

# CURRENTS

*second quarter twenty-sixteen . baton rouge area foundation*

## *Not by the book*

*In Lee High School, architects  
create a school for the future*









A bridge crosses a ravine connecting Lee High School's four buildings in a campus-like setting—story on page 42.





**MAKE THE MOVE TO THE MOST LUXURIOUS HIGH-RISE APARTMENTS IN DOWNTOWN BATON ROUGE.**

Experience riverfront living at its finest. Library, amenity room, bike room, dog wash, fitness center, and a pool deck with breathtaking views of the Mississippi River are just some of the amenities that this new downtown apartment building offers. Smart home technology, DIRECTV, High-Speed Internet included in the rent are just a few others.

**Call to schedule your tour today 225.709.1725.**

Enjoy the ease of life on the river with easy access to the IBM Center, the State Capitol, downtown restaurants, theaters, and museums.

**Visit us at [www.525lafayette.com](http://www.525lafayette.com) for more information!**



100 North Street, Suite 900  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Tel: 225.924.7206  
[www.cpirt.com](http://www.cpirt.com)

LOVE DOWNTOWN  
**LIVE**  
DOWNTOWN



©2016 Commercial Properties Realty Trust



# CONTENTS

VOLUME TEN | NUMBER TWO

6–Letter from the chair

8–About us

9–Lead in

12–Civic projects

19–First quarter grants

22–Nonprofits: *2016 John W. Barton awards*

30–Scholarships: *Deborah Riberio, violinist*

34–*Y'all aboard!*

38–*A homeless solution*

42–Cover story: *A school for the future*

54–Legacy: *Dudley W. Coates*

58–Spark: *LIGO education center*

63–Spark briefs

66–Coda: *Baton Rouge Blues Fest*

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

# LETTER



**I**t happened a billion years ago. Two black holes, each roughly 30 times the mass of our sun, gave in to gravity and collapsed into each other.

The cataclysm rippled across the universe. Trillions of miles later, in a field north of Satsuma in Livingston Parish and in another in Washington State, scientists detected those gravitational waves still surging across the fabric of space-time today. Albert Einstein, they proved, was right. Again.

“Until this moment, we had our eyes on the sky and we couldn’t hear the music,” said Columbia University astrophysicist Szabolcs Marka, a member of the discovery team. “The skies will never be the same.”

Einstein’s theories predicted the existence of gravitational waves. But, for a long time, they were more a matter of faith among scientists than anything else. The researchers at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory spent years of diligent devotion trying to detect evidence of something that might not even exist. This year, though, it all paid off.

We’re fortunate to have them here among us as; throughout it all, they have shared their passion for exploration with school-children from Louisiana and other states who visited LIGO’s Science and Education Center. Opened in 2006, the Center features an amphitheater, 40 interactive exhibits and monthly “Science Saturdays.” That’s when researchers share what they’ve learned with visiting students who, in turn, can build upon their knowledge and dream up ideas of their own to explain a universe that continues to surprise us.

You can read about the LIGO education project in this issue of *Currents*.

• • •

This issue also features two more education stories, both of them celebrating hard-won successes in the East Baton Rouge Public School System.

At the start of the new school year this fall, EBR Public Schools will open the new \$54 million Lee High School complex. Right now, Lee High has 460 students in a temporary facility, but when the complex opens on Lee Drive this fall, the school will enroll up to 1,200. Described by officials as “like no other” in Louisiana, the new LHS will have more in common with a college campus than any ordinary public school. With exclusive offerings like the biomedicine and media arts curricula, LHS will be a magnet school where students learn by working on projects. They can even earn college credit through 17 dual enrollment programs with LSU.

EBR is adding another innovative school. Recently, the school system began to search for an architect to design a career high school to be located in Arendale, a new community on Lobdell Avenue anchored by educational institutions. Students at the new career high school will learn useful trades that will make them job-ready the day they get their diplomas. Graduates will be trained for careers in health services, broadcasting and construction, for example.

But graduating from the career school doesn’t mean that students can’t choose to go on to a community college or four-year university if they want. And if they do, they’ll have an advantage over their peers: instead of taking out big loans, they can put their skills to work part-time while they earn a college degree.

• • •



*Einstein's theories predicted the existence of gravitational waves. But, for a long time, they were more a matter of faith among scientists than anything else.*

With the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, many generous people have contributed \$10 million toward building a new animal shelter for East Baton Rouge Parish. You may know that Companion Animal Alliance, a nonprofit, had to contend with many challenges after it agreed to take over the old parish shelter about five years ago. What you may not know, however, is that CAA boosted the number of dogs and cats placed in adoptive homes to 70%, up from less than 20% before they began their good work there.

But there was only so much that CAA could do with a shelter that's almost four decades old, and located in a part of the parish that's remote for much of the population seeking to adopt animals. Supporters of CAA have successfully sought out partners to help plan and build a new and better shelter. LSU, for example, is leasing the land for the new facility, situated conveniently near the School of Veterinary Medicine.

CAA is in the midst of raising \$2 million more from the community at-large, with the goal of beginning construction later this year. When it's built, the new animal shelter will be more humane, less costly to operate, more inviting to volunteers, and, best of all, more welcoming to loving families eager to adopt a homeless dog or cat.

We congratulate CAA for its ambition and leadership. Soon, the people and animals of East Baton Rouge will have one of the best animal shelters in the country.

Sincerely,



S. Dennis Blunt,  
Chair

## Baton Rouge Area Foundation

---

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

---

S. Dennis Blunt, *Chair*  
John G. Davies, *President & CEO*  
William E. Balhoff, *Vice Chair*  
Annette D. Barton, *Secretary*  
Francis C. Jumonville Jr., *Treasurer*  
C. Kris Kirkpatrick, *Past Chair*  
Mary Terrell Joseph, *At Large*  
B. Eugene Berry, MD  
Mark C. Drennen  
Donna D. Fraiche  
Perry J. Franklin  
Rose J. Hudson  
Raymond A. Jetson  
Kevin F. Knobloch  
John B. Noland Jr.  
R. Ryland Percy III  
Jeffrey S. Zehnder  
Kelly Bienn, *ex officio*

---

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing two essential functions. One, the Foundation connects philanthropists with capable nonprofits to make sure the needs of our communities are met. For example, our donors support the Shaw Center for the Arts and education reform. Two, BRAF invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region.

For more information, contact Mukul Verma at [mverma@braf.org](mailto:mverma@braf.org).

---

*Currents* is published four times a year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, 100 North Street, Suite 900, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact us at 225.387.6126 or email the Foundation at [mverma@braf.org](mailto:mverma@braf.org).

# ABOUT US

## THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION ACCOMPLISHES ITS MISSION IN THREE WAYS :

**1** We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 52 years, our donors have granted more than \$400 million across South Louisiana and the world.

The Foundation offers several types of charitable funds, including donor-advised funds, which can be opened for a minimum of \$10,000. Contributions to the fund are tax deductible. Donors use these funds to make grants to nonprofits. The Foundation manages the money in the charitable accounts, offers local knowledge about issues and nonprofits, and manages all the necessary paperwork.

**2** We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$100 to \$10,000.

**3** We offer strategic consulting services to nonprofits.

### KEY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROJECTS

#### JUST TREATMENT OF THE MENTALLY ILL :

The Foundation is partnering with Mayor Kip Holden, EBR council members, EBR District Attorney Hillar Moore, EBR Sheriff Sid Gautreaux, Baton Rouge Police Chief Carl Dabadie Jr. and behavioral health specialists to design a center for treating people with mental illnesses and substance abuse problems. Because of mental illnesses, people in crisis sometimes commit minor, nonviolent crimes and are incarcerated. The center will offer a less expensive and humane alternative.

#### BATON ROUGE HEALTH DISTRICT

**(BRHEALTHDISTRICT.ORG) :** The Foundation hired consultants to engage local health care leaders and the community to deliver a master plan for creating a Health District, including a four-year LSU medical school and a Diabetes and Obesity Center. The plan offers a design and destination for health care in Baton Rouge, with recommendations to improve the flow of cars and people in an area that is set to have more health care services.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

### MISSION :

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation unites human and financial resources to enhance the quality of life in South Louisiana.

To achieve our mission, we:

- serve our donors to build the assets that drive initiatives and solutions;
- engage community leaders to develop appropriate responses to emerging opportunities and challenges;
- partner with entities from our service area, as well as with other community foundations, in order to leverage our collective resources and create the capacity to be a stimulus of positive regional change; and,
- evaluate our work and share the results with our stakeholders.





Onyx Residences

## PROGRESS FROM CPRT

The first two buildings on the Water Campus are on schedule to be delivered this year. Commercial Properties Realty Trust, the real estate management firm for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, will turn over a headquarters this summer to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, which is responsible for implementing the state’s coastal plan. And LSU will open the Center for River Studies next door soon after.

Situated off Nicholson Drive, the two buildings are a few hundred yards from the Mississippi River Bridge.

High river levels have delayed a headquarters for the Water Institute of the Gulf on the old city dock. It should begin construction in coming months. On the Water Campus, CPRT will, before the year is over, begin a parking garage with attached river-view apartments and an office building for engineering firms.

CPRT is assembling the 35-acre campus for scientists, researchers, engineers and others who are offering solutions to vanishing wetlands and rising seas. The campus will be 1.2 million square feet when finished in a decade or so.

Onyx Residences, another CPRT project, will be ready for renters this summer. The apartments fulfill a promise by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to build a mix of uses on the Arts Block. The Shaw Center for the Arts anchors the block, which is bounded by Third, Convention and Lafayette streets and North Boulevard. Onyx will have 28 residences and three retail spaces. Iberia Bank will be one of the tenants.

The late Wilbur Marvin bequeathed his real estate holdings to the Foundation, and CPRT has repositioned and expanded the portfolio, working often on projects in challenged neighborhoods where other developers generally do not risk their capital.

## DAVIES WINS KANTROW AWARD

Friends and family of Marcia Kaplan Kantrow chose John G. Davies of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation as the first winner of their Marcia Kaplan Kantrow Baton Rouge Visionary Award.

Davies, who is Foundation CEO and president, accepted the award from the Kantrow family at the Foundation's annual meeting of members in March. Miriam Kantrow del Rio, Byron Kantrow and Josh Kantrow presented the award.

Marcia Kantrow was highly effective in her job, but she worked quietly and behind the scenes. However, that quiet demeanor always gave way to great passion and zeal when she talked about her city. She worked alongside Davies at the beginning of the most productive period for the Foundation.

After she died too soon, her family and friends honored her by opening an endowed fund at the Foundation in 1997. According to their wishes, the fund will support the Visionary Award. And in her spirit of caring for others more than herself, annual winners will receive \$5,000 to grant to a nonprofit of their choice.

## VICTORY FOR LSU!

The LSU Property Foundation picked RISE Real Estate to build a gateway project on 28 acres on Nicholson Drive. Construction is expected to begin later this year with occupancy in 2018. The design includes 1,260 apartment-style bedrooms and 410 suite-style bedrooms with associated residential support spaces, such as lounges, study areas, community gathering places and restaurants. Up to 50,000 square feet of new retail space will be included to serve residents, the LSU community and visitors. The gateway project would anchor one end of a proposed tram line, downtown the other. The site is between West Chimes and Skip Bertman Drive.

## FOUNDATION'S ASSETS RISE

On the strength of the real estate portfolio, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's assets climbed to \$574 million at year-end 2015 from \$550 million a year earlier. The Foundation reported financial results and elected directors and officers at its annual meeting of members in March at the Manship Theatre.

Contributions from fund donors to their charitable funds, which are managed by the Foundation, were

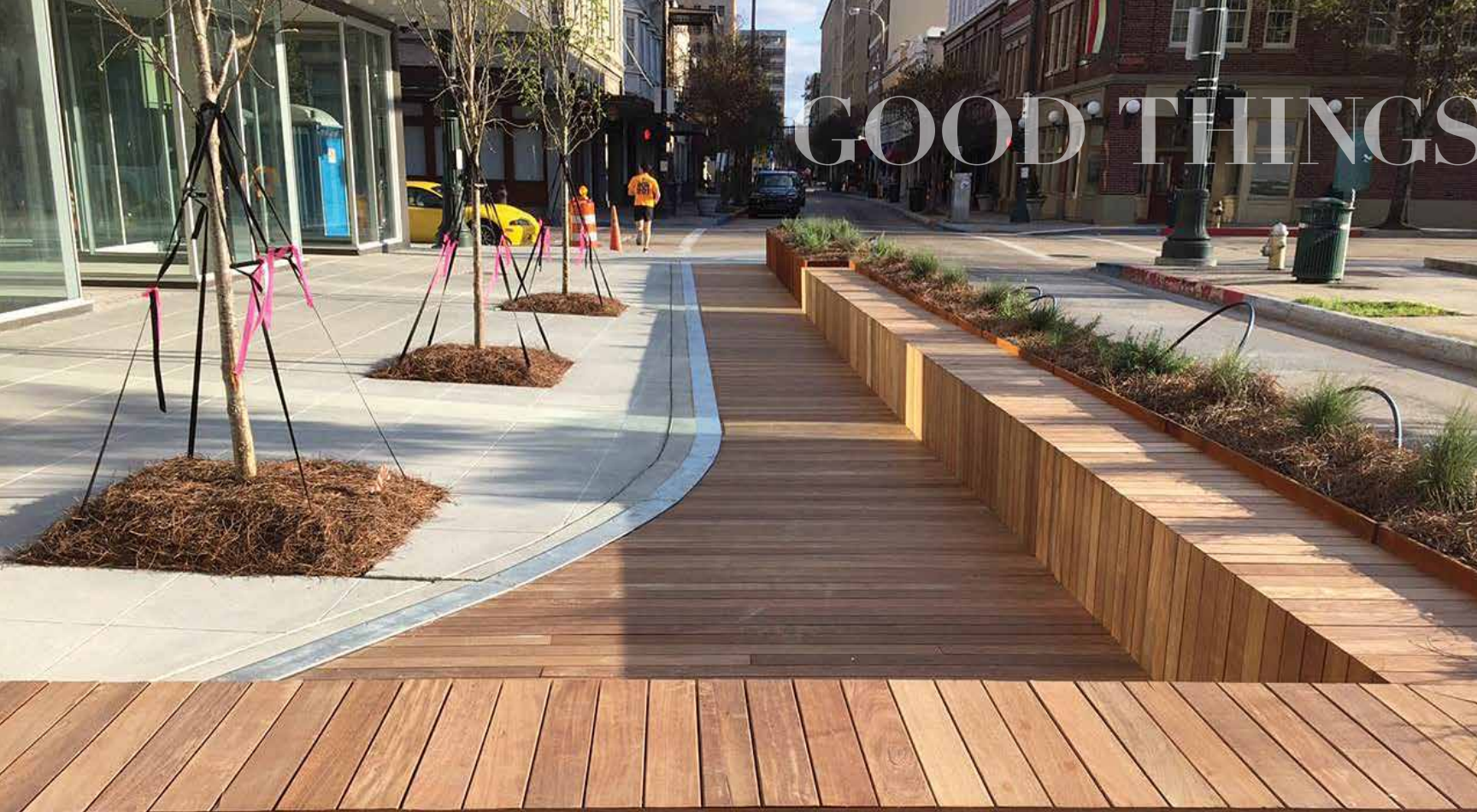
**\$574 MILLION**  
in assets, 2015

\$34 million in 2015; and donors and the Foundation together granted \$26 million to nonprofits last year.

The Foundation's membership, numbering about 700, elected new directors and the board elected its officers. Chosen by members for their first three-year terms to the board were Dr. B. Eugene Berry and Francis Jumonville Jr. Elected to second terms were Rose J. Hudson, Mary Terrell Joseph and John Noland Jr. Chosen by the board to officer positions are S. Dennis Blunt, chair; William E. Balhoff, vice chair; Annette D. Barton, secretary; Jumonville, treasurer; and Joseph, at-large.







Developers of the Commerce Building converted two parking spots imbedded in a curb to an outdoor sitting area. Magpie Café will have its outdoor seating there. The DDD is building a parklet in front of its offices (lower left).

## SHOW AND TELL

Two pop-up demonstrations by the Center for Planning Excellence have begun to transform the city. The state agreed to convert Government Street from four to three lanes with a turning lane and bike paths after CPEX displayed how that would work in a showcase that included temporary parks, cafes and art galleries. Reconfiguration of Government is expected to begin before this year is over. Downtown has a parklet on Third Street for Magpie Café and one soon in front of the Downtown Development District office on Florida Street.

If the streak continues for CPEX, the Perkins Road Overpass locale could be ready for a makeover. In late April, CPEX temporarily turned two blocks of Perkins Road into a more pedestrian-friendly destination with landscaping, parking, crosswalks, interactive artwork, and a BREC pop-up park.







**RDA SEEKS DEVELOPERS** Wanting to spin up a revival in Mid City, the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority is seeking developers to reinvent the former Entergy buildings and surrounding six acres on Government Street. In late March, the RDA formally asked developers to offer innovative ideas for returning the buildings to commerce.

It did so through a Request for Expressions of Interest for the site at 1509 Government St. Written for the RDA by Fregonese Associates, which also created FuturEBR, the parish's comprehensive growth plan, the REFI asks developers, business owners and others for conceptual plans. No detailed proposals are requested, but the RDA is accepting them.

A panel of up to seven will recommend the best offers to the RDA. Among other things, members will review whether the application has a compelling vision for the property, including walkability and an economic kickstart for nearby neighborhoods. Plus, the RDA is seeking a plan that provides it with resources to sustain the agency.

The RDA's request calls for housing blended with offices, retail and restaurant space. The Metro Council has already rezoned the property to allow for many uses.

"The redevelopment of this property has the potential to serve as a gateway linking to downtown, which is experiencing a renaissance of new investment, and Mid City, which is emerging as an economically vital commercial district focused on Government Street," says John Fregonese of Fregonese Associates.

In part, the RDA was created to spark projects that private developers avoid. The agency primes the pump to draw private capital to areas that have seen disinvestment. It was created with the assistance and financial support of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

Pockets of Mid City on Government Street farther away from downtown are returning to life. Buildings have been repaired, restaurants opened, offices rehabbed, and a developer is building a mixed-use project on an entire block of Government near South Foster Drive. The state is investing \$12 million to transform all of Government Street from four to three lanes flanked by bike lanes and sidewalks, a project that is likely to begin before the year ends.

The RDA wants to spread development to other parts of Government, and it has set the Entergy property near downtown on a fast schedule. Developers were submitting proposals by April 28, soon after this magazine went to press. The agency's board is set to choose a team or teams June 16. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2017.

A predecessor to Entergy operated the city's first power plant at the Government and South 15th Street site until 1940, then Entergy stored equipment there until 2011. The city's trolley service operated from the buildings, and the train station was next door.

Entergy donated the site to the RDA in 2014. The 6.1 acres on the north side of Government feature two prominent brick buildings, both of which are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Pioneering businesses have shown there is plenty of demand for housing, offices and restaurants just a few blocks away in downtown, and I'm certain that level of redevelopment will be repeated in Mid City," says John B. Noland, RDA board chair. "One of the best outcomes the RDA foresees is life returning to inner-city neighborhoods, where the infrastructure is paid for and where the residents are ready to reclaim the neighborhoods as their own."



## CAREER HIGH SCHOOL

Schoolchildren can be like pegs and squares. They sometimes don't fit what the school system is teaching them. Giving them options makes sense. And that's what the East Baton Rouge Parish School Board has done. In the 2017 school year, high schoolers can opt to learn at a career academy. Upon graduation, their skills will translate into in-demand jobs right away. The students also have an option to continue on to higher education.

The school should begin construction later this year now that the school board has approved a search for an architect.

The \$17 million career academy will offer another advantage: a location next to Baton Rouge Community College's automotive training center and a future allied health training center. The three training centers can work together and students can move easily among the campuses.

All will be anchoring Ardenale, a 200-acre development surrounding North Ardenwood and North Lobdell. The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority is developing Ardenale in an area that needs an economic boost. Eventually, Ardenale will have parks, houses, retail and offices.



## JOHN W. MCKAY, JR. AUTOMOTIVE TRAINING CENTER

The automotive training center at Ardenale has been renamed The John W. McKay, Jr. Automotive Training Center at Baton Rouge Community College in honor of John W. McKay Jr., father of Matt McKay, who was the driving force behind creation of the education institution. Matt McKay was chair of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation when the Foundation and the RDA together started developing Ardenale. The RDA is the sole developer now.



It's appropriate that an education center be named after John McKay. He was a teacher, coach and principal in the East Baton Rouge School system for 30 years. He was also executive director of the Catholic Youth Organization of Baton Rouge in the 1960s and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War who was awarded a Purple Heart for his service.

The auto center opens in fall with 150 students. It will offer Louisiana residents the best training possible. They can remain in Baton Rouge instead of traveling to Texas for training.



## HEALTH DISTRICT HIRES FIRST DIRECTOR

The Baton Rouge Health District hired Suzy Sonnier as its first executive director. She will lead the implementation of a strategic plan for the Health District that was underwritten by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

The plan recommends connecting streets and building new ones to improve traffic flow in the

Essen Lane, Perkins Road and Bluebonnet Boulevard area, where health care assets are clustered and more are under construction. Mayor Kip Holden has already pledged \$17 million to build one of the recommended connectors, an extension of Dijon Drive to link a new Our Lake of the Lake Children’s Hospital, which broke ground this year.

Also recommended in the plan is a Diabetes and Obesity Center, a priority for Sonnier. She’s talking to Pennington Biomedical Research Center about locating the center on its campus. The center could provide health care services in one location and offer new tools and nutrition advice to people with diabetes.

Sonnier was secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, where she managed Louisiana’s child welfare, child support enforcement, disability determination services and temporary assistance to needy families. Prior to that, she worked as the chief operations officer at the Louisiana Workforce

Commission. She has a masters of public administration from LSU and a bachelor of arts in communication from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. Health District members selected her after a regional search.

Sonnier will report to a joint operating board made up of leaders from member organizations. She will collaborate with hospital administrators, government agencies, community leaders and

*Sonnier will report to a joint operating board made up of leaders from member organizations. She will collaborate with hospital administrators, government agencies, community leaders and medical staff to implement the master plan.*

medical staff to implement the master plan.

An implementation team for FuturEBR asked the Foundation to lead and pay for the master plan. The Foundation hired Perkins+Will to write the plan with ideas and feedback from health care leaders, elected officials and residents. Upon completing the plan, the Foundation turned it over to the city-parish government.





## CONSULTANTS RECOMMEND TREATMENT CENTER FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

A health consulting firm engaged by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation has offered a plan to create a treatment center for East Baton Rouge residents suffering from mental illness and substance abuse problems.

Health Management Associates recommends a new nonprofit be formed to establish and run the center, tailoring treatment to residents afflicted with behavioral health disorders.

By intervening early and appropriately with treatment, the center will save the city-parish money compared to the costs of two alternatives: the emergency room or prison.

The Foundation began collaborating on this project two years ago, responding to concerns voiced by family members, public safety officials and behavioral health experts. They said prison was no place for people with mental illness.

The project began with research into other cities that had experimented with diverting the mentally ill to therapies instead of jails, which have become the nation's de facto asylums since the mass closure of public psychiatric hospitals.

*The Foundation began collaborating on this project two years ago, responding to concerns voiced by family members, public safety officials and behavioral health experts. They said prison was no place for people with mental illness.*

Research results were promising. In cities where diversion centers operated, overall costs to taxpayers were lower. Bexar County, where San Antonio is located, saves nearly \$11 million per year by diverting and treating more than 25,000 people at its Restoration Center. HMA used the San Antonio model to develop the center proposed for East Baton Rouge.

HMA estimates operating a center in EBR—at \$5.7 million per year—would reduce ER visits, lower prison medical costs and allow more efficient use of law enforcement time. Some parish funding mechanisms could be changed to capture the related savings for operat-



ing the center.

Diversion treatment centers must rely on multiple revenue streams, HMA says, including public funding, grants and philanthropic support. The report suggests that one potential source of funding could be Medicaid, which is being expanded by Gov. John Bel Edwards to cover people who are employed but don't make enough to pay for health care insurance.

The center's startup costs, HMA says, may be sharply reduced because the Foundation and local leaders have identified an existing location to house the facility. The Baton Rouge Detox Center on South Foster has ample space for the center. Already designed for clinical services, it only requires retrofitting the interior instead of new construction, which was previously estimated to cost nearly \$20 million.

Prior to the release of the HMA report, M. Ray Perryman, an economist hired by the Foundation, estimated that East Baton Rouge would directly save \$3 million in the first year, \$8.1 million per year at maturity and \$54.9 in direct costs over 10 years by implementing diversion programs modeled after the San Antonio Restoration Center. Moreover, Perryman wrote that successful models in other parts of the U.S. demonstrate significant indirect savings, too, through higher productivity among the mentally ill and reduced homelessness. He calculates such indirect savings generated by the center would total \$288.7 million in the first decade.

# For Puck & his friends

*Nonprofit raised \$10 million for new animal shelter, seeks \$2 million more*

Five years ago, Companion Animal Alliance of Baton Rouge began to manage the parish's animal shelter. It was a rough beginning for the new nonprofit. The shelter was in worse condition than imagined.

But last month, a new story was being written for CAA.

Emerging from a quiet phase of fundraising, CAA announced it had raised \$10 million for an animal shelter to replace the one that is nearly four decades old. Donors gave to an organization that was ready to save even more animals and find families to adopt them.

CAA also announced it needed \$2 million more to begin construction of the shelter as planned. It launched a public campaign to raise the money with a goal of starting construction later this year. A dog named Puck deserves more than a mention here. He's the face of the campaign.

Tethered to a house, Puck chewed through a chain and roamed the streets. East Baton Rouge Animal Control picked him up and delivered him to CAA. Waiting for adoption at the shelter, he'd often find his way out of his leash—probably because he had a job to do. Puck was a dog with a mission.

At the shelter, he'd seek out new arrivals, comfort the ones who were scared, and show them that it was okay to be there.

Puck was fostered by Morgan Comeaux—a super volunteer at the time, and now a CAA employee. She'd fostered other dogs before, but there was something special about Puck. And, just like that, his search for a home was over. Morgan adopted him.

Of course, Puck didn't quit his job. He still helps take care of wayward dogs, showing them the ropes when Morgan brings home other dogs to foster. Together, they have placed more than 35 dogs in permanent homes.

The new shelter will be a more humane place for dogs like Puck. Cats, too.

The existing shelter is near the airport. CAA's new shelter will be near LSU's School of Veterinary Medicine.

Modeled after the best in the country, it will be:

- Less expensive to operate. An efficient design requires less maintenance and staffing.
- Closer to where people live. A better location means more adoptions, less time in the shelter for animals, and more volunteers—especially among LSU students who live only minutes away.
- More humane. Fewer dogs and cats will get sick because the shelter is designed to contain diseases. Dogs will have more room to run outdoors, and cats will stay in calmer places away from barking dogs.
- A location for training students who are attending LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, which will be nearby. Students can diagnose and treat diseases that they don't see often, and try the latest surgical techniques.
- A place for evacuating pets after hurricanes and other disasters.

Families will get happier, healthier pets to adopt.

Since taking over the old shelter five years ago, CAA has boosted the number of animals saved and adopted from 20% to more than 70%. With a new shelter, even more lost or homeless dogs and cats can be placed in happy homes.

—Mukul Verma





  
PUCK



Companion Animal Alliance needs \$2 million to build the new animal shelter as planned. You can reach CAA's donation platform through [CAABR.org](http://CAABR.org). CAA has raised \$10 million for the shelter.

# IMPOSSIBLE?

Not for our members. They know only one direction.

# FORWARD

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation had its most productive year yet, thanks to backing from our members. We completed a master plan for the Baton Rouge Lakes and another for a Health District in the city. The Water Campus is taking shape. So is the Ardendale development. We made a persuasive case for building a mental health treatment center and began a blueprint for better services for people with autism.

## **Join the movement.**

Become a member of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

225.387.6126 or [BRAAF.org](http://BRAAF.org)

Memberships start at \$100.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

100 North Street, Suite 900 | Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802 | [braf.org](http://braf.org)



# GRANTS

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation's fund donors make thousands of grants from their charitable accounts. Grants for the first quarter of 2016 are listed below. They total \$4.4 million. If you wish to learn more about opening a charitable fund at the Foundation, please call Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126. You can open a charitable fund for a minimum of \$10,000. The Foundation will manage the fund and make grants on your behalf. Contributions to charitable funds are tax deductible.

Academic Distinction Fund \$50,683  
Alabama Kidney Foundation \$500  
Alcorn State University \$500  
ALS Association Louisiana-Mississippi Chapter \$5,000  
Alzheimer's Association \$500  
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$11,000  
American Heart Association Greater Southeast Affiliate \$2,000  
American National Red Cross \$10,000  
Ann Martin Center \$1,530  
Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub Inc. \$5,000  
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$5,500  
Arts Council of Pointe Coupee \$500  
Atlantic Theater Company \$25,000  
Auckland Communities Foundation \$10,000  
Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Inc. \$2,500  
Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation / The Dunham School \$2,271  
Baton Rouge Crime Stoppers Inc. \$2,300  
Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center \$5,404  
Baton Rouge Epicurean Society \$2,500  
Baton Rouge First Church of the Nazarene \$350  
Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet School \$500  
Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$112  
Baton Rouge Kappa Leadership and Services Foundation Inc. \$2,500  
Baton Rouge Opera Guild Inc. \$4,390  
Baton Rouge Progressive Network \$1,000  
Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation Inc. \$12,152  
Baton Rouge Women's Rugby Football Club \$700  
Baton Rouge Youth Coalition \$43,700  
Beth Shalom Synagogue \$650  
Bevill State Community College \$1,500  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Siouland \$5,000  
Big Buddy Program \$5,000  
Boy Scouts of America Istrouma Area Council \$3,500  
Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge \$10,000

BREADA (Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance) \$2,000  
BREC Foundation \$2,500  
Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$46,000  
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$307  
Capital Area Human Services District \$5,000  
Capital Area United Way \$25,000  
Cat Haven Inc. \$7,960  
Catholic High School Foundation \$1,195  
Cenikor Foundation \$13,000  
Center for Orangutan and Chimpanzee Conservation Inc. \$500  
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$111,000  
Centre for the Arts \$1,000

## HOW WE ISSUE GRANTS

**Philanthropists establish charitable funds at the Foundation and deposit money in those accounts. The Foundation manages the money in these donor-advised funds. Donors recommend grants to nonprofits; the Foundation board reviews and approves the grants. Our staff manages all the paperwork, including issuing checks and sending acknowledgement letters. Contributions to donor advised funds are tax-deductible.**

Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./ McMains Children's Development Center \$1,000  
Chapel on the Campus \$350  
Children's Cup \$800  
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$168  
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$11,238  
Christian Medical and Dental Association \$301  
City Year Baton Rouge \$68,200  
CLIMB Community Development Corporation \$200,000  
Closer Walk Ministries Inc. \$1,000  
Community Center of Pointe Coupee \$500  
Community Fund for the Arts \$7,500  
Companion Animal Alliance \$86,601  
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$9,447  
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge Foundation \$3,600  
Corporation for Civic Documentaries \$5,000  
Court 13 Arts \$30,000  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation - Baton Rouge \$1,500  
David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies \$25,000

Deborah Sophia Carneiro Ribeiro \$1,500  
Delta State University \$1,000  
Department of Public Safety and Corrections Public Safety Services \$2,000  
Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. \$2,500  
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$13,713  
Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$6,000  
Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge \$605  
East Mississippi Community College \$1,000  
EBRP - Downtown Development District \$5,000  
Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$15,000  
Ernest J. Gaines Literature Award \$5,000  
Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,500  
Family Services of Greater New Orleans \$500  
First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$12,000  
First United Methodist Church \$7,550  
First West Thrift Store \$10,000  
Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana Inc. \$10,000  
Forum 35 \$5,000  
Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$8,530  
Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting \$20,000  
Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. \$10,410  
Foundation for Womans \$13,109  
Friends of City Park \$10,000  
Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$500  
Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$16,000  
Friends of Magnolia Mound \$1,000  
General Health Foundation \$2,000  
Girls on the Run of Greater Baton Rouge \$700  
God's Light Shining Ministries Inc. \$20,000  
Good Work Network \$10,000  
Grace Baptist Church \$700  
Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$51,494  
Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$2,500  
Greater Baton Rouge Hope Academy \$1,000  
Harmony Church of Bartlett \$35,000  
Hogs for the Cause \$2,500  
Holy Family Catholic Church \$11,524  
Hope House Inc. \$36,480  
HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$5,000  
Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,500  
Houston Community College \$1,000  
Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$5,728  
Institute of Southern Jewish Life Inc. \$2,500  
International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$566  
International Rescue Committee \$1,000  
International Society for Krishna Consciousness of New Orleans \$3,753  
Isidore Cohn Jr.-James D. Rives Surgical Society \$10,000  
Johns Hopkins University \$1,000  
Jones County Junior College \$1,500  
Jubilee Community Inc. \$1,000  
Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge and Acadiana \$3,449  
Junior League of Baton Rouge Inc. \$100

King of Kings Ministries Inc. \$15,000  
Knock Knock Children's Museum \$95,000  
Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$500  
Lake Harriet United Methodist Church \$24,000  
LANO (Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations) \$4,000  
LCTCS Foundation \$129,041  
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society \$700  
Live Oak Wilderness Camp \$5,000  
Living Word Church of Muskegon \$600  
Livingston Parish Public Schools \$700  
Louisiana 4-H Foundation \$225  
Louisiana Adoption Advisory Board Inc. \$2,500  
Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$112,157  
Louisiana Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross \$1,307  
Louisiana Children's Museum \$5,000  
Louisiana College \$750  
Louisiana Culinary Institute \$1,000  
Louisiana Key Academy \$1,000  
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra \$5,000  
Louisiana Public Health Institute \$121,028  
Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$2,000  
Louisiana State University and A&M College \$52,450  
Louisiana Symphony Association/Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra \$42,610  
Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation \$100  
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation \$25,000  
LSU Foundation \$27,510  
LSU Foundation - Department of Kinesiology \$350  
LSU Foundation - Department of Libraries \$1,000  
LSU Foundation - E.J. Ourso College of Business \$10,089  
LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$37,500  
LSU Foundation - LSU Press \$13,900  
LSU Health Sciences Center Foundation \$17,000  
Maison des Ami of Louisiana Inc. \$2,500  
Map 10 40 \$500  
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$95,229  
Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$12,073  
May Gallery Inc. \$10,000  
Metanoia Inc. \$10,000  
MetroMorphosis \$65,000  
Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans Inc. \$5,000  
Mississippi State University \$3,500  
Mohorn Missionary Baptist Church \$1,100  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society \$2,400  
Nature Conservancy of Louisiana \$113,110  
New Ark Baptist Church \$700  
New Orleans Ballet Association \$25,000  
New Orleans Mission Inc. \$15,000  
New Schools for Baton Rouge \$215,000  
Nicholls State University \$2,000  
Oakland Public Education Fund \$460  
O'Brien House Inc. \$250  
Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$351



Orange Coast Foursquare Church \$7,500  
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$35,429  
 Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital \$200  
 Our Lady of the Lake College \$6,800  
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$15,000  
 Pastoral Center \$24,800  
 Pearl River Community College \$1,500  
 Pelican Institute for Public Policy \$25,000  
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$30,500  
 Piedmont Orthopedic Foundation \$1,000  
 Planned Parenthood Federation of America \$250  
 Plymouth County 4-H and Agricultural Society \$5,000  
 Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition Inc. \$72,500  
 Pointe Coupee Parish School Board \$1,750  
 President & Fellows of Harvard College \$1,000  
 Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana Inc. \$3,000  
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge \$1,250  
 Red Shoes Inc. \$15,000  
 Regents of the University of Minnesota \$2,000  
 Rhymes Memorial Library Foundation Inc. \$250  
 Rocketkidz Foundation \$3,000  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$106,101  
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$1,300  
 Rotary Foundation of Rotary International \$300  
 Saint Jean Vianney Catholic Church \$2,366  
 Saint Joseph's Abbey \$100,000  
 Saint Joseph's University \$6,000  
 Sight Savers America \$13,000  
 Single Stop USA Inc. \$62,500  
 South Africa Development Fund Inc. \$10,000  
 Southeastern Louisiana University \$3,500  
 Southern University and A&M College \$2,500  
 Southern University System Foundation Inc. \$3,000  
 Southwest Louisiana Alliance Foundation \$5,000  
 St. Aloysius School \$250  
 St. Augustine Church \$883  
 St. Elizabeth Foundation \$59,227  
 St. Francis Chapel \$500  
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church \$7,000  
 St. Gabriel Health Clinic Inc. \$20,000  
 St. George Catholic Church \$10,000  
 St. Gerard Majella Church \$10,500  
 St. Helena Catholic Church \$1,200  
 St. James Episcopal Church \$1,000  
 St. James Episcopal Day School \$8,500  
 St. John Interparochial School \$998  
 St. Joseph Cathedral \$30,155  
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$5,706  
 St. Joseph's Academy \$600  
 St. Joseph's Academy Foundation \$300  
 St. Joseph's Catholic Church \$500  
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. \$4,000  
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$151,061  
 St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church \$1,500  
 St. Philip Parish \$3,475  
 St. Philomena Catholic Church \$350  
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church \$10,000  
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$13,606  
 Teach for America - South Louisiana \$72,850  
 Texas A&M University \$1,500  
 The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund / Tulane University Law School \$2,600  
 The Ascension Fund \$11,770  
 The Edina Community Foundation \$2,000  
 The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$3,500  
 The Idea Village \$10,000  
 The Louisiana International Film Festival \$15,000  
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$802  
 The Salvation Army \$10,000  
 The Salvation Army Lake Charles \$10,000  
 The Suffolk Community Foundation \$2,500  
 The Tanzania Wildlife Fund Inc. \$5,000  
 The University of Mississippi \$1,000  
 The Walls Project \$3,500  
 THRIVE Baton Rouge \$5,000  
 Trinity Episcopal Church \$20,000  
 Troy University \$500  
 Tulane Law School / Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy \$50,000  
 United Methodist Foundation of Louisiana \$5,000  
 United Southern Express Track Club \$700  
 Unity Church of Christianity Baton Rouge \$500  
 University of Alabama at Birmingham \$1,000  
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$3,500  
 University of Louisiana at Monroe \$1,500  
 University of North Carolina at Wilmington \$2,000  
 University of South Alabama \$145,246  
 University of Southern Mississippi \$1,000  
 University of Virginia Alumni Association \$10,000  
 University Presbyterian Church \$72,000  
 UpStage Inc. \$2,500  
 US Biennial Inc. \$25,000  
 Vision 21 Foundation \$1,000  
 Washington & Lee University \$100  
 Water Institute of the Gulf's Delta \$311,250  
 West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,003  
 Westdale Heights Academic Magnet School \$250  
 Western Michigan University \$5,000  
 William Carey University \$1,000  
 Xavier University \$1,000  
 Yellowstone Academy \$1,000  
 YMCA of the Capital Area \$6,000  
 Young Aspirations/Young Artists Inc. \$15,000  
 Young Life New Orleans \$5,000  
 Youth Oasis \$10,000

NONPROFIT





# 2016 John W. Barton Awards

*Winners answer a  
few questions*

By Mukul Verma | Photos by Tim Mueller

Three nonprofit leaders have won the 2016 John W. Barton Sr. Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award, which is given each year by Baton Rouge Area Foundation. The award is named for the late Mr. Barton, who led a group that created the Foundation in 1964.

The Foundation honored Barton winners at its annual meeting of members at the Manship Theatre in March. Each winner received \$10,000 with firm directions: the winners must spend the money on themselves.

Donors with charitable funds at the Foundation nominate nonprofit executives for the recognition; former Foundation chairs choose up to three winners each year. The award is in its 15th year.

## David Aguiard

*Executive director of Catholic Charities  
of Baton Rouge*

Appointed in 2008. He was president and CEO of Lake Physicians Health Organization before that. He created a process that led to a threefold increase in grants and donations to the agency. He has overseen the restructuring of the organization to respond more quickly to the needs of the diocese.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?

Listening to stories my grandfather—a farmer in Pointe

Coupee Parish—told us in his Cajun accent and acted out by his imaginative gesticulations. They were stories of what he called “the olden days,” of a simpler, rustic life. In my mind, I heard the “The Golden Days.”

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?

Anything that ends with apple pie!

### EXCLUDING BATON ROUGE, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CITY AND WHY?

Portland. It’s got everything. Great city life, and for a guy who loves the outdoors—especially the mountains—it’s got everything nearby: ocean, glaciers, mountain peaks, the Eden-like magic of the Olympic Peninsula and its temperate rain forest.

### SOLVING WHICH PROBLEM WOULD PROVIDE THE GREATEST RETURN FOR OUR REGION?

The inequality of opportunity between North and South

Baton Rouge. We would all share a better future if all our children had access to good schools and safe neighborhoods.

**WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO IN FICTION?**

Sarah Woodruff, heroine of the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

**WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?**

A vibrant mass transit system. I grew up in New Orleans, and because of the bus system there, I could go to school in the morning, football practice in the afternoon, my job in the evening, and be home in time to study. I was enriched by everything the city had to offer—the museums, the symphony, concerts at the Auditorium, festivals, the French Quarter.

**WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?**

My dad. With the help of community and the unearned grace of loving parents, he overcame poverty, illness and other obstacles to build a successful business in New Orleans and throughout Florida, and provided a stable, loving home not only for his five children, but my mom's younger siblings. Because of him, we have an amazingly close and supportive family.

**WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?**

Letters my mom sent weekly when I went away to college in St. Louis.

**IF YOU COULD CHOOSE WHAT TO COME BACK AS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

A Kodiak brown bear.

**IF YOU HAD \$1 BILLION, HOW WOULD YOU SPEND IT TO IMPROVE THE REGION?**

To improve mass transit.

**HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE \$10,000 BARTON AWARD GIFT?**

Not "will spend," but have spent: To help pay my three children's college costs.

# Teri James Casso

*Director of the St. Elizabeth Foundation*

She began as Executive Director of St. Elizabeth Foundation in 2010 and currently serves her community on the Ascension Parish Council. During her tenure, adoptions have increased from a low of 8 a year to a high of 35 in 2014. She initiated an outreach program to hospitals, schools, pregnancy resource centers and with professionals who encounter women struggling to determine what is in the best interest of their child.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?**

Dancing on my daddy's shoes.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?**

One cooked at our family camp over an open fire. My favorite is jambalaya and white beans with a side of fried catfish.

**EXCLUDING BATON ROUGE, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CITY AND WHY?**

New York City because there is so much to do!

**SOLVING WHICH PROBLEM WOULD PROVIDE THE GREATEST RETURN FOR OUR REGION?**

Transportation.

**WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OF FICTION?**

Batman. My love for Batman goes back to the TV version. His lifestyle was glamorous. He and Robin were so obviously the good guys! Today's version is too dark for me to love. The Batman of old will always be my hero.

**WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?**

Walkability and modern mass transit.

**WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?**

Bill Gates, because he has used his fortune to benefit mankind and has inspired others of great wealth to join with him to address major issues that affect our world.





Teri Casso, center, with the Blanchard family



#### **WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?**

Of course, my family, and my daddy's pocket knife, which was my grandfather's knife too. And my mother's unconditional love.

#### **IF YOU COULD CHOOSE WHAT TO COME BACK AS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

A less anxious, more articulate and detail-oriented leader.

#### **IF YOU HAD \$1 BILLION, HOW WOULD YOU SPEND IT TO IMPROVE THE REGION?**

I'd get as far as a billion would take me toward a mono-rail system from West Baton Rouge, Ascension and Livingston parishes to Baton Rouge.

#### **HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE \$10,000 BARTON AWARD GIFT?**

I'm going to be 60 this year, so I'll take a great birthday trip. I'm thinking of a cruise to Central America.

## **Janet Simmons**

*President and CEO of Hope Ministries*

**N**amed president and CEO in 2012. She joined the organization in 2004 as volunteer director and was promoted to director of programs in 2005 and director of operations in 2008. She created Understanding the Dynamics of Poverty, a revenue-generating program for the organization.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?**

Sailboating on Lake Nojiri in Nagano-ken, Japan. I grew up in Japan.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?**

Definitely sushi.

#### **EXCLUDING BATON ROUGE, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CITY AND WHY?**

Tokyo, Japan. I spent most of my formative years there and have many wonderful and fond memories there.

#### **SOLVING WHICH PROBLEM WOULD PROVIDE THE GREATEST RETURN FOR OUR REGION?**

This is such a complex issue because so many things affect each other, but I believe transportation and the high costs of automobile insurance cause more problems for our region than anything else. If people were able to get around the city more easily it would increase job retention, mobility and help to reduce our incredibly high rate of poverty.

#### **WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OF FICTION?**

Pi, from the life of Pi. He traversed and overcame so many challenges and barriers but learned from them and was better for it.

#### **WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?**

Tokyo Tower. Just kidding. A community in which people love each other, no matter what color their skin is or what socio-economic class they grew up in. No boundary lines of the haves and have nots, like Florida Boulevard.

#### **WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?**

My father. My dad's like a cat and has lived at least six of nine lives. He is 92 years old and has shown me how to love, forgive and be grateful in all circumstances. He exudes grace and mercy and shows others how to do that as well.

In his later years, he has listened to my challenges and has provided wise counsel. He gave me the best advice when I was selected as the new president and CEO of HOPE. He said, "Janet, surround yourself with people who are better than you and you will always be successful." His words show true to this day, as I have the best team of people working with me. They are not only employees of HOPE but are some of my closest and dearest friends.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?**

I don't really have a most treasured possession, and although my family is not my possession, while on Earth, I count them as mine and wouldn't trade them for anything.

My husband, four children, three grandchildren, sisters and brothers and their children and their children. We have a very close-knit family and, although we live all over the United States, we try to get together at least once a year with my father. I also have a close relationship with my mother-in-law and my husband's brother's family.





**IF YOU COULD CHOOSE WHAT TO COME BACK AS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

Just me.

**IF YOU HAD \$1 BILLION, HOW WOULD YOU SPEND IT TO IMPROVE THE REGION?**

Throw out all the outdated programs that don't work and implement programs that have proven, evidenced-based outcomes. I would implement HOPE's The Way to Work Sustainable Workforce SOLUTIONS in Louisiana through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, just as Michigan has done to reduce welfare program costs to the state.

The state of Michigan conducted a soft study that found that for every \$1 spent on its program—Welfare to Career—the state saved \$10 in welfare and tax credit expenditures.

HOPE has implemented the best practices here in Baton Rouge. Every year our program outcomes increase. At the end of 2015, HOPE's clients had an average of 22 months on the same job and 23 months in continuous employment, which is well over the national average.

Additionally, in 2016, we have seen our numbers rise dramatically. It's my belief that we have some of the best people working with our clients, helping them to reach goals that they've never reached before. In just one year we have increased the number of individuals in The Way to Work program by 200%. We expect this number to continue rising as we are able to hire more career coaches and workforce case managers and extend our training throughout the region.

I would also pay for the best company to digitize our curriculum, which we then would market nationally. This would allow our agency to have a sustainable revenue stream and reduce our need for funding from the local community.

**HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE \$10,000 BARTON AWARD GIFT?**

Specifically, I've reimbursed my husband and myself the money we spent on a St. Patrick's Day weekend and reunion with our friends and family. I'm giving a portion of it to my church and then the rest was spent on our trip to Japan in March.

My parents moved to Japan in 1951, right after the war. They were missionaries and lived in Japan for 35 years. I was born in Kyushu, Japan, and lived there for five years. We then moved to Nagoya, Japan, where I lived another five years. My last seven

*I see my husband's childhood home every time we are in New Orleans, Hattiesburg or Jackson. Now finally, he got to see mine.*

—Janet Simmons, President and CEO of Hope Ministries

years were in Tokyo, where I graduated from the American School in Japan in 1976. It had been 38 years since I went back.

My husband and I traveled to Japan and took all the kids and grandkids for a two-week trip. This is the first time in our married life we were able to do this. I see my husband's childhood home every time we are in New Orleans, Hattiesburg or Jackson. Now finally, he got to see mine. Thanks to the John W. Barton Nonprofit Leadership award our trips were that much sweeter. •





## FARMERS MARKET

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA - PROJECT OF BREADA

Over 50 regional farmers and food artisans selling farm fresh produce, pasture-raised meats, Louisiana seafood, fresh cut flowers and baked goods



## FRESH FEST 2016

- May 28 Butterfly Extravaganza
- June 4 Dairy Day
- June 11 Corn & Squash-tastic
- June 18 Blueberry Bash
- June 25 Tomato Me Crazy
- July 2 Star Spangled Saturday
- July 9 Just Peachy
- July 16 Melon Maina
- July 23 Cool as a Cucumber
- July 30 Everything Eggplant

Special Events  
Every Saturday

Local Chefs &  
Seasonal Cooking  
Demos

Summer Music

Red Stick Spouts  
Art & Garden  
Activities

**Saturdays 8am-Noon—Downtown Baton Rouge—5th and Main Streets**

Find recipes and market updates at [www.breada.org](http://www.breada.org).

Facebook.com/breada - Instagram: @redstickfarmersmarket  
market@breada.org - 225-267-5060

# SCHOLARSHIP





# Deborah Riberio

## *Sidney M. Blitzer Award in Violin Performance*

By John Wirt | Photo by Tim Mueller

Deborah Riberio is the 2016 winner of the Sidney M. Blitzer Award in Violin Performance. A native of Brazil, Riberio won the honor by earning the top violinist spot in the LSU School of Music's annual concerto competition.

The Blitzer Award in Violin Performance, a \$1,500 prize, is given in memory of Sidney M. Blitzer, a music lover and violinist. It is funded by the Helene Kantrow Blitzer and Sidney M. Blitzer Family Fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Attorney Sidney M. Blitzer Jr. oversees the fund.

"I like giving this award because of my father's interest in young violinists," Blitzer said. "He studied violin at the Curtis Institute of Music. He helped found the Baton Rouge Symphony and played in the orchestra during its earliest years."

For her LSU concerto competition performance, Riberio played 20th century British composer Malcolm Arnold's Concerto for Two Violins and String Orchestra, Op. 77.

"I am honored to have been chosen for this award among all the amazing violin students who did the competition," Riberio said. "I wasn't expecting it. I feel motivated to keep challenging myself to be always at my best performing shape. Financially, this award will be a big help in paying for school so I can finish my doctoral degree."

Riberio's hectic spring includes academic study for her doctor of musical arts degree at LSU, rehearsals with various ensembles, hours of daily violin practice and teaching at the Kids Orchestra project and Music Tree Prep School in Zachary.

On behalf of our donors, Baton Rouge Area Foundation manages scholarships. We make grants to high school graduates entering college and to college students. For more about our scholarships, visit [BRAAF.org](http://BRAAF.org).

Riberio grew up in João Pessoa, the capital of the northern Brazilian state of Paraíba. Her husband, percussionist Gustavo Miranda, is also from Paraíba and a doctor of musical arts candidate at LSU. Riberio, in addition to appearing with the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic, Acadiana Symphony and Louisiana Sinfonietta, performs with her husband in The Dynamic Duo.

Riberio began playing violin in João Pessoa at 5. She studied the Zuzuki violin method for children during a flowering of regional arts support in Brazil. Her aunt, Ana Elizabeth Cruz Ribeiro, a professional violinist and Zuzuki teacher, chose the violin to be her niece's instrument.

As best as Ribeiro remembers, playing the violin at 5 was fun, or least not traumatic.

"Lots of kids were playing the violin," she recalled. "We were a group. And, still, most of my friends from back home are the same people who started music with me. And most of them stayed doing music."

Like Ribeiro, many of her musical peers from João Pessoa are pursuing doctorate-level degrees in the United States and Europe.

"They're all over now," she said. "Some of them will return home, some of them will stay wherever they are. But I remember that we had a nice family, a nice group of people. That was one of the reasons playing music was fun, because your friends were doing the same thing you were doing."

Ribeiro comes from a family of classical music fans.

"I remember mornings there was always music, symphonies playing in the house," she said. "My whole family is passionate about music."

The violinist and her family moved to João Pessoa to participate in the booming arts scene there.

"It is a very musical place," she said of the city on Brazil's northern coast. "There was a time in that area of Brazil that the politicians who were in power were really focused on the arts. They invested a lot of money in the arts. So people from all over

the world, from Europe, the United States, they all went to João Pessoa. Even though it wasn't a big center like São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro.

"After the politicians kept changing, this support went away a little bit, but still there were people who stayed there. Lots of people started doing more classical music. They started orchestras and chamber groups. The university there is not in the best shape, but at some point it was in great shape. We benefitted from that."

By 6, Ribeiro was performing solos with a junior orchestra composed of children four to six years older than her.

"Because I was tiny and I could play, the conductor liked to

*"I always want to perform. But I also really like teaching, being in the academic world and researching and teaching young people, sharing what I know."*

—Deborah Riberio

include me in that program, even though I wasn't of the age yet," she said. "It wasn't solos like a concerto solos. It was arrangements of music for kids and small parts that I could play."

Ribeiro later joined the João Pessoa Youth Orchestra, another group of older children, but she didn't stay.

"At that time, I wasn't prepared psychologically to be dedicated to the orchestra," she recalled. "I was like, 'This is not fun. I want to have fun.' So I left. But then I came back at 15. I stayed with the group for a long time."

Ribeiro also became a founding member of the João Pessoa Chamber Orchestra. She performed as a soloist and became the ensemble's concert master.

Ribeiro's path to Louisiana opened in 2008 when violinist and Baton Rouge native James Alexander performed in João Pessoa with the Brazilian music-focused Alexander-Soares Duo.



He also gave a violin masterclass. When Alexander, director of the string program at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, offered Ribeiro a full scholarship at Nicholls, she accepted.

“I really liked James, his style of playing and his instructions,” she said. “There are some people who can play very well but they cannot teach you very well. James can do both. He is an amazing player and a great teacher. So I took the opportunity and came here.”

Despite being terribly homesick during her first few years in Louisiana, Ribeiro relished her undergraduate study at Nicholls.

“I love Thibodaux,” she said. “It’s not a big center but it’s pretty and clean. It’s calm. Very quiet. You have all the chances to perform for all the people, but you also have time to dedicate to your studies, without all the craziness of dealing with orchestras.”

At Nicholls, Ribeiro was named outstanding string major during her senior year.

“She’s a great person and a fine violinist at home with any repertoire,” Alexander said of his former student. “I was most impressed with her strong work ethic. No matter how talented you are, it doesn’t get you anywhere without consistent application. Deborah has that discipline. Her strong technical background and empathy will make her a great teacher at any level.”

Coincidentally, Brazil and Louisiana share the tradition of Carnival, the annual revelry known in Louisiana as Carnival and Mardi Gras.

“Carnival is big everywhere in Brazil, but in northern Brazil we don’t have the big samba schools like they do in Rio,” she said. “And our Carnival is not so much like Louisiana with the floats, but people still go to the streets and dance. And there are big cars with bands on top, and they’re singing and going down the street and everybody follows.”

Ribeiro discovered more similarity between Brazil and Louisiana in the brass bands that parade any time of year through New Orleans.

“The first time I saw that, I thought, ‘What’s going on? People in the street?’ It was a surprise that made me think of home, because Brazilians have big parties on the streets.”

Moving from Thibodaux to Baton Rouge to study for her master’s degree in music performance at LSU was a natural step.

“I already knew how things work around here, so it was easy to come to Baton Rouge,” she said.

Also, Ribeiro’s husband enrolled in LSU for his graduate study.

“There are more things going on here,” she said of Louisiana’s capital city. “The Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, lots of

churches to play. I had a good time at Nicholls, but it was time to branch out. In that aspect, coming here was perfect.”

Ribeiro aspires to five hours of violin practice a day. That’s the minimum time practicing to be a good musician, she said. The demands of her doctorate studies, teaching and rehearsals, however, don’t always allow it.

As for her musical taste, Ribeiro loves the Romantic era.

“It’s passionate music and there are beautiful melodic lines and really challenging, exciting parts in the music,” she said. “Tchaikovsky. Some people say that’s cheesy, but that’s what I like. But the truth is every period and every composer has their own specific quality.”

Of late, the violinist is especially enamored with J.S. Bach. During the spring semester, she prepared a recital featuring the Baroque master’s Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor, including its monumental, vastly difficult finale, “Chaconne.”

“So, for this moment, my favorite composer is Bach,” she said.

Ribeiro is not enamored with, for instance, the dazzling technical display seen and heard in the compositions of violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini.

“A lot of people who really like to go there, but it’s not that deep,” she said of Paganini’s early Romantic-era compositions. “It’s very easy to focus only on the challenge and not focus on the music. I like to focus on the music.”

As recently as a few years ago, Ribeiro aspired to be a touring soloist. Her emphasis has since shifted from performance to teaching and academia.

“That’s another mentality,” she said of the traveling virtuoso life. “You have to live and breathe your violin all the time. But now I’m focused on my academic work. And I did my share of touring already, moving from my country, leaving my family. That was a big challenge for me. So I don’t see myself traveling around and playing everywhere.”

Ribeiro and her husband hope to find academic positions in places where they can also be members of regional orchestras and ensembles.

“I always want to perform,” she said. “But I also really like teaching, being in the academic world and researching and teaching young people, sharing what I know.” •

An Amtrak employee signals the arrival of the train at the first stop – Bay St. Louis. The train stopped for 10 minutes in cities, including Biloxi, Miss., Mobile, Ala, Pensacola, Fla, and Tallahassee, Fla. It terminated in Jacksonville, Fla.

# *“Y’all aboard”*





# *Amtrak looks to restore Gulf Coast service*

By Mukul Verma | Photos by Tim Mueller



*From top:* New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu and Amtrak Board Member Thomas Carper talk before the inspection train departs New Orleans.

Sarah Feinberg, Federal Railroad Administration administrator, said rapid population growth along the Gulf Coast is among reasons passenger rail service is necessary.

Louisiana Department of Transportation Secretary Shawn Wilson voiced support for passenger rail. The Gulf Coast route and service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans are among Gov. John Bel Edwards' transportation priorities.

**I**t was the kind of ride you don't easily forget.

The special Amtrak train had coupled up the last of the company's double-decker observation cars. Nowadays, it's only for truly extraordinary occasions that the grand car ever leaves the yard to roll the rails again. And this ride last February certainly qualified.

Inside the unique passenger car was a delegation of political leaders and railway officials, gazing out the big windows onto a world seldom seen—a side of the New Orleans skyline and Superdome, invisible from the interstate, that few travelers glimpse; the limitless-looking stretch of Louisiana's coastal prairies; the soaring pine forests of Mississippi and Alabama.

Officially, this trip's purpose was to inspect the rails. But, really, it was about recalling something special that has been absent from the Gulf Coast for too long.

The journey began in New Orleans as soon as the elected officials had delivered their speeches and the big engine rolled forward from the platform. Something about trains brings people together: Republicans and Democrats alike had joined forces to stump for restoring passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast that would connect New Orleans to Orlando, two of the country's most visited tourist destinations, as well as points in between.

No passenger train had run these rails since Hurricane Katrina twisted up the tracks more than a decade ago. They'd been repaired to restore cargo routes, but passenger service had not returned. At the time, some grumbled that it was for the better; the train that ran before Katrina, the Sunset Limited, was rarely on time. They remembered its erratic schedule, caused by aggravating delays that piled up along the 1,500 miles it traveled from Los Angeles to New Orleans before continuing eastward to Florida.



Amtrak's dining cars offer hot meals on longer routes. On the inspection route, fresh fruit and sandwiches were on the menu.

But this trip in February reminded many of what they'd been missing, too, since then. Climbing the steep steps to board the inspection train, they crossed back to a form of travel whose unique comforts and delights are largely unknown to those who only move about by automobiles or airplanes. Wandering freely throughout the train from front to back, they passed between dining cars and sleepers, making their way to the special caboose, with its rearview seats and big, picture frame window that allowed passengers to look back on the places where their train had been. They sat at tables and enjoyed meals without being rushed. They roamed from car to car, visiting with friends and making new ones. They discovered that what's often said about passenger trains is true: it may take longer to get there, but the time is your own while you're aboard. Train travel is, indeed, civilized.

There were things to see when the train slowed and stopped too. All throughout the trip, the delegation was greeted by people who wanted the passenger service restored. Local high school bands played and cheerleaders cheered from the depot platforms along the way. Mayors and governors came out to the station to make a case for bringing back the train, and there was an air of old-time festivities wherever the train went.

Amtrak is looking over the numbers before committing to



A colorful dance troupe greeted the Amtrak train in Bay St. Louis, Miss.

restart the service but, already, a preliminary study by the train company for the Southern Rail Commission projects some intriguing figures. With the preferred service from New Orleans to Orlando, and a second daily service between New Orleans and Mobile, Ala., the train is predicted to seat 153,900 passengers per year at a cost of \$9.49 million, an amount that could be shared among governments along the route. The Southern Rail Commission and other groups are presently doing more research to submit to the federal government.

If restarted, the service is expected to be faster, more reliable, and on time. Riders could embark in New Orleans in the evening and arrive in Orlando the next morning. The service between Mobile and New Orleans would operate back-and-forth each day.

Heading up the Federal Railroad Administration, Sarah Feinberg states the need plainly, "Over the next 30 years, this country is going to change. The population of the Gulf Coast will grow by 10 million people. These additional people need to move safely and efficiently. It cannot happen without passenger rail." •





Above: A big crowd—some people watched from a parking garage—cheered for the train in Bixby. One stop later in Pascagoula, Miss. Gov. Phil Bryant pledged his support for the Gulf Coast service.

Below: The last car of the inspection train had rear-view, stadium-style seating to let people see where the train had been.









# Rooms of *their* own

*To solve homelessness, say Housing First  
advocates, first provide a home*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photo by Tim Mueller

It is an idea that is at once simple and revolutionary: what the homeless need first and foremost is a home. The problems that might have led to their on-the-streets existence – addiction, mental health or lack of job skills – can and should be addressed, but only after they have a permanent place to call home.

That “housing first” strategy, which was first introduced in 1992 by psychiatrist and social activist Dr. Sam Tsemberis, has begun to seriously impact the way communities approach homelessness. In December 2015, officials in Utah reported that the state’s Housing First approach to homelessness over the last decade has helped it reduce the homeless count by more than 90%.

In 2015, the Charlotte, N.C., homeless outreach organization, Urban Ministry Center, pledged to eradicate homelessness by the end of 2016 using the Housing First model. And throughout the country, including in Baton Rouge, Housing First principles are being applied to rapidly rehouse homeless veterans through a special federal program. One hundred thirty-nine homeless veterans who were identified in Baton Rouge were rehoused within 13 months.

Tsemberis is the founder and CEO of Pathways to Housing, a New York City-based nonprofit that has helped more than 150 organizations and public entities in the United States and around the world implement the Housing First strategy. He has

*“There were studies done that were showing that it was just so much cheaper in the long run if you had permanent housing.”*

—Randy Nichols

said that the idea of rehousing the homeless as the first order of business is bound with the notion that housing is a basic human right.

“We decided to try an intervention that the people who were homeless actually wanted,” Tsemberis said recently. “What the people actually wanted was a place to live.”

Over the course of his career addressing homelessness in Baton Rouge, Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless Executive Director Randy Nichols has seen the evolution of the Housing First strategy. As contrary and risky as it sounds, communities have slowly accepted the value of providing permanent housing to the homeless before they tackle other issues.

Nichols remembers when a flood of mentally ill individu-

als began hitting the streets in the 80s after it became difficult to keep them in hospitals and institutions. The initial response to the country's homeless crisis was one of compassion, with churches and cities building emergency shelters. The problem was, it was only a nighttime bed and a hot meal, the so-called three-hots-and-a-cot approach. In between, the homeless were largely adrift and on their own.

Transitional housing was the next iteration to the social problem, in which the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funded temporary housing that was often aimed at subsets of the homeless population, including those with substance abuse issues, mental health problems or HIV. In this scenario, the focus was on stabilizing an individual enough by addressing health and wellness, so that he or she could find housing on their own or with the help of friends and family.

Finally, by the mid-2000s, the country began giving serious consideration to the idea of housing first. Tsemberis had come to his conclusion from a position of ethics, but others were simply starting to note its fiscal impact.

Then-*New Yorker* columnist Malcom Gladwell wrote an article in 2006 called "Million-Dollar Murray," which traced the expense of a Reno, Nev., homeless man and ex-Marine named Murray Barr. The subtitle for the article was "Why problems like homelessness are easier to solve than manage," alluding to the frustrating irony that by the time Barr died, he had cost Reno more than \$1 million in hospital bills and social service programs.

Gladwell's article, says Nichols, and the burgeoning momentum of the Housing First movement, helped spark studies that showed how much more expensive it was to treat symptoms and not the main problem of homelessness.

"There were studies done that were showing that it was just so much cheaper in the long run if you had permanent housing," says Nichols.

Indeed, in Utah the price tag of dealing with chronically homeless individuals, who often end up in jail or in hospitals, was a big part of the motivation to focus on housing; the promise of saving taxpayer money over the long term helped build political will for adding new housing units. Since 2005, when it began the Housing First approach, the state has added enough units to reduce its number of homeless from just fewer than 2,000 to less than 100 today.

While the Housing First philosophy has influenced the impact on the approach to homelessness across the U.S., implementing it isn't without challenges. Adding affordable housing units takes time.

"There's no question that we have a shortage of permanent affordable housing in Baton Rouge," says Michael Acaldo, president and CEO of the Baton Rouge Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which operates the Bishop Ott Shelters for men and the Sweet Dreams Shelter for women and children. "Everyone is working hard to see this increase, but it's a slow process."

It takes a combination of subsidized housing developments and willing landlords, says Nichols.

*"We decided to try an intervention that the people who were homeless actually wanted. What the people actually wanted was a place to live."*

—Dr. Sam Tsemberis

"What we need is more development of affordable housing units that are dedicated to mixed-income people, including the homeless," he says. "We need mission-driven developments that are produced with tax credits and federal and private funding."

Nichols continues. "To make Housing First a viable model, you need affordable units, subsidized housing and case-managed properties, and we have a shortage of all three of these," he says.

Still, the Capital City has worked hard to chip away at the homeless population. While accurate counts are hard to nail down, the city has reduced its homeless numbers from about 1,118 in 2009 to about 600 currently, says Nichols.

Developments include the Scott School Apartments, which offer about 20 affordable workforce housing units to teachers, firefighters, law enforcement and other professions and 40 units for individuals with chronic special needs. And the One Stop Homeless Center, a multi-purpose center for homeless individuals on Convention Street that was completed in 2011, has 36 permanent efficiency apartments for the disabled homeless.

Nichols says that an essential part of the strategy in ensuring homeless men and women transition well into permanent housing is to simply help them get used to the basics.

"A lot of time needs to be spent orienting a client, helping them with cleaning, buying groceries, even things like baking cookies," says Nichols. "This helps a person feel like it's their place and gives them the stability to address other things." •





arts council  
GREATER BATON ROUGE



# THE ARTS ELEVATE

**ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION  
MAKES A HUGE IMPACT  
ON STUDENTS IN THE  
CLASSROOM & BEYOND:**

Photograph by Judy Griesedieck

Dance education helps students to develop motor skills

Music training is linked with memory improvement

Students in arts programs are 44% less likely to use drugs than their non-arts peers

Involvement in Arts and Music leads to better grades in Math, Science, Speech, Social Studies, Literature, History, and Foreign Language

**ELEVATE YOUR COMMUNITY. SUPPORT ARTS EDUCATION!**

**ARTSBR.ORG**

## SOURCES

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/27/books/27gugg.html?scp=7&sqarts%20in%20education&st=cse&r=0>

<http://www.nafme.org/>

<https://www.nammfoundation.org/educator-tips/telling-story-music-impacts-learning-and-way-life>

<http://theskypac.com/the-power-of-arts-education/>

<http://www.americansforthearts.org/>

COVER

HE HIGH SCHOOL



# Not *by* *the* book

*In LHS, architects create  
a school for the future*

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

t

he new Lee High School would qualify as a school like no other if the only thing you considered is the black-box theater with the 40-foot panel wall. Slide open the wall on a nice night and the audience can sit outside and watch what happens inside the theater.

Or maybe it would be better to stage the performance outside and the have audience inside looking out? The theater's design makes that just as easy.

The theater captures what makes Lee unlike any other school in Louisiana, or almost anywhere. The \$55 million reconstructed campus on Lee Drive is a technology-rich environment designed to adapt—to change in a real sense—in support of project-based learning in which students are collaborative, hands-on learners.

The design supports learning not just in classrooms with folding glass walls but everywhere on campus. Its hallways are not hallways in the traditional sense but open-project spaces and gathering spots. Instead of lockers along the walls—there aren't any lockers on campus—you find cozy nooks and comfortable furniture that invite students to linger.

Lee's media centers—there is no central library—include magnetic, dry-erase walls and tables that students can write on.

Books will roll on wheeled carts to wherever students and teachers gather inside one of three distinct academies dedicated to STEM/robotics, digital media and bioscience.

But students will rely less on printed texts and more on laptops that will be assigned to them. There is abundant outdoor learning space, too.

There are windows everywhere, the idea being that allowing students to see their peers engaged in learning is a good thing.

Lee has been compared to a college campus or a Silicon Valley office building. Lee is even more striking, warmer and distinctive, with a lacy horizon of distant trees juxtaposing buildings that combine glass, metal and earthy, neutral tones.

Even the natural landscape seems to conspire to make Lee's design unlike anything you will find in Baton Rouge or any place else in Louisiana. In a delta-flat region short on hills and rocks, a boulder-lined ravine with a curving metal bridge across it runs through the heart of campus. (The ravine was put there

*“We found we challenged everything. We’d ask ourselves, ‘What is best for each learner?’ That drove the design.”*

—Jerry Hebert, GraceHebert Architects

by nature. Lee's design team added the rocks.)

The school is simultaneously wide open and intimate, high-tech and personal. What students and teachers do on a given day at Lee will shape the look, feel and function of spaces that can expand or contract for groups of 10, 20, 60 students or more.

“When you talk about flexibility, it's not just the learning environment but how the students will interact and collaborate,” says David Hebert, a partner at GraceHebert Architects of Baton Rouge, Lee's architect of record.

Adds Jerry Hebert, the firm's president: “Learning's changed, so the school's changed.”

Two years ago, Lee Principal Nanette McCann handed Lee's designers the mission of creating a “school like no other.”

There is no arguing McCann got what she asked for in the 250,000-square-foot school that will enroll 1,200 students when it opens in August.

The campus has three specialized academies and a common administration building. The school will emphasize learning through projects and applying scientific data and research.













There are only a handful of new high school campuses in the U.S. built from the ground-up with project-based learning in mind. The idea, supported by research, is that students learn better and acquire deeper knowledge when they actively engage in sustained, collaborative projects and investigative pursuits of real-world challenges.

A project-based approach to anatomy might have students delve into anatomy and the history of prosthetic limbs and then design and build a 3D-printed prosthetic arm. Or they might build a spectrometer as part of a study of light.

High-profile examples of schools built along the project-based model include San Diego's High Tech High and Cleveland's MC2 STEM High School.

GraceHebert visited MC2 and two other Cleveland campuses early in the design process to better understand how design and function interact at such schools.

The school that most closely resembles Lee is Marysville-Getchell near Seattle, Wash., which has been repeatedly honored as the best-designed high school in the nation.

The similarities between the schools are no accident. Kansas City-based DLR Group was involved in development principles to guide the design of both campuses, a process that in East Baton Rouge involved input from administrators, teachers, school board members and others.

The resulting six principles—close in substance to those that shaped Marysville-Getchell—include fostering creative, productive partnerships and putting the needs of each learner first.

GraceHebert looked to the tenets throughout a design process that involved continuously re-examining its established expertise in school design along the way.

“We found we challenged everything,” Jerry Hebert says. “We’d ask ourselves, ‘What is best for each learner?’ That drove the design.”

The guiding principles manifest themselves in tangible ways on campus. Teachers at Lee won't have assigned classrooms, but will instead move to different classrooms to meet with students in the space that best suits their project or focus of study.

Doing what's best for students also explains why there are administrators' offices in each academy building, and close to the students they serve, rather than in a centralized site.

Creating an optimal environment for each learner also explains the acres of windows at Lee. Landmark studies in 1998 and 2002 of 20,000 students in California, Colorado and Massachusetts found that those enrolled in schools with abundant natural light, called “daylighting,” scored as much as 26

A walking track encircles the fitness center and offers views of the gym.

The school's dance studio is on the second floor of the common building.

The state-of-the-art black box theater that can open to an outdoor seating area.

The school will not follow a traditional school layout, but will consist of flexible spaces that can be configured for a variety of uses.

percent higher on standardized tests than students in classrooms with fewer windows and less light.

Fostering creative partnerships is another guiding principle. It explains why each academy has a two-story atrium or “wow” space where real-world partners will collaborate with Lee to create distinct learning areas. (Academic partnerships will shape learning at Lee in additional ways, including through 17 dual-enrollment courses that will be available to students through LSU.)

There was not a deliberate effort to eliminate symbols of traditional high school life at Lee, and if you look closely enough you will find some of these. There is a commons building where students can gather in the gym for spirit rallies and basketball games, an art studio, tennis courts, a music room.

Each of the three academy buildings has a distinct blue accents on the outside of the building, but the Patriots’ common building brings together all three hues.

Still, there is no question that Lee looks and feels different from other schools.

There is a yoga and Pilates studio. There is no football field. Instead of weights in the gym there are treadmills and elliptical machines. The gym and the science labs feature the expansive windows that give Lee an outdoor-indoor feeling wherever you go.

Each academy has a counter akin to the Genius Bar at Apple stores that can be used for technology help or as student-run stores. The campus is wireless. There are USB ports everywhere so students can quickly recharge phones and tablets.

Even eating will be different at Lee: salads and wrap-style sandwiches will be made on site and dispensed from vending machines. The cafeteria in the commons building has a vaulted, airy atrium that includes booth seating, high bar-style tables and chairs and traditional lunchroom furniture.

Jim French, DLR Group’s manager for K-12 education projects, says he hopes Lee can make an impact beyond its campus in serving as an example of project-based education for schools across the region and state.

“There’s a discussion underway nationally about how to better engage students,” French says. “My hope is that Lee will serve as an example to other schools to incorporate some kind of project-based learning on their campuses, to whatever degree makes sense for them.” •













The dining area in the Digital Arts Academy offers dramatic open space with a large wall graphic.

The media center in the Digital Arts Academy is framed with open windows and a staircase leading to the upper floor.

# CELEBRATE Summer with MANSHIP THEATRE



**LIVINGSTON TAYLOR**  
June 12 | 7:00PM

A natural performer, he connects to fans with his musical knowledge which has inspired a varied repertoire, with a range of musical genres—folk, pop, gospel, jazz—and from upbeat storytelling to touching ballads.



**EDWIN MCCAIN**  
July 28 | 7:30PM

Called the “great American romantic” by the New York Times, his hit songs, authentic spirit and sense of humor keep fans coming back for nights that feel more like parties with old friends than rock concerts.



LONG LAW FIRM



**BEATLES VS. STONES**  
August 4 | 7:30PM

Two of the greatest rock 'n' roll bands of all time face off and fans must choose between the Stones' rhythm & blues anthems, or the Beatles classic hits.



**US THE DUO**  
August 11 | 7:30PM

Michael and Carissa Alvarado fell in love, and combined their talents to form US THE DUO. With over 17 million views on Youtube, they released their first self-titled album Us. They have been traveling and playing music together ever since.



**ROBIN BARNES**  
August 18 | 7:30PM

Called the “Songbird of New Orleans”, Robin Barnes mixes modern and classical jazz music to captivate audiences with her unique renditions of songs. Her powerful voice ranges with each verse, to create a song uniquely her own.

**KAREN & BILL WOLFE**



**TANYA TUCKER**  
August 25 | 7:30PM

From the signature classic songs to the unforgettable sass and soul of her voice, Tanya Tucker has paved a path in country music and continues her longevity today due to a natural, undeniable talent.



John G. Turner  
Jerry G. Fischer

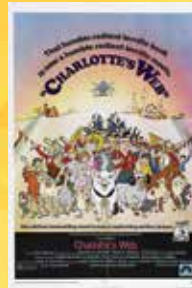




# CREATURE FEATURES



SEE • SNACK • SPLASH



**JUN 1** **RUGRATS THE MOVIE**

**JUN 8** **THE IRON GIANT**

**JUN 15** **WE'RE BACK! A DINOSAUR STORY**

**JUN 22** **CHARLOTTE'S WEB (1973)**

**JUN 29** **FANTASTIC MR. FOX**



## EVERY WEDNESDAY IN JUNE AT 10AM

### GET HERE EARLY. STICK AROUND AFTER.

Before the movie, don't miss a unique animal encounter with the Baton Rouge Zoo! **DOUBLE BONUS!** Before every film the folks with our newest exhibit: **EARTH AS ART** will be on-hand in our Free Gallery doing short, educational presentations about the Art. All you have to do is get here 30 minutes early to catch the presentations.



Stick around after the movie to play in the fountains!  
Bring lunch and make it a picnic!

Group rates available for camps and daycares. Please contact [jlangois@manshiptheatre.org](mailto:jlangois@manshiptheatre.org)  
Movie tickets include popcorn, juice or water, & a sweet treat!



FOR TICKETS: [MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG](http://MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG) • (225) 344 - 0334





# LEGACY





# Dudley W. Coates

*Retired tennis player,  
philanthropist*

By Sara Bongiorno | Photo by Tim Mueller

**A**s a boy, Dudley W. Coates lived in Galveston, Long Beach, California, Washington, D.C., and Cincinnati before his family settled in Baton Rouge in 1945. His father was a pilot in the Army Air Corps, hence the frequent moves. Our city has been lucky to have him: the soft-spoken investment broker, now retired, has had a hand in transformative community initiatives, from supporting downtown revitalization to finding more humane ways to cope with the challenge of homeless animals, to raising funds for state-of-the-art cancer care.

The longtime friend and supporter of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and founding member of the Wilbur Marvin Foundation shared thoughts on topics from race relations to tennis-court line calls on a recent afternoon.

## **CURRENTS: WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BATON ROUGE?**

**DUDLEY W. COATES:** The people, without a doubt. I've traveled around the country, and without a doubt this is one of the easiest places to live because of the friendly, helpful attitude of the people who live here.

*I believe an endowment makes you a better, more decisive leader as a community organization, which is good for the community you serve.*

—Dudley Coates

**WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHANGE IN THE CITY IN THE MORE THAN 50 YEARS YOU’VE LIVED HERE?**

Traffic (chuckles). But really, it’s downtown. It’s jumping now. It’s wonderful to see that, and you can put its progress in the hands of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

**YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN ENDOWMENTS FOR CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH IS SOMETHING THAT IS NOT UNIVERSAL. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT?**

An endowment is an organization’s ticket to the future. It means that you are going to be around and be able to do what you are supposed to do. I think for any institution one of the first things it needs to do is build up a good endowment. As I said, it ensures your future, but I would also say that you’re not as inhibited as you might be otherwise when you have an endowment. I believe an endowment makes you a better, more decisive leader as a community organization, which is good for the community you serve.

**YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE WILBUR MARVIN FOUNDATION SINCE ITS INCEPTION. HOW IS ITS WORK DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE ENVISIONED AT THE OUTSET?**

I think Wilbur Marvin would be beside himself if he could see some of the projects that have come to fruition through the Wilbur Marvin Foundation. Its work is one of the really good stories in Baton Rouge. Mr. Marvin wanted to have his company carry on after his death. Before his death, he turned over the operation of the company to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, which is something that is unusual and a wonderful way to fund community projects. That action made so many projects possible, including the purchase of the Capitol House to start the turnaround of downtown. It’s remarkable what has been achieved, and we could not have imagined any of it at the start. Wilbur Marvin would have been amazed, and I believe very pleased.

**WHAT ABOUT YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE COMPANION ANIMAL ALLIANCE. WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THAT?**

That’s the work of my daughter, Cathy Coates, who is on the CAA board. She thinks it’s about the best thing in Baton Rouge, and she is involved in fundraising work for a new shelter for its operation. Our dog, Shade, is indirectly from CAA, as we got her from Friends of the Animals on Highland Road, which works with the organization. We walked in and saw her, and we just fell in love. She has been a delight to us.

**WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE PROGRESS IN BATON ROUGE? WHERE DOES THIS COMMUNITY HAVE MORE WORK TO DO?**

Race relations, undoubtedly. There has been progress, but there is a long way to go. It takes a lot of giving on the part of a lot of people to make progress, but it is something we must achieve because it holds back progress in this city in so many ways.

**I UNDERSTAND YOUR TENNIS COURT WAS THE SETTING FOR A LOT OF FUN WITH FRIENDS OVER THE YEARS. ANY PARTICULAR MEMORIES YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE?**

I get nostalgic looking out at my tennis court. We used to play on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and it was great. The regulars were John Davies, John McGregor, Kevin Reilly Sr., Leon Tarver and T.O. Perry. John Davies had an overhead that was totally unpredictable and therefore dangerous to his opponents, who ran for cover because no one knew where it was going, including John. I give Kevin low grades on line calling. I told him I was going to name the court after him. I’d call it, “Just out.”

**LPB IS ONE OF MANY ORGANIZATIONS YOU’VE SUPPORTED OVER THE YEARS. ANY CHANCE YOU ARE A “DOWNTON ABBEY” FAN?**

Oh, yes, and LPB is a wonderful asset for our community.

**SO, DO YOU THINK THE YOUNGER SISTER, EDITH, WILL FINALLY FIND HAPPINESS?**

I sure hope so. She’s had a run of bad luck. I’ve just got to think that it’s finally going to be her turn to have some good luck for a change. •





New in 2016, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge will provide unique opportunities to meet master artists in their home countries, experience rich histories and traditions firsthand, and connect with creative placemakers who are building better futures for their communities through art. Art Routes adventures will include day trips to museums and private collections in the Baton Rouge region, as well as trips to other cities and countries. Travelers will not only deepen their understanding of the world through the arts, but will help generate innovative creative ideas for the local community.



### UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL EXCURSION:

Celebrating Spain's Cultural Heritage  
**Madrid - Granada - Seville**  
September 12 -21, 2016

### CONTACT THE ARTS COUNCIL TO LEARN MORE AT

(225) 344-8558, ext. 226



**ARTSBR.ORG**

arts council  
GREATER BATON ROUGE

# SPARK

## Mind place

*LIGO's companion  
Science Education Center  
is all about inquiry*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson  
Photos by Tim Mueller

58

Through a charitable account, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation helps administer a grant and other money for an education center at the Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory in Livingston Parish.







Science museums have always been about wonder. Children stand before an exhibit of a 40-million-year-old dinosaur, a retired spacecraft, the guts of a light bulb, or an active beehive and their worldviews shift and broaden. They realize, even though subconsciously, that there is more out there than what they see and think about daily.

But science museums should also be places of thoughtful, even frustrating, inquiry, where children and adults are encouraged to go beyond a cursory glance, wrestle with issues and emerge with fresh understanding.

That is the intention of the LIGO Science Education Center, an interactive physics museum and the community arm of the renowned Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO). The two facilities are co-located in Livingston, north of Interstate 12. LIGO's Science Education Center aims to reveal some of science's most abstract concepts, including the groundbreaking research taking place next door at LIGO.

LIGO Livingston is one of two partner gravitational wave research observatories in the United States; the other is located in Hanford, Washington.

Together, they are advancing the field of gravitational-wave astrophysics through the detection of gravitational waves, the kind predicted a century ago in Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. The two facilities, intentionally built in flat, remote locations that were far apart, work in unison to measure gravitational waves that result from various cosmic events, including the mergers of black holes or neutron stars. LIGO is funded by the National Science Foundation and operated by CalTech and MIT, with universities including LSU serving as key partners.

The observatory opened in 1999. In February 2016 it made international news when researchers recorded a monumental event that confirmed Einstein's theory. New advanced equipment that had just completed a series of multi-year testing and was teed up for a new round of data collection detected strong gravitational waves from the collision of two black holes, an event that had happened one billion light years away.

Successfully detecting the ripples from the black hole merger was a huge event for LIGO, the thousands of scientists involved and the broader field of gravitational wave astrophysics, says

Joseph Giaime, LIGO Livingston Observatory Head and professor of physics and astronomy at LSU. It proved Einstein's prediction that gravitational waves exist. And as the first recorded evidence, the finding has introduced enormous possibilities for further research and discovery.

"The research implications are huge," Giaime says.

Lead scientists published their results before the press announcement, further validating the sanctity of the research.

LIGO's findings broadened public awareness about the observatory. But while the average Louisiana adult might not have been aware of LIGO before the media coverage, many of their children probably were. Giaime says the LIGO Science Education Center sees 15,000 to 17,000 contacts annually, most of which are students on field trips. Students from nearly every parish in Louisiana, as well as classrooms from Arkansas and Mississippi, have made their way to LIGO.

Open in 2006, the Center features an amphitheater where visitors can view an orientation movie called Einstein's Messenger or hear speakers who sometimes share their research during monthly Science Saturdays when the Center is open to the public. In the main

exhibit hall, more than 40 interactive exhibits invite children, youth and adults to ponder different aspects of physics. The exhibits were designed and built by the popular San Francisco-based Exploratorium, an attraction known for innovation and interactivity. Now located in the Embarcadero where it receives 1 million visitors a year, the Exploratorium was founded by particle physicist Frank Oppenheimer in 1969. Because of the significance of LIGO and the complex nature of gravitational-wave research, the Science Education Center is seen as a groundbreaking model for advancing the understanding of physics in the region. Funding through the NSF has allowed the center to establish a thriving docent training program with Southern University, as well as a respected professional development program for regional science educators called Project Modeling Inquire Science Education (MISE).

The docent program is a keystone project, says Giaime. Southern University undergraduate and graduate students from STEM fields are selected to participate and are trained as Science Education Center docents. As children and visitors meander

*"Learning happens when you're confused and you finally figure something out. That's the kind of learning that sticks."*

—Joseph Giaime, LIGO Livingston Observatory head and LSU professor of physics and astronomy.









through the museum, docents help them move from a passive to active learning experience by asking them thought-provoking questions about the exhibits before them. At times, they conduct mini-experiments or manipulate exhibits to demonstrate cause and effect. Visitors learn to investigate the rich information contained within each engaging station.

“It’s not easy to do this kind of inquiry-based learning,” says Giaime, pointing out that it’s part of the process for visitors to struggle with concepts. “Learning happens when you’re confused and you finally figure something out. That’s the kind of learning that sticks.”

The majority of Southern University docents are African American, which helps promote STEM fields in minority communities. LIGO also targets minority schools for participation in field trips, says Giaime.

“The students see the docents and they think, ‘Hey maybe I might like to do this one day,’” he says. “It’s a wonderful win-win all around.”

Ten to fifteen docents are selected each year to serve two-year terms. Last fall, two docents who were hired by LIGO Livingston and LIGO Hanford were actually on staff in the early morning

hours when the gravitational waves were detected, says Giaime.

Also conducted in partnership with Southern is Project MISE. In it, pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade educators can build their science teaching skills through regular professional development opportunities that show teachers how to break down physical and earth science concepts in the classroom.

Giaime says the Science Education Center is also about to launch an exchange program between Louisiana and Scotland high school physics instructors to advance high school physics education in the region.

In the U.S., says Giaime, physics instructors have historically not been trained in physics, causing many students to come away with an inferior understanding and a lack of interest in the field as future teachers. Consequently, there remains a shortage of physics educators in high schools. The opposite is true in Scotland, says Giaime, where high school physics teachers are certified and a healthy ecosystem of secondary physics education exists.

“We’re going to start small,” says Giaime. “But hopefully it will be just the beginning.” •



**REINVENTING THE AIRPLANE** Three ideas to reinvent airplanes from Teague, the firm that has designed aircraft interiors for Boeing since 1946. Given no constraints, Teague would:

1. Eliminate carry-on luggage to get rid of the overhead bins and speed up boarding by 71%. Personal items, like computers and small bags, would be allowed. Teague says planes would be 3,300 pounds lighter, saving millions in fuel annually for airlines. Checked luggage could be delivered directly to hotel rooms for a fee.
2. No one wants to go there, so make the person sitting in the middle seat feel special. As an example, a special gift for people who sit in the middle, maybe some exclusive chocolates. The seat could be sold to sponsors, for offering special deals to people who sit there.
3. Sell memberships, like Amazon does. Flyers would get a number of flights with a membership, but be able to sell or trade seats through an app or online exchange without a fee. Memberships build loyalty, and trading or selling seats to other members eliminates fees.



**UBER MOVES FASTER, BUT SAYS “WHOA, DRIVERS”** “If you don’t innovate, someone will speed by you in the passing lane.” That could be Uber’s motto. The turbocharged company was testing a version of bus service in Seattle late last year. Now, its drivers in Houston are being monitored for their motoring habits. Uber’s app is using built-in accelerometer and GPS systems in cellphones to measure speed. Uber is using the data to assess customer complaints of dangerous driving. “Or we could use technology to determine that the average South Florida Uber driver goes 50 miles per hour and takes 50 minutes to drive from Miami to Fort Lauderdale. For drivers who go much faster on that stretch, we can ask them to curb their enthusiasm,” says Uber Chief Security Officer Joe Sullivan.

**LA. MIXED ON SOLAR** Louisiana has some of the most generous solar tax credits in the country. In a report that compares states on how easy it is for homeowners to sell excess solar energy to power companies, Louisiana fares well in one category but fails in another. In its 2015 report, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council graded Louisiana a B for net metering, or ease of sale to a utility, but an F for interconnection, the logistics of hooking up a renewable energy project to the grid.



**SCHIZOPHRENIA UNLOCKED?** Led by a group from the Broad Institute, researchers have found a gene—C4—that leads to a greater risk of developing schizophrenia. The gene produces a protein that tags poisons for removal by the body’s immune system. But the same protein prunes neurons in the brain from childhood to early adulthood. Schizophrenics could be producing an excessive amount of the protein, leading to their disease. More research must be done before a treatment is attempted.



## MAKING HIGHER END GROCERIES

Homes grow more rapidly in value if they are closer to a Trader Joe's or Whole Foods, according to data analysis by Zillow, an information site for housing. Between 1997 and 2014, homes near the two grocery chains were consistently worth more than the median U.S. home. By the end of 2014, homes within a mile of either store were worth more than twice the median home value in the rest of the country.

Baton Rouge's Trader Joe's was recruited to Acadian Village shopping center by Commercial Properties Realty Trust, which manages real estate for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. CPRT developed and sold Acadian Village.

"Today's homebuyers seek things in neighborhoods that weren't even in real estate agents' vocabularies a generation ago: walkability, community, new urbanism—and maybe we should add words like sustainable seafood and organic pears," says Zillow Group CEO Spencer Rascoff.

**NEW NET** The entrepreneur who used clustered antennas to offer Internet service at a big discount, only to have his business shut down because the system was deemed illegal, is back. Chet Kanolia, the former CEO of Aereo, has launched Starry, which would use multiple antennas and a range of different frequencies to deliver gigabit speeds that are faster than most cable connections today. Starry's wireless broadband service begins testing in Boston. And its router—which can be used with any service—was available in April. The \$350 router includes parental controls and a screen that offers a glimpse of which devices are online.



**BACK ON YOUR FEET** Exoskeletons designed to help paraplegics walk have been on the market for a while. But the machines were expensive – up to \$100,000 – before SuitX invented the Phoenix. The device will sell for \$40,000, cheaper than competitors but still four times the cost of the most expensive wheelchair. Phoenix is lighter (27 pounds) than all others, and a version is being prepared for children with cerebral palsy and severe spinal cord-related diseases.



**TURN OUT THE CFLS, THE PARTY IS OVER** LED lightbulbs once produced a harsh light. But technology improvements have made the light from LEDs almost indistinguishable from the warm glow of old-fashioned bulbs, causing GE to say it would stop producing competing fluorescents by year-end. LED's and fluorescents each have 15% of the market, but LED sales soared by 250% last year. The cost of LEDs has dropped to compete with CFLs (fluorescent bulbs), and the energy consumed is 70% less than traditional bulbs, which are being phased out under a 2012 federal law.



## HISTORY OF BATON ROUGE’S COCA-COLA SIGN

The Allies had won World War I. The twenties were roaring ever louder. America was electrified.

Coca-Cola was still relatively new, but already it was blazing its way toward becoming an American icon. There were troubles in the business, though, between Coke and the companies that bottled and delivered the product. Coca-Cola wanted more money for its proprietary syrup to manage the risk of spiking sugar prices. The bottlers wouldn’t budge. Finally, in 1922, there was a breakthrough: both sides realized that they could safeguard their profits if they put aside their differences and team up to improve their marketing. Soon, they weren’t just selling a beverage anymore. They were building a brand, an emblem of American identity in a booming peacetime economy.

Coca-Cola and its partners dramatically expanded their advertising so that, before long, everyone would come to recognize the fizzy drink in the shapely bottle. An important part of their promotions was to introduce the use of neon signs—a technological innovation that had appeared in Paris in 1913, plugging Cinzano Vermouth and the Paris Opera.

Bringing a flicker of the City of Lights to a post-WWI America, Coca-Cola and its bottlers first built their neon signs where crowds gathered: Times Square in New York, San Francisco’s South-of-Market District, and Margaret Mitchell Square in Atlanta, where the company originated and remains today.

Neon signs were expensive to make and maintain, so there weren’t many of them, Ted Ryan tells us. As Coke’s official historian—a job held by only four people ever—Ryan has chronicled the story of the world’s No. 1 sparkling beverage for twenty years.

Perhaps one reason that neon signs have become so cherished is that they are almost as rare as they are captivating. Appropriately, Coca-Cola called its bright neon signs “spectaculars.”

“They were there to catch the eye. They were there to keep interest,” says Ryan. “They did.”

In Baton Rouge, one still does. It has been flickering over Third and Florida Streets since shortly after the end of World War II. The familiar neon sign was brought here by Baton Rouge Coca-Cola Bottling Co., a business begun by Thomas Daigre in 1906.

Operating downtown in a small building located at the corner of Europe and St. Louis Streets, Daigre’s first production line bottled six Cokes per minute. A wagon pulled by a single horse delivered the beverage to the 12,000 people who called Baton Rouge home in those days. Later, for soldiers who’d returned to the city from World

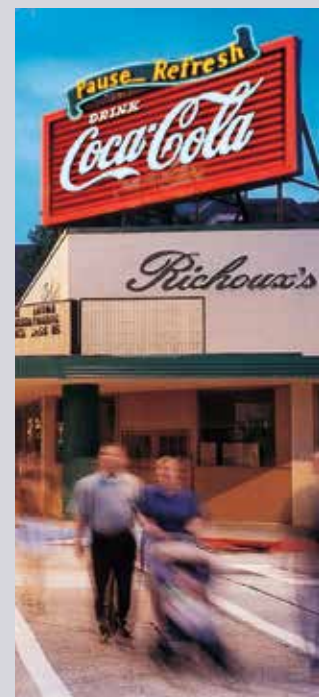
War II, the company’s luminous neon Coca-Cola sign would become a reassuring reminder that they were finally home. In fall of 1951, Baton Rouge Coca-Cola Bottling placed the sign in a prominent location above Liggett’s Drug Co. on Third Street. The permit to erect the electric billboard, issued to Airlite Neon Co., documents a cost of \$4,000 for the job.

The sign blinked “Pause, Refresh,” which derives from one of the most famous advertising slogans in Coca-Cola’s history. “The Pause That Refreshes” first appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1929.

The aging electric sign stayed lit overhead until, finally, Hurricane Andrew’s winds blew out the neon lights altogether in 1992. The community recognized that an important relic of city history had been lost, but nearly ten years passed before interest in restoring the sign found the support it needed. In 2002, Entergy, Baton Rouge Coca-Cola, the Downtown Development District, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, and the Downtown Merchants Association collaborated to restore the antique electric billboard. Jones Electric Signs of Denham Springs was paid \$28,000 to replace the old transponders and to pump fresh neon gas into the glass tubing. It is presumed that Baton Rouge’s neon Coca-Cola sign is among only two or three like it remaining in the world.

“These old neon signs create special memories because they attract your attention and create affection,” Ted Ryan says. “Those signs have a place in our heart.” •

**The Baton Rouge Area Foundation’s assets include the historic Coca-Cola sign on Third and Florida streets. The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge donated the sign to the Foundation late last year. Entergy is covering the cost of lighting and Coca-Cola Bottling Co. is paying for upkeep.**







# CODA

FOUNDATION STAGE



## BATON ROUGE'S BLUES FEST

The Baton Rouge Blues Fest has arrived; renowned musical acts have made it so. Dr. John drew a record crowd to the festival two years ago. This year's headliner was Buddy Guy, who grew up in these parts and became an international star. A reinvigorated Baton Rouge Blues Foundation is the reason the festival is growing. It sponsors a Blues Education program, a Blues Music History Project, an annual Blue Carpet Blues Gala and the festival, which was held over two days in April to record attendance.





**MEMBERS OF THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION  
SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT MAKE LIVES A LITTLE BETTER EACH DAY.**

**BE ONE WITH THEM AT [BRAf.ORG/MEMBERSHIP](http://BRAf.ORG/MEMBERSHIP).**

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Permit 485

*550 donors.*

*3,530 grants.*

*\$22.1 million to  
nonprofits in 2015.*

*1 community foundation.*

Join the movement. Open a donor advised fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.  
Call Elizabeth Hutchison at 225.387.6126.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*



100 North Street, Suite 900 | Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802 | [braf.org](http://braf.org)