative or acquaintance.

Armed with the knowledge of the number of Oklahoma's homeless children, founders of the **COMMUNITY BEARD CHAMPIONSHIP FOUNDATION** knew they needed to do something to help the unfortunate. That's when they reached out to leaders at Positive Tomorrows, Oklahoma's only private, tuition-free elementary school specifically serving homeless children and their families.

The foundation created a civic event entitled Oklahoma Community Beard Mustache Championship to bring awareness to issues facing our community's homeless children.

"We partnered with Positive Tomorrows and held a contest crowning a grand champion and raised funds for the school's hygiene pantry. That

night we raised \$1,500, mostly through \$1 spectator voting from our category winners from the contest," said Ben Grunewald, chief executive officer of the Community Beard Championship Foundation. "The event was created, launched and executed all within 30 days."

The event was so successful that it was slated for the next six years, a nonprofit foundation was formed, and the CBCF was able to retain 100 percent of the initial sponsors for the 2nd annual Oklahoma Community Beard Championship on Nov. 17. The event is set to be held each year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

The Oklahoma Community Beard Championship would go on to win So6ix Magazine's award for best festival in 2017. The foundation was also personally invited to participate in the 2018 National Summit on Youth Homelessness in Washington, D.C., as well as being personally invited to become advocates for National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Since then, the foundation has expanded to four



The Community Beard Championship Foundation was created by Oklahoma entrepreneurs with the mission to increase awareness and advocate on behalf of our local homeless youth population.

annual civic events to further its mission to increase awareness of issues facing Oklahoma's homeless children. Those events include the Oklahoma Community Beard Championship, Oklahoma Bearded Fest, Bearded Open Charity-AM Golf Championship and Oklahoma Homeless Youth Summit.

"We are so grateful for the support the Community Beard Championship Foundation has given to Positive Tomorrows through their fundraising efforts," said Susan Agel, president and principal of Positive Tomorrows. "Their passion for raising awareness of homeless children in our community will change many lives!"



ESCCO's 2018 Bill Phillips Award was given to Focus on Home on May 24, 2018, at the Faculty House. Pictured are ESCCO President Paul Moore; Focus on Home board members Kit Letcher and Vicki Van Stavern; Joli Sanders, Focus on Home executive director; Focus on Home board members Brenda Davis and Abby Thompkins; and ESCCO board Chairman Larry Wagner.

Experienced business volunteers for a local nonprofit have spent thousands of hours helping strengthen other nonprofit agencies so they can better serve their communities.

These volunteers for the **EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA, OR ESCCO**, are retired and working business and nonprofit executives themselves who bring with them a deep understanding of best practices and finances of these groups. In 2017, ESCCO worked on 22 projects ranging in length from 50 to more than 100 hours,

bringing a total value of \$165,000 to \$330,000 to the organizations they served. Each year, ESCCO gives a scholarship for services to one nonprofit in honor of its founder, Bill Phillips, who died last year. The other nonprofits receive services for a fee, but ESCCO executives are volunteers.

"First of all, we love this community," said ESCCO President and Executive Director Paul Moore. "That's what all of our volunteers have in common. We care about this place."

ESCCO's programs and areas of expertise include management review, executive director coaching, organization coaching, organizational focus workshops and nonprofit structural change. "We offer executive coaching for CEOs or help the organization come up with a plan to reach their goals," Moore said.

ESCCO believes that a strong nonprofit community makes the entire community more robust. With changes in tax laws, economic uncertainty among corporate donors, state budget woes and other issues, Oklahoma's nonprofit community continues

to have funding challenges as it is asked to serve more people with fewer resources, Moore said.

Many nonprofits are so busy providing services they need help to create the necessary strategies for their survival. That's where ESCCO steps in.

To identify organizations in need of help, ESCCO works with partners Allied Arts, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, United Way of Central Oklahoma and Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits. ESCCO volunteers have served animal lovers, people with addiction problems, single parents, women philanthropists, performing arts organizations and their audiences, schools, a health clinic and patients, the Boathouse District and the Oklahoma History Center.

ESCCO is an affiliate of the national organization ESC-US and formed in Oklahoma in 1995. Since then it has worked with 125 metro recipients.

"We think the world of our volunteers," Moore said. "They're incredible people and bring a great set of skills to central Oklahoma nonprofits."

ESCCO

IMPACT OKLAHOMA

A group of women who get together to give money away – “everyday philanthropists” – recently celebrated a landmark of donating \$3 million total to central Oklahoma organizations since it formed in 2005.

IMPACT OKLAHOMA started with the idea that a person might not be able to give \$100,000 to make a big difference in meeting a community need, but many can donate \$1,000 and then find 99 other friends to give as well, said Jilian Larimore, Impact’s executive director.

And that’s what they’ve done.

Impact Oklahoma has fully funded 26 projects with \$100,000 catalyst grants and given smaller, operating grants to other organizations through the years as part of the group’s commitment to give out 100 percent of its membership dues every year. More than 260 women currently give \$1,000 each year for giving away; Impact hopes to keep growing that number so it can give five catalyst grants each year – one in each of its focus areas: family, health

and wellness, community, education and culture.

The group also is one of the five founding members of a national Impact 100 Council, composed of similar groups across the country. Modeled after a similar organization in Cincinnati, Impact Oklahoma has been key in mentoring new groups as a member of both Impact 100 and a similar group, the Women’s Collective Giving Network.

Larimore said her organization’s members expect the grants to be transformational ones to serve as a catalyst for the organization.

“We want an organization to come up with a project that can be fully implemented with this payment so they can start getting day two outcomes,” she said, noting that on day two, they can begin ordering equipment, hiring people and getting started.

In central Oklahoma, Impact Oklahoma’s 2018 catalyst grant recipients are Positive Tomorrows and Pivot, a Turning Point for Youth, formerly



Positive Tomorrows representatives and students stand in front of one of the buses the nonprofit bought with its grant from Impact Oklahoma.

known as Youth Services of Oklahoma County. The Positive Tomorrows grant will go toward buying two 30-passenger buses in order to expand the radius of the homeless schoolchildren the program serves. Pivot will use its grant to launch a tiny homes residential community for teens living on their own.

“We have lowered the threshold to philanthropy,” Larimore said, adding that the women in the group stay involved with the organizations and hear frequent updates from them. “Being a philanthropist means ... you can walk in and say, ‘Let’s talk about how this project will make an impact on your ability to deliver your mission.’”



Front row (L to R): Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director Kelly Baker and volunteer Maria Perez. Back row (L to R): Volunteers Lee McClendon, Georgene Hawkins and Tina Cofelt.

A nonprofit agency in Altus with a mission of serving as a go-to place for charitable services in the community is helping out two other southwest Oklahoma organizations as part of its mission.

OPERATION C.A.R.E. MINISTRIES is sharing its facilities, internet access and utilities with the Shortgrass Medical Clinic and Southwest Oklahoma Community Action Group’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Total cost of these contributions equals more than \$10,000.

OPERATION C.A.R.E. MINISTRIES INC.

With just two employees, Operation C.A.R.E. (Christians Assisting, Resourcing and Encouraging) has also provided 4,464 volunteer hours to these organizations – 16 hours a week for the medical clinic and 10 hours weekly for the VITA program during tax season. Shortgrass Medical Clinic’s main office is in Altus. Opening the clinic in Altus was a cost-effective way to serve people without having to provide costly transportation to and from Hollis.

“It’s been a blessing, it’s been a huge blessing just to know how many more people are being helped, being served pretty much at no cost,” said Angela Ybarra, executive director of Operation C.A.R.E. “We’re there for a hand up and I think working with these two organizations provides that.”

Kelly Baker, program director for the Community Action Group’s Retired Senior Volunteer Program, called Operation C.A.R.E.’s role a rescue mission. The building the group had used to help low-income people with tax returns for 30 years was undergoing renovations. From that

building, volunteers filed 274 federal tax returns and related state returns for free for people who don’t have access to computers or who don’t have knowledge to file their own. The tax preparation help result in nearly \$350,000 in refunds for people whose incomes qualified them for the assistance from VITA.

“Operation C.A.R.E. stepped up,” Baker said. “They were awesome.”

Opening the clinic in Altus was a cost-effective way to serve people without having to provide costly transportation to and from Hollis.

Operation C.A.R.E.’s goal was to help both of these nonprofit organizations continue essential programs. The clients that both the medical clinic and the Community Action Group serve also are clients that Operation C.A.R.E. serves.

“By partnering with these nonprofits, we are assisting our clients in more ways than we can alone,” Ybarra said. Through these partnerships, “more people have become aware of our programs.”

OUR COMMUNITY CARES COALITION

Responding to the loss of three area teens by suicide in the last year, a community group in Madill seeks to foster connections with teenagers and help them get treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues.

The organization, **OUR COMMUNITY CARES COALITION**, has raised more than \$10,000 selling T-shirts and asking for donations in the community to fund its efforts. Volunteers have donated an estimated 1,000 hours to the effort.

The group is called OC3 for short and founding members include two family physicians, one licensed professional counselor, a high school principal and a mother who had lost her son to suicide. Its endgame is to prevent further suicide deaths by fostering connections.

"One aim of ours is to help our children become more connected with each other, with their peers, with their teachers, with their family and with their community," said family physician Dr.

Pamela Ahearn. "We also aim to help take away the stigma from diagnoses of mental health issues like depression and anxiety, making it easier to admit that a problem exists and seek help for that problem."

In its first year, OC3 has hosted tailgate parties before football games, invited volunteers to go through training and then spend time with the students in school at lunch, given goody bags to students participating in competitions, held a school spirit bonfire at the beginning of the year and worked closely with schools to meet other needs.

"We've been very busy," Ahearn said. "We know it's working; and we want to keep it up, and we want to do more."

The group already has seen that effort pay off – they were invited to help a 17-year-old who had a specific plan to commit suicide. Ahearn said the teen, who is in counseling and surrounded by a



Two teens play table tennis at Madill Church of Christ during an event hosted by Our Community Cares Coalition.

network of parents and friends, has told the group that OC3 helped save his life.

Ultimately, OC3 would like to receive a grant to fund a full-time behavioral health counselor in schools. In addition to a large board and grant writers, OC3 has a community of backers with a common goal of supporting the Madill area's kids.

"The long-term benefits of the efforts of our organization will be more lives saved, more mental health problems treated, and a happy and healthy community," Ahearn said. "Our goal is to have no more deaths by suicide in our community."



A Twist of Fate – ATS founder Andrea Taylor and her sons, Aaron (left) and Aiden, who has ATS.

When Andrea Taylor realized during a medical emergency that local doctors in her new state of Oklahoma were unfamiliar with how to treat or care for her son, she decided to do something about it.

Taylor's 10-year-old son, Aiden, has a rare genetic connective tissue disorder, arterial tortuosity syndrome, which affects the entire body with arteries that grow too long, and it can cause debilitating eye diseases, heart attacks, aneurisms and strokes. He had received treatment in Arkansas from when he was diagnosed at age 2, but when he needed treatment in Oklahoma, Taylor said doctors didn't know enough

about the rare condition. So she formed the Owasso-based nonprofit with an international focus, **A TWIST OF FATE – ATS**, to educate medical providers and parents and fund research.

Last year, the National Organization for Rare Disorders honored A Twist of Fate with a Rare Impact Award for its work with the rare disease community.

"We have been the driving force for science, for the public education and awareness and support of families," said Taylor, founder and president. "That's where our organization changed the whole landscape of everything."

Those involved with her organization agree.

"The organization A Twist of Fate, led by Andrea Taylor, is responsible for taking ATS from obscurity to a well-recognized medical entity," said pediatric cardiologist Eudice Fontenot, associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and a practicing physician at Arkansas Children's Hospital. "I can't overstate how important Andrea has been in this process."

A TWIST OF FATE – ATS

Since its inception, A Twist of Fate – ATS has initiated research projects and supported two medical facilities on creating multidisciplinary clinics in the U.S. and in Europe; the one in Ghent, Belgium, opened last year. A Twist of Fate organized both Oklahoma's and Arkansas' Rare Disease Days in 2017.

It also hosts the Natural History and Quality of Life Study on ATS through the International ATS Patient Registry and provides a continuing medical education program to offer medical professionals incentives to learn more about the disease – seminars are held annually in the United States and every other year in Europe. A Twist of Fate's work includes creating a "carrier" database surrounding the disorder and hosting regular meetings for families living with ATS and other rare diseases.

The organization also supports other organizations working with rare diseases by sharing its carrier research, database and other practices – the research will help others living with connective tissue disorders and congenital heart defects.

BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF OKLAHOMA

For more than a decade, **BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD** of Oklahoma has been involved with Infant Crisis Services in both big and small ways.

For starters, employees volunteer there annually and an employee serves on its board. In addition, a mobile health Caring Van program administered by Blue Cross through the Oklahoma Caring Foundation Inc. partners with Infant Crisis Services' BabyMobile program so entire families can receive assistance. The Caring Van program delivers preventive health services statewide; the BabyMobile program delivers Infant Crisis Services to underserved areas in the metropolitan area and beyond.

"As a health insurance company, BCBSOK understands that healthy beginnings play an important role in the healthy development of citizens in our state," said Ted Haynes, president of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma. "By

partnering with ICS, we can invest directly in the healthy early development of Oklahoma's youngest community members."

In 2017, BCBSOK awarded a \$35,000 Healthy Kids, Healthy Families grant to Infant Crisis Services' Safe Sleep, Safe Travels project. This project is focused on supporting the organization's efforts to help lower infant mortality in Oklahoma, a state with infant mortality rates that rank in the nation's top 10.

Brooke Townsend, director of community affairs, said BCBSOK was proud to support the organization's work in providing safe environments for babies, and that it partners well with the company's Health Kids, Healthy Families program.

"The connection between poverty and childhood safety is striking," BCBSOK wrote. "ICS' decades of work in this area have led them to understand that many parents/caregivers struggle to provide safe environments due to a lack of



Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma's Brooke Townsend and Travis Johnson pack diapers at Infant Crisis Services.

resources."

The Safe Sleep, Safe Travels project provides quality car seats and safe beds for infants and toddlers while also providing education on the importance of both and training how to use them properly.

"We are so grateful to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma for funding through its Healthy Kids, Healthy Family Initiative," said Miki Farris, Infant Crisis Services executive director and co-founder. "Through this partnership, we will impact many local Oklahomans by providing car seats and Pack-and-Plays to needy families."



Josh Grantham unloads sod as he and other Kimray employees volunteer with Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity.

Supporting the local community has been a big part of the philosophy at **KIMRAY INC.** since the Oklahoma City-based oil and gas equipment manufacturer was founded 70 years ago.

Late last year, Kimray gave \$45,000 to Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity to help sponsor the building of a new home for Stephen and Terece Sandini and their family. Nearly 40 volunteers from Kimray also helped frame, paint and landscape the Sandini house over a four-month period.

In addition, Kimray's generosity included donating \$425,000 to local charities in 2017

KIMRAY INC.

alone, including Oklahoma Schools of Character, In the Gap, City Rescue Mission, Girl Scouts of Oklahoma, Central Oklahoma 89ers chapter of Quail Forever, Shiloh Camp, Wings of Edmond, Canterbury Voices, Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation and Oklahoma Business Ethics Consortium.

Specifically, Kimray's donations helped:

- 6,500 elementary students receive character education and mentoring through In the Gap.
- 700 inner city children attend Shiloh Camp.
- 500 children receive mentoring from Youth for Christ Fish Clubs.
- 2,000 youth and parents attend Geekapalooza STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) events hosted by Girl Scouts.
- Six public schools become "State Schools of Character," a program that has led to a decrease in suspensions and discipline referrals at other schools.
- 134 children develop music appreciation, teamwork and other lessons through Canterbury

Voices.

Kimray's founder, the late Garman Kimmell, always supported the way Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity helps families achieve the dream of homeownership. Kimray's current CEO, Thomas Hill, believes that strong relationships lead to transformation, so the company's financial giving follows where its employees are engaged in service.

"I am very grateful for the life-changing work of Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity. They really make a difference in our community, and we are privileged to partner with such a great organization," Hill said.

All of these gifts reflect Kimray's core values of responsible stewardship and strengthening the family. The company invests locally, and its priorities include education to help people develop knowledge and skills to reach their potential; young people to develop leaders; character; and culture.

"We can't change the entire world, but each of us should be changing someone's world," Hill said.

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MCALESTER REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER

The **MCALESTER REGIONAL HEALTH CENTER'S** focus on improving the health care of those in southeast Oklahoma has led to a growing event for women involving 600 volunteers.

The 2017 Ladies' Night Out Health Fair last October served 802 people from eight different counties in Oklahoma and two in Arkansas, as well as offered free health care services that totaled more than \$10,000 per attendee.

These people received free tests, including carotid and venous ultrasounds, manual breast exams, cholesterol level checks and others at 32 health care stations.

"What makes up a community is the people, and you can't have people if they're not healthy," said Christopher Plunkett, the hospital's director of marketing. "That's really one of the biggest drives that we have – part of taking care of our community."

Based on the screenings, they can be referred to

the hospital's "mercy clinic" for uninsured or underinsured people or for additional tests at a medical clinic that works for them. The event has been held at Life Church McAlester, which has a large enough space to accommodate so many people. Hospital employees, including medical personnel, and others from community organizations, volunteer to provide staff for the evening health fair.

The hospital is a nonprofit, public trust hospital and "regional" is the second part of its name, which explains the large area from which people come, Plunkett said.

"We feel that we have a duty to take care of the region and provide services that are truly needed by our community," he said.

The event began in 2015 after health center research showed a large number of women weren't receiving annual mammograms. Such tests find problems early, when chances for treatment and cure are better. Since it began, the hospital has



Women line up for free manual breast exams at the third annual Ladies Night Out health fair event.

seen an increase in these types of screenings after the event. The first event drew 125 people, and its numbers have increased each year. It is funded by the hospital foundation and attracts a lot of donations from the community, Plunkett said.

"The McAlester Regional Health Center mission is to consistently deliver a high-quality, compassionate, and cost-effective health care experience," Plunkett said. "There are many in southeast Oklahoma who are not insured or underinsured and the Ladies' Night Out Health Fair provides a platform to provide much needed screenings and education, while fulfilling our mission and at no cost to the attendees."



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Marnie Taylor

President & CEO

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SONIC, AMERICA'S DRIVE IN

SONIC, AMERICA'S DRIVE IN has shown its commitment to today's youth over the years through its work with various nonprofit organizations.

Sonic's relationship with the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy dates back for decades.

The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy was established in 1983 to create an advocacy network to provide a voice for the needs of children and youth in Oklahoma, particularly those in the state's care and those growing up amid poverty, violence, abuse and neglect, disparities, or other situations that put their lives and future at risk.

Oklahoma ranks 36th in the nation in overall child well-being, according to The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

"The mission of OICA to create awareness, take action, and support policy to improve the health, safety, and well-being of Oklahoma's children blends greatly with our dedication to organizations that can help provide educational opportunity for

children within the state of Oklahoma," said Sonic spokesperson Becky Rickard.

Sonic is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to all children in Oklahoma in hopes the new generation of residents will stay in the state to work, raise families and be productive to the local economy, Rickard said.

"OICA has played an integral role over the years in compiling facts and numbers on different aspects about the children in our state. They are constantly monitoring what the needs are of these children and helping to find ways of providing positive solutions," Rickard said. "We are continuously grateful for our partnership with OICA and know it helps promote relationships as a way of life, which is one of Sonic's core values."

Each year, the company presents the Sonic Commitment Award at OICA's Heroes Ball. The Chickasaw Nation will receive the 2018 award next month.



Sonic sponsors Power Hour at the Boys & Girls Club, where students come after school and work on their homework.

"It is Sonic's belief that OICA is an organization that can help the children of Oklahoma become the best they can be. Knowing that our funding can actually help make a difference in the lives of Oklahoma children certainly touches our hopes for positive outcomes for so many Oklahoma children in need," she said.

Other youth organizations Sonic also sponsors include the Boys & Girls Club of Oklahoma County and Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City Inc.

"Sonic is a tremendous benefactor for youth programs across Oklahoma," said OICA CEO Joe Dorman. "OICA is thankful for their effort to improve the quality of life for children through their support."

Oklahoma's DRIVE-IN



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JESSICA P. MAX- THE MAX INSURANCE AGENCY- ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY

When Jessica Max joined **ALLSTATE INSURANCE CO.** as an exclusive agent, she also jumped at the chance to join the insurance company's mission to help victims of domestic abuse. She said that she has seen firsthand how domestic abuse has affected those around her and she wanted to help.

So the Jessica P. Max Insurance Agency and its three employees, including Max, have provided physical and monetary donations, volunteer time at the facility and access to local grant funding.

"I feel like I've been blessed, so I just try to give back to others," Max said. "It doesn't matter how small it is. When you help, it does make a difference."

Specifically, since 2016, Max' agency has helped facilitate the Allstate Foundation Purple Purse's \$37,000 in grants to YWCA Oklahoma City, and the agency has spearheaded and contributed personally to the donations that include \$2,000 worth of clothes from a clothing drive, \$600 in donated items for the

YWCA's Purple Sash fundraiser, \$500 to the YWCA's Women Who Care luncheon and \$300 in donations to the organization's Santa Store.

"Having the Allstate Foundation back our local nonprofits is an amazing opportunity," she said. "Having my feet on the ground locally allows the YWCA of OKC to benefit."

Max said she gravitates toward helping women get on their feet financially – whether it's through education to help them understand financial literacy, clothing and toiletries for immediate daily living needs or other donations to provide emergency shelter, housing, counseling and more.

"Every dollar helps provide critical services to survivors," said Max, who combines her efforts with other local Allstate agents to help victims of domestic abuse.

"It is an effort that requires many hands to fulfill and I hope I can continue to provide a bridge to those opportunities for each victim to become a



In April 2018, Jessica Max and other Allstate agents present donated items along with a \$9,000 Helping Hands Grant check from The Allstate Foundation to YWCA Oklahoma City.

survivor," said Max, who is touched by hearing the personal stories of women helped by the work of her and other Allstate agents.

Max recalled a story about the purple keychain charms she passes out to clients during October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month. They helped inspire the daughter of one of her insurance clients to leave her abusive relationship.

The mother believed the keychain helped her to communicate to her daughter that there is help and a better way awaits, Max said.

"I am just one volunteer," she said. "Think if we were each just one, how many we could be."

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BEACON AWARDS

PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT - SMALL



James Griffith and Vern Baker, employees of The Womble Co., replace a double window at the home of a struggling family.

THE WOMBLE CO.

An Oklahoma City family living with broken windows now has a new look at the world, thanks to the work of **THE WOMBLE CO.**

On a frigid Saturday, with temperatures hovering around 19 degrees Fahrenheit, company employees volunteered their time to install 17 windows donated by The Womble Co. and do tree-trimming and yardwork to clean up the lot. Total cost of the donation was about \$16,000, with about 180 volunteers.

The experience meant so much to the Oklahoma City company employees that they're looking to find more ways to help in the future.

The project originated with Ann Manley Kelley, a friend of company executives and whose late husband dedicated himself through the former Cornerstone Ministries to helping the working poor.

Kelley learned of a struggling family who kept facing tough challenges related to their broken home. The family didn't have air conditioning or heating, but all the windows in the house were broken or boarded up, so a new air conditioner or heater wouldn't have helped them. So Kelley asked if The Womble Co. could help with the worst windows. The Womble Co. thought the right thing to do was to fix all of them.

"The aim really was just to bless this family," said Ainslee Crum, The Womble Co.'s chief financial officer. "Through this we got the blessing of being able to work as a team. All of our employees who helped on the project donated their time. It was one of the coldest days of the year when we installed them and yet we had over half of our employees there. We had people drive in over 100 miles to help. We all left feeling as if we received more than we gave."

In addition to windows, the family now has new air conditioning, heating, plumbing, electricity and a fumigated house, thanks to additional donations.

"They are back in business," Crum said. "It was an awesome experience for our company because we hadn't had the chance to do something like that before. ... We all have big hearts and want to give back."

Kelley said she got involved because she heard of this family in need and approached The Womble Co. in addition to others who contributed in their own ways.

"The Crums and the Womble Co., they just responded to a need. They went and saw the house and they didn't hesitate," she said. "They were there because they wanted to serve."



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OG&E

For more than 10 years, **OG&E** has partnered with the Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity to build homes that provide low-income families with low-cost, energy-efficient, comfortable housing. In March 2018, OG&E and Habitat for Humanity built the 500th certified Positive Energy Home, which is built with improved insulation, high-performance windows, energy-efficient water tanks, airtight ducts, and high-efficiency heating and cooling equipment.

Over the years, OG&E has given approximately half a million dollars to the Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity to offset the higher construction costs of building an energy-efficient home. That includes the cost of the homes' design, inspection and performance testing by Residential Energy Services Network-certified partners.

In addition to the financial contributions and energy efficiency expertise the company provides, OG&E employees have spent hundreds of hours volunteering with Habitat for Humanity to build the homes.

"We love volunteering with people from OG&E because they show up on time, they do their job and they stay until the very end, so it's a wonderful partnership," said Anne Felton, CEO of Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity.

Because OG&E's certified Positive Energy homes are significantly more energy-efficient than most new construction in the state, over the life of the partnership, about 500 families have saved approximately \$180,000 in energy costs.

"For the working poor, one in eight in central Oklahoma, homeownership can seem an impossibility," said company spokeswoman



OG&E employee volunteers work on a milestone build: the 500th OG&E Positive Energy/Habitat for Humanity partnership home.

Christina Dukeman. "If they do manage to purchase a home, juggling home maintenance and utility costs with car payments, food, child care and other necessary expenses makes it difficult for them to keep their homes."

"Energy-efficient homes make homeownership possible and affordable for low-income families, providing them more disposable income to spend in the communities where they live and work," Dukeman said. "That strengthens the economy in those communities."

WE SUCCEED TOGETHER®

OG&E is proud to be working **TOGETHER®** with the **Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity** to create Positive Energy Homes in our community. This gives limited-income families a chance at a brighter future.

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OU MEDICINE

Every month, the Live to Give program coordinates at least one volunteer opportunity that involves **OU MEDICINE** physicians and staff members in efforts to help nonprofit agencies.

To date, Live to Give volunteers have completed 11 Habitat for Humanity homes. Other initiatives include supporting the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's food and fund drives and providing a range of needs for the annual Endeavor Games at the University of Central Oklahoma, including volunteering and raising more than \$400,000 in seven years through its annual OU Medicine Corporate Challenge event.

"As an organization, we see the importance of serving our patients, but also in serving our community outside of our exam rooms," Kelli Hayward Walsh, marketing project manager for OU Physicians, said.

OU Medicine has approximately 5,000 employees and its mission is to lead health care by being

the premier enterprise for advancing health care, medical education and research for the community, state and region. In 2009 Brian Maddy, chief strategy officer for OU Medicine, identified the importance of community outreach, which led to the creation of Live to Give.

The program will often take place more than once a month, as charities reach out to OU Medicine when volunteer support is otherwise lacking.

"We take care of our patients when they come to us, but we need to take care of them long before they ever do," Walsh said.

In 2017-2018, the program assisted 21 nonprofits by supplying over 1,300 volunteers who donated more than 3,800 hours of service. The 2018-2019 goal for Live to Give is to have a greater impact on more local organizations in need of support by providing more than 5,000 hours of community service.

"Being able to place a family in a safe home they



Employees from OU Medicine pose with a family on the company's Habitat for Humanity frame day.

can be proud of and own gives them pride, and they go on to make positive impacts of their own in the community," Walsh said. "In some cases, it helps break a pattern of generational poverty within a family, enabling them to show their children how hard work can pay off and how having pride in something can transcend other areas of their lives."

In addition to providing volunteer labor, OU Medicine has supported more than 70 nonprofit agencies through sponsorship of fundraising events for Boys & Girls Club of Oklahoma County, funding Partners in Action items through the Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools and hosting fund drives for the Letter Carriers Campaign.




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HOMES BY TABER

HOMES BY TABER started its Taber Cares program about 10 years ago to expand its community giving.

As part of the program, Homes by Taber accepts applications from the community each fall and then selects 12 monthly charities to partner with for the following year.

Taber Cares' goal is to provide hands-on volunteering in the community along with a financial contribution to the selected charities each year.

"We are teaching and providing opportunities for our employees to give back and help the less fortunate while helping to make the community in which we live, work and love better," said Julie LeBlanc, owner and Taber Cares' charity director. "We make volunteering fun, hoping our employees teach their friends and family to give back to their communities."

The 2018 charities include Infant Crisis Services, City Rescue Mission, Make-A-Wish Oklahoma Foundation, Ally's House, Regional

Food Bank of Oklahoma, Project 66 Food Bank, Sunbeam Family Services, Oklahoma Outdoor Outreach, Free to Live, Susan G. Komen of Central and Western Oklahoma, Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma and Anna's House Foundation.

"We provide our employees opportunities with our selected charities to volunteer throughout the year. More specifically, we aim to have one opportunity from each selected charity per quarter," said LeBlanc, who owns the company with her husband, Taber. "We also provide \$250 from each home sold during each month to that selected charity."

In 2017 Homes by Taber and its Taber Cares program provided over 1,000 hours of community service and donated more than \$115,000 to selected charities.

"We are on track to make 2018 even bigger," LeBlanc said.

During the company's check presentations, the charities are given a chance to speak to Homes by



Homes by Taber employees box up food in assembly lines at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma.

Taber employees about how the donation is going to help the nonprofit. It really gives the employees a sense of pride that their hard work is helping others, she said.

"Our charity program has not only brought our company closer together, but has given all our employees an eye-opening experience to the world around us," LeBlanc said.

A group of Homes by Taber employees volunteer each month at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. The company recently donated \$9,750 to the nonprofit organization aimed at fighting hunger.

"The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma is so thankful for our partnership with Homes by Taber," said Katie Fitzgerald, chief executive officer of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma.



Polston Tax Resolution & Accounting employees hold presents they will donate as part of the company's annual Christmas Family program in conjunction with the Rod Polston's Servant Heart Foundation.

Rod Polston, the founder and president of **POLSTON TAX RESOLUTION & ACCOUNTING**, established the Rod Polston's Servant Heart Foundation to serve local communities and the firm's own employees.

Since 2015, the foundation has raised over \$50,000 and has donated to local causes such as single mothers in need of emergency housing and financial assistance, emergency medical services, military members and families, local church missions and fundraisers, and more. The firm has also used the foundation to fundraise for its employees and their family members in need of assistance.

Before the foundation was created, Polston

would often donate money to community members in need. His charitable actions led to other Polston Tax employees eager to contribute to the community.

"Rather than simply express sympathy, in each case our first reaction was 'How can we help?' followed shortly by donations of our own personal finances to aid these causes," Brenna Bagnaro, director of client relations, said. "We've become a culture that truly 'walks the walk' of generosity and giving."

A tradition for the foundation is its annual Christmas Family giving program, where employees help four to six struggling families from the firm's clients. The firm purchases presents for children, helps families move and furnish a house and provides Christmas dinner, as well as pays medical bills, rent and miscellaneous expenses and more.

"The act of giving during this time not only brings us closer to our clients, but also closer as a firm as we band together to do something huge for those in need," Bagnaro said. "It's truly an honor to

be a part of each year."

Polston Tax takes part in quarterly volunteer events where employees volunteer during paid work hours. In 2017, employees spent 1,449 hours of their time to causes and charities such as Community Food Bank of Eastern OK, United Way Day of Caring, Infant Crisis Services and Moore Food & Resource Center. Employees are encouraged to bring their families to volunteer with them.

Each year, employees also volunteer in the Ask a Lawyer event, where people who are economically disadvantaged are offered free legal services.

"Lawyers are not always seen in the most positive light, so we take great pride in disproving the stereotype and volunteering our time to those who need it most," Bagnaro said. "By doing this, our hope is that those who would have been weary of requesting legal help for much needed assistance due to the stigma of lawyers will actually reach out and achieve assistance in the future and can do so without fear."

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STINGRAY PRESSURE PUMPING

STINGRAY PRESSURE PUMPING

donated about \$3,800 worth of bicycles and helmets to the children of Oklahoma through the Catholic Charities and Sunbeam Family Services program A Very Giving Christmas.

"We at Stingray Pressure Pumping strive to be a good neighbor every day," district manager Dominic Herrald said. "Through this program, we connect with neighbors in an effort to provide joy during the Christmas season."

The program, which has been around for three years, offers holiday joy to about 600 families who otherwise would not be able to buy presents for their children. Families receive Santa Bucks to obtain items in St. Nick's shop that have been donated by the community. In exchange, each family member does an hour of community service.

"It's a dignified way to make families feel like they are part of the gift-giving aspect of Christmas," said Erin Engelke, chief external relations officer

for Sunbeam. "It's a really rewarding program for everyone involved."

Sunbeam Family Services offers community support in early childhood, counseling, foster care and senior services to people of all ages. In 1907, the same year Oklahoma became a state, the nonprofit started out as a home for abandoned boys and girls.

Catholic Charities, which partners with Sunbeam for the program, was founded in 1910 and offers services to those in need by supporting justice in social structures and calling for the church and others to follow in example.

Stingray's management has become invested in the cause. Herrald has committed to match employee contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

"Our employees have enjoyed the program so much," Herrald said. "We are already being asked if there are other ways in which they can help."

The company donated over 100 helmets and 60



Stingray employees deliver a load of donated bicycles for Sunbeam Family Services' A Very Giving Christmas program.

bikes.

"In participation in other programs, we foster the ideal of giving a 'hand up, not a handout,'" Herrald said.

In April of 2017, Stingray Pressure Pumping expanded its operations into Oklahoma. The company has a total of 220 employees who have donated about 60 hours of their time to the community.

"As we continue to grow in Oklahoma, it is our intention to grow the community outreach," Herrald said. "It has been my experience you always get more than you give."



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WEOKIE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

WEOKIE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

established the Weokie Foundation in 2006 to focus on three areas: scholarships, charitable giving and financial literacy education.

Since then, the Weokie Foundation has given more than \$800,000 to more than local charities and provided over 6,500 hours of community service. The foundation also gives \$50,000 in college scholarships to 25 graduating seniors each year.

"It's an honor to be a recipient from those who are willing to award and give financially to students in the community who are continuing their education," said Ethan Renner, a graduate of Deer Creek High School in Edmond.

In addition, the Weokie Foundation has developed a no-cost Money Talks Financial Education program designed to teach youth how to manage their money wisely. The financial literacy program focuses on classroom lessons, presentations and seminars in second to 12th grades to help students understand financial responsibilities and encourage them to make smart decisions as they become more financially accountable.

"The Weokie Foundation is committed to equipping Oklahoma students with the skills and knowledge to handle their finances wisely throughout their lifetime," said Sarah Mackey, Weokie financial education specialist.

Since inception, the foundation has offered over 6,600 presentations in Oklahoma City metro classrooms to more than 76,000 students.

Weokie assists Oklahoma educators by dedicating a full-time education specialist to visit schools, teaching the 14 Oklahoma Personal Financial Literacy Standards. Additionally, the foundation provides free online financial education curriculum, teacher scholarships and professional development training opportunities.

The Weokie Foundation holds an annual golf tournament to help raise money for the scholarships for the graduating high school seniors and to promote financial literacy in the Oklahoma City metro area.

The biggest supporters of the Weokie Foundation are the employees of Weokie Federal Credit Union, said Brent Remppe, assistant vice president and director of education for the credit union. The foundation



YOUniforms and teacher Mary Northcraft from Belle Isle Enterprise Middle School in Oklahoma City were the winners of Weokie Federal Credit Union's inaugural BizKid\$ Middle School Cooperative Entrepreneurship Program.

achieved 100-percent employee giving in 2018 with a 98-percent average over the past 10 years, he said. This year, employees have pledged more than \$42,000 to the foundation.

In October 2017, Weokie Federal Credit Union teamed up with eight other credit unions, seven electric cooperatives the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives and MemberHaven for the inaugural BizKid\$ Middle School Cooperative Entrepreneurship Competition program. Seventy students participated and pitched ideas for 14 new businesses in a Shark Tank-style competition. The winners were YOUniforms and teacher Mary Northcraft from Belle Isle Enterprise Middle School in Oklahoma City.

CHARITABLE INFLUENCE - SMALL

AMSHOT



Employees Michael Thomas and Rick Alliss pull beers at OKC Midtown Rotary's 7th Annual Spelling Bee(r).

The company culture at amshot stems from one of the company's core values: empowering your community.

The Oklahoma City-based technology company strives to empower its community by offering educational training classes, participating in public speaking engagements and engaging with the chamber of commerce as well as encouraging employee volunteerism and community participation and supporting social causes.

"Community engagement has been a pillar of **AMSHOT'S** business practice since day one, and it has drastically influenced the company culture,"

said amshot CEO Michael Thomas.

"It gives both the employees and the company a greater sense of purpose. It builds strong employee bonds, creating a group of friends rather than a group of co-workers. It displays the humility of management and gives managers and staff members alike a common ground to stand. It promotes open communication and team building, and it increases pride in our city and state."

Marketing strategist Lexi Belvis said Thomas, a native of Oklahoma City, has a passion for the city that is evident in everything he does.

"Michael is truly a visionary of community culture - he strongly encourages employees to pursue community involvement, even if it means time off work. He gives out Keep It Local cards to employees and friends to support local business."

The company offers regular training classes to its clients and the public on technology and business-related topics to help community members sharpen their skills and give them an opportunity to ask an expert questions.

Belvis said amshot team members are

encouraged to get involved in organizations that promote causes they are passionate about. The company even has a community engagement adviser on staff to help the company and its employees find the best opportunities to make a positive effect in the local community.

Some of the causes the amshot team focuses on are STEAM education, art and music, ending disease, youth sports, and gender equality. The local events and organizations the company supports include the Oklahoma City Midtown Rotary Spelling Bee(r), FLY Film Festival, The Cage OKC, Oklahoma Women in Technology Spring Retreat, Metro Tech Mechanical Monsters robotics team, Neighborhood Services Organization, Oklahoma Power BI User Group and Preservation Oklahoma.

"Contributing time and money to local organizations that further these causes in Oklahoma means helping shape it into a leader among states, a better place to live, generally promoting a better society for future generations, and assisting our neighbors in need," said Rick Alliss, director of software development.

FREESTYLE CREATIVE

From donating millions to education and other causes to volunteering for nonprofits themselves, **FREESTYLE CREATIVE** founders Mohammad and Vahid Farzaneh are setting the tone for giving throughout the company.

One cause dear to many hearts at Freestyle Creative is the American Cancer Society, the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service.

CEO Vahid Farzaneh and President Kelley Gann both serve on the board of Oklahoma City's American Cancer Society office because of personal connections and experiences with cancer, which has given the rest of the team even more of a desire for volunteering.

"Whether the team participates in an event, donates or raises funds, or a team member chairs a

committee, we get to see the impact of these efforts in our community," Gann said. "Our involvement with ACS has impacted our company culture to think and give locally."

The Norman-based digital marketing firm has donated marketing initiatives to raise awareness of ACS events through billboards and social media.

"We organized a breakfast informational event, followed by the Real Men Wear Pink fundraiser, in which Freestyle helped raise over \$32,000 – a record for this event," Farzaneh said.

Freestyle Creative and its employees also participated in Relay for Life, the Cattle Baron's Ball and Making Strides 5K through promotion, volunteering and fostering relationships with donors and potential donors. As a sponsor, Freestyle helped with marketing efforts that included an e-blast and a video promoting the Cattle Baron's Ball, which features food, games, dancing and a live auction.



Freestyle team members attended the American Cancer Society's Cattle Baron's Ball of OKC.

Gann said Freestyle's efforts raised a call to action not only for its team, but for the surrounding community to help raise awareness, funds, become/ support advocates, and care for local cancer patients and families.

In addition to their work with ACS, Freestyle team members have served the community through many other organizations, including Sunbeam Family Services, Arts Council Oklahoma City, Infant Crisis Services, Positive Tomorrows, Rebuilding Together, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma, Junior League of Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma City Museum of Art and many more.



Campfire Green Country employees take a break from painting the offices of Tulsa Campfire.

LUXA ENTERPRISES started its quarterly community events in 2009. The entire Luxa team participates in these quarterly Helping the Community days at a volunteer event that has been selected by employees.

The employees have volunteered their services at Habitat for Humanity, Tulsa SPCA, A New Leaf, Family & Children Services, Domestic Violence Intervention Services Inc., Meals on Wheels, Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, Campfire Tulsa, Tulsa Center for Homeless and Up

with Trees, just to name a few.

The human resources, payroll, and accounting firm in Tulsa has 19 employees.

"We lend our skills – accounting and HR – to help these organizations reach their goals," said Luxa CEO Frauke Quiroga.

In addition to the company's quarterly employee community event, Luxa Enterprises offers its employees 48 hours a year of paid time off to volunteer on their own with nonprofits of their choice.

"The volunteer opportunity does need to be within certain guidelines that match the company's core values, but the goal is to allow everyone to fulfill their own charitable time goals without using personal time off," Quiroga said.

Luxa's Volunteer Time Off program has allowed several to serve at various volunteer events – for example, helping nonprofits during the teacher walkout, participating in the Reading Partners

program, and serving on boards and committees for various nonprofit organizations, Quiroga said.

"The objective of this program is to encourage employees to give back to the community," she said. "The quarterly events also provide an opportunity for team building, while serving those in need. It helps support our core values of teamwork, integrity and passion."

Luxa Enterprises has also been a strong proponent of the Tulsa Area United Way and has held successful campaigns for financial giving that have led to several other small businesses agreeing to participate in TAUW annual campaigns and/or Day of Caring.

"We strive to set an example to other small businesses to help the community with their gifts of time, talent and treasures. As a secondary result, our turnover is low, morale is high and we thrive, financially, in our community."

LUXA ENTERPRISES

PINNACLE BUSINESS SYSTEMS

Employees from **PINNACLE BUSINESS SYSTEMS**, an information technology solutions provider with 50 employees, participate in the Pinnacle Day of Service, a one-day companywide service event.

The program was created last year when employees volunteered at HOPE Center in Edmond by sorting through donations of food, clothing and household items to create emergency baskets for families in need. If employees chose not to participate in the program, they are given eight hours each year to volunteer at a charity of their choice.

"The immediate social and economic benefits of the program are that we are providing assistance to nonprofits who need more hands and feet to get the job done," said Sarah Hendon, social media and marketing specialist for Pinnacle. "We are having a direct impact on the organization as well

as the people who benefit from their services. The long-term benefits are that we are able to develop a relationship and better meet their needs."

Other than the Pinnacle Day of Service, the company donated a new shooting wheelchair for Paralympic track and field athlete Johnnie Williams and presented and provided a hands-on demo of technology to a group of high school students from Oklahoma Christian School.

They also participated in the University of Oklahoma and Ronnie K. Irani Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth's Entrepreneurial Exchange Program by hosting a CEO from New Delhi who runs an IT consulting company that supports subject matter experts in India.

Pinnacle was also a title sponsor for the Blake E. Naifeh #33 Memorial Gold Tournament, which benefited Oklahoma City programs for teens and children with learning disabilities.



Pinnacle Business Systems employees serve at the Hope Center of Edmond.

In addition, the company is a corporate sponsor of and has employees who are members of the organization Oklahoma Women in Technology, a nonprofit for professionals in the technology industry that fills the divide between genders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics – or STEM – fields.

"The aims are to build relationships with the organizations in our community that are helping others and assist them with that goal," Hendon said. "We also aim to build unity among our team and foster a charitable spirit in our organizations that encourages our employees to find organizations that they are passionate about and serve at."



Tribal member elders enjoy their lunch served at the Quapaw Elder Center, where the tribe donates beef and bison regularly to the Title VI nutritional programs.

The Quapaw Tribe's mission is to maintain and exercise self-governance that is continuously working toward economic self-sufficiency, to protect its land and resources, to improve the health and welfare of its members through quality programs while maintaining cultural heritage, and to develop economic opportunities for the tribe and the community.

In 2010, Quapaw Tribe Chairman John L. Berrey, business committee members and agricultural director Chris Roper started an agricultural program to further this mission. The company now has more

QUAPAW CATTLE CO.

than 1,200 cattle and 200 head of bison.

The **QUAPAW CATTLE CO.** donates about 20,000 pounds of beef and bison to Quapaw Public Schools, as well as area food banks, day care centers, churches and Quapaw Tribe Title VI nutritional programs in an effort to provide protein for a healthy diet.

The program consists of breeding, raising, planting and harvesting crops and processing livestock that is part of the tribe's farm-to-table initiative.

During the Quapaw Annual Powwow, the company provides beef and bison rations to its tribal members and visitors.

The Quapaw Tribe follows safe and humane practices in raising and handling animals to produce hormone-free black angus beef.

"Today health problems and loss of ancestral knowledge about food and farming are common in many tribal communities," said Quapaw Cattle Co. administrative assistant and Quapaw tribal member Robyn Olsen. "Sustainable farming is a way for our tribe to get back to their roots and address these

problems. It is our goal as a tribe to sustain production of food and other plant and animal products, using farm techniques that protect the environment, public health, communities and animal welfare."

Centuries ago, members of the Quapaw Tribe followed the Mississippi River from their homeland in Arkansas to northeast Oklahoma. This is the origin of the name "O-gah-pah," which translates as the "downstream people."

The Quapaw Tribe's meat processing facility also trains university students on how the entire farm-to-table process works and sponsors internships for college students who are majoring in agricultural studies. The tribe also hosts students who attend Intertribal Agriculture Youth, a summer camp for Native students from tribes across the United States.

"We believe learning is a lifelong process," said public relations director and Quapaw tribal member Anna McKibben. "It is our goal to facilitate the learning process to everyone who is in contact with the Quapaw Tribe."

BEACON AWARDS

CHARITABLE INFLUENCE - SMALL



The Rees space comes together at Design Appetit 2017. Team members included Michael Cromaz, Paige Fruits, Libby Gober, Cynthia Greene, Julie Hornbeek, Kate Howell, Angela Rapihana, Benjamin Shullaw, Melody Stinson, Dana Templeton and Kelsey Wegener.

REES ASSOCIATES INC.

REES ASSOCIATES INC., an architecture, planning and interior design firm, volunteers to help families living in substandard environments receive a personalized home atmosphere based on their needs through the Focus on Home program.

Families in need are given furniture, houseware and more to develop cozy, dignified homes based on needs that have been documented by partnering agencies. These families have housing, but do not have crucial furniture or supplies.

"Focus on Home eliminates an incredible stress on the family about how to afford the items necessary to create a home," said Joli Sanders, founder of Focus on Home. "Having a good night's sleep in a bed, and not on the floor, affects job and school performance. Additionally, a place to come home to gives a person a sense of worth and motivation to keep moving forward."

In 2017, Rees employees spent about 500 hours volunteering for the program.

The program issues a questionnaire to measure the service and the effect it had on the families. The service has received a 100-percent response of "exceeds expectations" on reviews. A follow-up takes place three to six months later to further measure the impact of the program and to ensure the families are doing well.

The program's main fundraising event is Design Appetit, where design teams are paired with a chef to create a tablescape to complement the chef's menu. Team members spend hours choosing a theme, designing their table and hosting a public viewing of the event.

"Each year, the question surrounding Design Appetit has not been 'Will we support this event?', but 'How can we better support this event?'," said Rees Vice President Farooq Karim.

During the planning process of Design Appetit, the company holds bake sale and jeans day fundraisers to create companywide enthusiasm. The 2017 events raised more than \$1,200 to benefit Focus on Home.

"Focus on Home is important to Rees because it is so closely related to the work we do every day," Karim said. "Our architects and designers understand the importance of a building, a room, a space and the impact it has on the people within."



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SDG ARCHITECTS

Employees from **SDG ARCHITECTS** in Ardmore have spent more than 300 hours as mentors to young school-age girls in a program that develops self-esteem and promotes fitness, culminating in a 5K run and a service project. And in doing the volunteering for Girls on the Run of Southern Oklahoma over the last six years, SDG employees have become more engaged in the community in general.

The firm's seven employees have served as volunteer coaches, provided marketing and design services for the local council, run in the 5K itself and more.

Coordinated through local public schools, Girls on the Run is a 10- to 12-week program for third- through eighth-graders designed to develop an appreciation for health and fitness along with physical, emotional and spiritual health. The curriculum creatively integrates running.

"Our connection to the organization has

promoted a culture of volunteerism and prompted employees to give back to the community in other ways as well," said Elizabeth Windel, SDG's founder and principal architect. "Our firm's participation in Girls on the Run also has increased our awareness of some of the challenges our community faces."

Windel said she had seen firsthand how much the program benefits the girls by promoting positive body image and self-esteem and getting them physically fit. She has also seen her employees become stronger leaders and role models.

"Giving back to the community and others has always been important to me, and I have strived to bring that culture of volunteerism into the workplace by supporting my employees' volunteer efforts however I can," she said.

By participating in Girls on the Run, employees at SDG Architects are also more physically fit themselves. The 5K marked the first time several had ever run one.



Elizabeth Windel, SDG's principal architect and founder, poses with several of the girls she coached last fall.

"I am incredibly thankful that my employees have embraced the program and made it their own. I am proud that we can serve this important organization that fills a huge need in our community," Windel said. "Though we are small, I am hopeful that we make a big impact in our community and inspire others to do the same."

SDG's Ilse Tucker is known as Tough Tucker to the girls she coaches.

"As a girl you face a lot of personal challenges, and I am very happy to be a source of guidance to them where they can find warmth, support and positive reinforcement."



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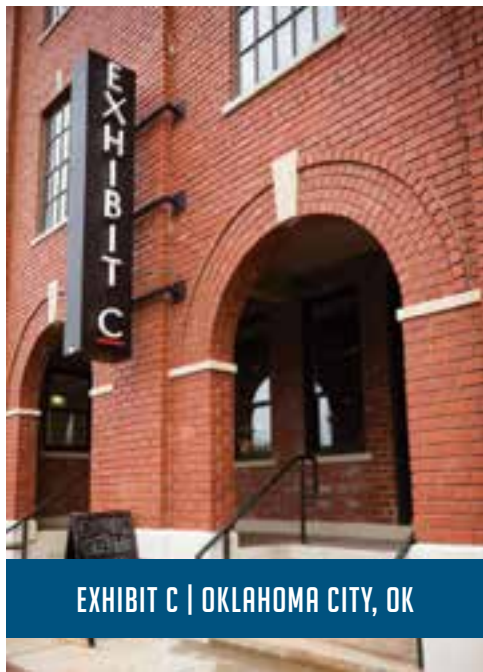
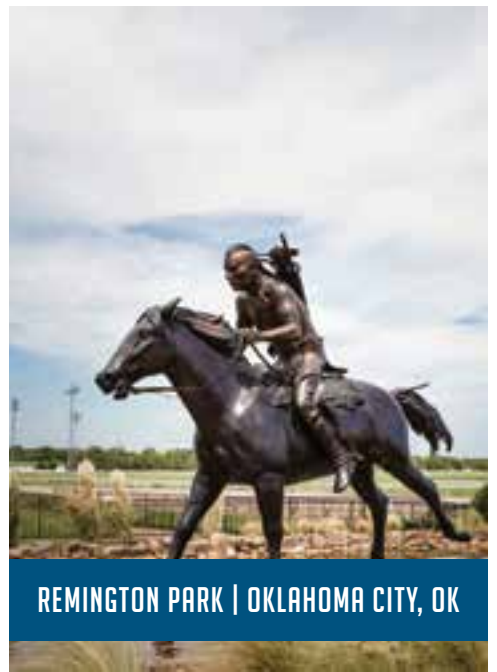


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