

CURRENTS

second quarter twenty-seventeen . baton rouge area foundation

Automotive *for the* people

Jason Hughes returns to help the next generation from his neighborhood



Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome honored local wheelchair tennis competitors with a Baton Rouge Day at the 28th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament. Photo by Tim Mueller.





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LETTER



Oftentimes, our most inspired ideas spring up only after realizing all our plans have fallen apart.

Failure has been a kindly muse to many wise men and women. Winston Churchill said, for example, “Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” Inventor Thomas Edison noted, “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

At the Foundation, we come by our failures honestly. We start sometimes with improbable ideas, debate them, and decide that, despite the odds, the return will be greater than the risk if the idea succeeds. Pursuing outsized initiatives means the shadow of humiliating failure hangs over our efforts the whole way. And, sometimes, it also means stumbling as we go.

The Ardendale project is an example of a long-shot idea that has begun to deliver rich returns— but only after a decade that included an invaluable failure. For those who don’t know the story, a little background will help to explain what happened.

After Katrina, the population of East Baton Rouge Parish more than doubled. And with the future of New Orleans uncertain for a time, it looked like many of our temporary new neighbors would be part of our community for years to come. But the shortage of housing meant that evacuees were staying with friends and relatives or in hotels and trailers. They needed a

place to live over the long term, so the Foundation found 200 acres of undeveloped land in the middle of the parish.

Our initial idea was to acquire the land and quickly build a new mixed-use development. Hundreds of new homes there, blended with retail shops and businesses, would ease the housing crisis while also bringing life back to a part of the city that badly needed investment and jobs.

That good idea came up short. Federal recovery funds pledged to the project went elsewhere. Plans for the development would remain on paper, shelved for more than five years.

But from this failure emerged an even better idea. We asked, *What if learning was at the heart of a community?*

All along, the Foundation had been working with Matt McKay, a board chair and owner of All Star Automotive, to draw up a strategy for an automotive training center aimed at bolstering Baton Rouge’s workforce. With the new training facility, students would no longer have to

travel to Houston to learn how to fix today’s high-tech vehicles. The project took shape and moved forward, thanks to partnerships between businesses, educators, and state and local officials. Operated by Baton Rouge Community College, the John W. McKay Automotive Training Center opened in January on a parcel of those 200 acres originally slated for the post-Katrina development.

If one training center could help to anchor a new community, it only made good sense to draw together more. So BRCC is also building a collision repair training center on the property, and the EBR Public School System will start a career high school

At the Foundation, we come by our failures honestly.

there in a few months. Surrounding this cluster of schools will be the blend of new housing and retail first envisioned for the acreage. Named Ardendale and developed with the Foundation's support by the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, the unique neighborhood will be built around the business of education, bringing new vitality to a neglected section in the middle of the parish.

It's not what we originally had in mind. With a bit of luck and perserverance, it's better.

And so we have renewed hope, encouraging us to continue our efforts on other projects that are equally challenging, projects that don't always succeed on the first attempt. Perhaps the most important among these is a diversion center for people with mental illness and drug abuse problems. A small property tax to operate this center was proposed last year and failed among voters by 1 percent. That was a disappointment.

But we continue to pursue this initiative, in part because it would save the parish more tax dollars. Most of all, though, it's because giving dignity and proper treatment to people with mental illness is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,



S. Dennis Blunt,
Chair

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

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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 three 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. Three, we provide consulting services to nonprofits.

For more information, contact Mukul Verma at mverma@braf.org.

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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

THE NEW MOBILITY:

The Foundation is trying to make it easier for people to get around the parish. We are participating with local and state government on several projects that give residents transportation choices. Engineers say that more choices reduces the burden on roads. The projects include a train connecting Baton Rouge to New Orleans, a bike sharing system that is expected to start in late 2017 and support for car sharing.

BATON ROUGE HEALTH DISTRICT

(BRHEALTHDISTRICT.ORG) : The parish asked the Foundation to pay for a master plan for the Bluebonnet, Perkins and Essen Lane corridor, where most of the health care assets are located. The plan has been adopted by the parish, and an independent nonprofit – the Baton Rouge Health District, has been formed to implement the plan.

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.

THE AID

FOUNDATION ASSETS RISE, BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

Rodney C. Braxton has joined the board of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation after being elected by the members at the annual meeting and celebration. Members also elected Mark C. Drennen, Perry J. Franklin, Kevin F. Knobloch and Jeffrey S. Zehnder to second terms. Each term is for three years.

In turn, the board re-elected S. Dennis Blunt, chair; William E. Balhoff, vice chair; Annette D. Barton, secretary; Francis C. Jumonville Jr., treasurer; and Mary Terrell Joseph, at large.

The Foundation convenes an annual meeting each March to conduct business and provide the latest information on projects, as well as honor nonprofit and civic leaders. Members and Foundation donors are invited.

Guests were told that the Foundation's reached a record \$626 million at year-end 2016, up 9% from \$574 million the year before. Assets climbed on the strength of the real estate portfolio managed by Commercial Properties Realty Trust, more contributions by donors to charitable funds, and the value of those funds rising with the stock market.

Fund donors contributed \$60 million to their charitable funds and the Foundation granted \$34 million on their behalf to nonprofits in 2016. About 32% of the grants in 2016 were issued to human services organizations and 22% more to education institutions.

At the meeting, Jennifer Eplett Reilly was named the second winner of the Marcia Kaplan Kantrow Baton Rouge Visionary Award, which was established independently by friends and family of the late Ms. Kantrow, who was the first director of programs for the Foundation.



Ms. Sue Turner visits at the celebration after the Foundation's annual meeting.



Jennifer Eplett Reilly, left, was named the second winner of the Marcia Kaplan Kantrow Baton Rouge Visionary Award, which honors the late Ms. Kantrow, director of programs for the Foundation. Miriam Kantrow del Rio and son, Kaplan McMains, far right, presented the award to Ms. Reilly. Kaplan and Rowan Reilly have been friends since an early age.



John G. Davies, Foundation president and CEO, learned about the next generation of philanthropy from millennials: from left, Alex Barbosa, Riley Vannoy and Kenny Nguyen.



ART FOR ART'S SAKE Ann Connelly, who has supported young and established artists for decades, has a new space to display and sell their work. She has shifted Ann Connelly Gallery from a rented space in Southdowns Shopping Center to a space of her own at Lobdell Avenue and Jefferson Highway. Her new 6,800-square-foot gallery is part of a 2.8-acre project developed with husband Paul Connelly.

BORGHARDT AND CO. Franz Borghardt is using a desire for food to do good. His Geaux Rouge, a social media platform, partners with restaurateurs and marketers, to lure diners to food festivals. Addictive mac and cheese is the main course of the next festival, which is set in June at Curbside Burgers on Government Street. By its own definition, “Geaux Rouge celebrates the social, cultural, artistic, and culinary scenes of Baton Rouge. Let’s enjoy this great city and find ways of making it better.” Search for it on Facebook for more information.



IN WITH THE OLD

Almost two decades ago, Stefanos Polyzoides planted an idea in Baton Rouge. As a prescription for traffic snarls and other urban maladies, the town planner recommended the parish reclaim its downtown and start building traditional neighborhood developments, a throwback to how towns became organized before the automobile. New TNDs were being designed with offices, housing and retail within walking distance of each other, making it possible to walk more, ride less.

Baton Rouge has been transformed since that Polyzoides talk. Downtown has been reclaimed and several TNDs are under construction, including Americana, a project by John M. Engquist and partners with Commercial Properties Realty Trust, the Foundation's real estate manager, responsible for retail and apartments.

In April, Walk-Ons opened in a building at the entrance of Americana. Bistro Byronz will welcome diners in fall. Above the restaurants will be 60 apartments. CPRT is also building a TND in Raleigh, N.C., that will include a farm within the development. More on that in the next issue of Currents.

As well, CPRT has proved there is a market for downtown apartments. 525 Lafayette on the corner of Main and Lafayette streets is fully occupied, and the new Onyx apartments on Convention and Third streets are more than 80% leased.



LESS CONCRETE Red bricks are being converted into a lawn behind the Baton Rouge government building. Funded by a state tax rebate and overseen by the Downtown Development District, the City Hall Plaza project will make repairs to the city-parish parking garage while also transforming the paved roof into a greenspace that extends the new Town Square.



John and Virginia Noland with Rev. Raymond Jetson. All are former board members.



Above, Elizabeth Hutchison, Foundation director of philanthropic services, with Rachel Delamain and Louisiana Economic Development's Don Pierson.

FOUNDERS FORUM DINNER

The Foundation has an annual dinner with Founders Forum members. They are briefed about the Foundations' projects and given advance knowledge of the work that's coming. All members support our civic leadership initiatives, which are the most visible projects. Learn more or join at BRAAF.org/membership.



Right, Foundation Chairman, Dennis Blunt, with his wife Valerie and board member Ryland Percy.



ARDENDALE RIBBON CUTTING

Governor John Bel Edwards pledges to expand workforce training at the Ardendale development, which is a project of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. The state paid for the McKay Automotive Training Center at Ardendale and Edwards has promised to build a collision repair training facility next door. Both centers will be operated by Baton Rouge Community College. EBR Public Schools is building a career high school next door. Ardendale is on 200 acres off Lobdell Avenue.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, from left, Timothy Hardy, chair of Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Matt McKay, owner of All Star Automotive; La. Gov. John Bel Edwards; Gwen Hamilton, executive director of East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority; Dr. Monty Sullivan, LCTCS president; Dr. Larissa Littleton-Steib, chancellor of Baton Rouge Community College; La. State Rep. C. Denise Marcelle; and Baton Rouge Area Foundation Executive Vice President John Spain.



CIVIC PROJECTS



WATER CAMPUS MOVES AHEAD In April, bulldozers began doing the satisfying work of razing outdated warehouses on Nicholson Drive, preparing the land for roads and sidewalks to support the Water Campus. The state is paying for the infrastructure in a deal that will transfer ownership and responsibility for Nicholson Drive from Louisiana to local government.

A new road – Water Street – will be built to connect the Water Campus from Nicholson to River Road, where a building for The Water Institute of the Gulf is under construction on the former city dock.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and its real estate managers, Commercial Properties Realty Trust, are building the Water Campus, a 1.5 million-square-foot place for scientists to collaborate on threats to coasts where more than 3 billion live worldwide.

Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and LSU's Center for River Studies are the first two tenants of the 35-acre campus. The Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions, which will house The Water Institute of the Gulf, will open nearly next year, along with a parking garage to serve the project, mixed in with an urban park and apartments.



NEXT GREAT PLACE In our cover story for the last issue, we wrote about the rise of Government Street. Several projects have advanced since then. Dyke Nelson and business partner David Weinstein began converting the former Entergy buildings on Government Street near downtown into an entertainment destination with apartments and shops. The main building is expected to contain restaurants, bowling lanes, a cocktail bar and music space. The redevelopment will cost \$30 million to \$50 million, with new apartments in a second phase. The buildings are owned by the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, a partner in the project. The RDA was created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and local government.

Another sector of Government—near South Foster Drive—is the stage for Square 46, a mixed-use project that will include a European-style food market. And renovations are underway across Government Street for a branch of New Orleans-based French Truck Coffee. The road itself will be reduced from four to three lanes with bike lanes. Louisiana’s Department of Transportation and development is bidding that project in summer.



ANIMAL SHELTER STARTS CONSTRUCTION

Dogs are wagging their tails. Baton Rouge is getting a new animal shelter, thanks to the Companion Animal Alliance and grants from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and philanthropists. The foundation for the shelter was to be poured in April on Gourrier Lane at the LSU campus. The \$12 million, 30,000-square-foot animal sanctuary will replace a dog-eared, five-decades-old shelter near the Baton Rouge airport.

The shelter will be better located to serve its main purpose: place dogs and cats with families that want them. Created by the Foundation with animal enthusiasts, CAA has already done an exceptional job at that. Since assuming control of the shelter five

CAA has naming opportunities available for the new animal shelter. For more information or to make a donation, please visit CAABR.org.

years ago, the percentage of dogs and cats saved has soared to about 70% from 20%. Because LSU’s School of Veterinary Medicine will be within walking distance of the shelter, students will learn and practice techniques at the shelter. The new shelter will be more efficient to operate, more comfortable to the animals and more welcoming to people who want to adopt them. Buquet & Leblanc is the contractor and Antunovich Associates is the architect.

GRANTS

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation's fund donors make thousands of grants from their charitable accounts. Grants for the first quarter of 2017 are listed below. They total \$9.3 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.

Abraham and Lorraine Williams Community Center \$600
Academic Distinction Fund \$45,432
Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Foundation Inc. \$7,000
Alcorn State University \$1,500
Alliance Francaise de la Nouvelle Orleans \$2,300
Alpha Kappa Psi Foundation \$350
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$112,500
American Heart Association Greater Southeast Affiliate \$7,000
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$805
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$305
AMIkids Inc. \$100,000
Angels' Place Inc. \$2,500
Animal Grantmakers Inc. \$5,000
Ann Maxwell Greer Education Initiative Fund \$40,000
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$17,000
Arts Council of Pointe Coupee \$300
Assess the Need \$2,500
Auckland Communities Foundation \$11,000
Baton Rouge Basketball and Volleyball Association \$750
Baton Rouge Black Alcoholism Council \$2,500
Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation/
The Dunham School \$2,254
Baton Rouge Crime Stoppers Inc. \$1,500
Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center \$8,461
Baton Rouge Emergency Aid Coalition \$1,000
Baton Rouge Epicurean Society LLC \$2,500
Baton Rouge First Church of the Nazarene \$350
Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion
Magnet School \$500
Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. \$13,000
Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$15,355
Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$2,948
Baton Rouge Opera Guild Inc. \$3,001

Baton Rouge Progressive Network \$2,000
Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation Inc./
The Emerge Center \$17,146
Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee \$5,000
Baton Rouge Women's Rugby Football Club \$700
Baton Rouge Youth Coalition \$58,700
Be the Change Inc. \$100,000
Belle Rose Primary School \$5,000
Boy Scouts of America Istrouma Area Council \$22,700
Boys & Girls Clubs of Marion County \$1,000
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$1,000
Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge \$1,250
BREADA (Big River Economic & Agricultural Development
Alliance) \$1,000
BREC Foundation \$177,500
Calcasieu Parish School Board - T. H. Watkins Elementary School \$500
Calcasieu Parish School Board- J. J. Johnson Elementary \$500
Cancer Research and Life Foundation \$10,000
Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$2,100
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$305.29
Capital Area United Way \$64,500
Catholic Community Radio Inc. \$1,000
Catholic High School Foundation \$23,353
Catholic High School Foundation \$16,667
Catholic of Pointe Coupee \$250
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$3,500
Centre for the Arts \$1,000
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./
McMains Children's Develo \$6,250
Change Lives Now \$1,000
Chief's for Change \$148,500
Children's Cup \$1,200
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$158.72
Chippin in for St. Jude \$4,000
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$11,321
City Year Baton Rouge \$212,100
City Year Inc. \$35,000
CLIMB Community Development Corporation \$200,000
Closer Walk Ministries Inc. \$1,000
Community Center of Pointe Coupee \$500
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge Foundation \$4,100
Covenant House New Orleans \$2,000
Cumberland Center Inc. \$8,000
Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans Foundation \$500
Dillard University \$1,500
Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. \$5,000
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$22,950

Dress for Success Charity \$500
 Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$6,159
 Duke University - Sanford School of Public Policy \$800,000
 Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge \$601
 East Baton Rouge Parish Council on Aging Inc. \$250
 East Baton Rouge Parish School System \$500
 East Feliciana Parish School Board \$500
 EBRPSS - Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts \$2,715
 EBRPSS - Baton Rouge Magnet High School \$2,500
 EBRPSS - Belaire High School \$3,000
 EBRPSS - Broadmoor High School \$2,000
 EBRPSS - Brookstown Middle Magnet Academy \$1,500
 EBRPSS - Claiborne Elementary School \$3,000
 EBRPSS - Glen Oaks High School \$1,500
 EBRPSS - Park Forest Middle School \$2,500
 EBRPSS - Park Forest Middle School \$1,500
 EHS Endowment - General Endowment - Unrestricted \$56,866
 Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$2,211,000
 Eternal Word Television Network \$1,000
 Even Ground \$40,000
 Exceptional Lives Inc. \$28,900
 Family Service of Greater Baton Rouge \$2,500
 First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$25,000
 First United Methodist Church \$131,000
 Fleur de Que \$5,000
 Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. \$2,610
 Foundation for Woman's \$53,905
 Friends of Cantera Inc. \$5,500
 Friends of City Park \$5,000
 Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$1,400
 Friends of Magnolia Mound \$1,000
 Friends of the Animals BR Inc. \$1,000
 Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church \$1,000
 Gardere Community Christian School \$2,500
 General Health Foundation \$201,000
 Girl Scouts-Audubon Council Inc. \$150
 Girls on the Run New Orleans \$2,500
 Girls on the Run South Louisiana \$700
 Good Shepherd Nativity Mission School Inc. \$5,000
 Grace Baptist Church \$700
 Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$90,000
 Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$9,500
 Greater Baton Rouge Hope Academy \$21,000
 Greater Baton Rouge Literacy Coalition Inc./UP Alliance \$250
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$7,000
 Habitat for Humanity Orange County \$15,000
 Harry Tompson Center Inc. \$500
 Health Care Centers in Schools \$1,000
 Heritage Ranch \$50,500

Holy Family Catholic Church \$11,576
 Hope Landing \$1,500
 Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$900
 Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$5,691
 Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund \$15,000
 Inner-City Arts \$1,500
 International Center for Journalists Inc. \$10,000
 International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$1,062
 International Rescue Committee \$1,000
 International Society for Krishna Consciousness of New Orleans \$3,753
 International Students Inc. \$5,000
 Itawamba Community College \$500
 Jefferson Parish Public School System \$1,250
 Johns Hopkins University \$2,000
 Jones County Junior College \$500
 Jubilee Pioneers \$10,000
 Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge and Acadiana \$1,938
 Kids' Orchestra Inc. \$4,600
 King of Kings Ministries Inc. \$250
 Knock Knock Children's Museum \$75,500
 Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$1,000
 Leukemia and Lymphoma Society \$700
 Living Word Church of Muskegon \$600
 Livingston Parish Public Schools \$700
 Livingston Parish School Board/Denham Springs High School \$350

EMPLOYEES 1ST GRANTS

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has granted more than \$7 million to employees of firms that established charitable funds after the Great Flood of 2016. One of the foundation's programs—Employees 1st—offers assistance funds to companies. The companies, employees and vendors make tax-free contributions to the funds; the Foundation makes grants to employees who qualify for help after personal troubles or disasters. More than 80 firms opened Employees 1st funds after the flood, and those funds raised more than \$6 million with the assistance of the Foundation. We took applications from employees and made nearly 3,800 grants to those who could show losses.

More than 40 firms have continued their employee assistance funds to make hardship grants throughout the year.

Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$121,107
 Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities \$2,500
 Louisiana Industries for the Disabled Inc. \$250
 Louisiana International Film Festival \$23,500
 Louisiana Lemonade Day Inc. \$13,540
 Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra \$325
 Louisiana State University Alexandria Foundation \$500
 Louisiana State University and A&M College \$13,350
 Louisiana Symphony Association/Baton Rouge Symphony
 Orchestra \$10,000
 LSU Foundation \$4,175
 LSU Foundation - Burden Horticultural Society \$10,000
 LSU Foundation - Department of Kinesiology \$350
 LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$15,000
 LSU Foundation - LSU Press \$16,500
 LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication \$500
 LSU Foundation - Paul M. Hebert Law Center \$1,000
 LSU Foundation - School of Social Work \$300
 LSU Foundation - University Lab School Foundation \$10,250
 LSU Health Sciences Center Foundation \$2,000
 Luke's House - A Clinic for Healing and Hope \$2,500
 Lycee Francais de la Nouvelle-Orleans \$1,250
 Manners of the Heart \$2,750
 Map 10 40 \$2,500
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$107,862
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$15,000
 Mercy Corps \$3,000
 Metanoia Inc. \$15,000
 Metro Centers for Community Advocacy \$2,500
 MetroMorphosis \$62,500
 Miami Suns Youth Development Inc. \$27,027
 Missionaries of Charity Inc. \$3,000
 Mississippi State University \$4,500
 Myron and Roberta Falk Fund \$1,000
 National Parks Foundation \$25,000
 Nature Conservancy of Louisiana \$34,841
 New Ark Baptist Church \$700
 New Life Church of Christ Holiness USA \$600
 New Life United Pentecostal Church of Bogalusa \$600
 New Orleans Ballet Association \$12,500
 New Orleans College Preparatory Academies \$2,750
 New Orleans Opera Association \$6,200
 New Schools for Baton Rouge \$225,000
 Nicholls State University \$3,000
 O'Brien House Inc. \$500
 Of Moving Colors Productions \$1,500
 Old State Capitol Foundation Inc. \$250
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$348
 Opera Louisiane Inc. \$40,000

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church \$1,200
 Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church \$8,333
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$35,719
 Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital \$11,750
 Our Lady of the Lake College \$5,000
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$20,000
 Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge
 Louisiana \$3,000
 Pastoral Center \$25,628
 Pearl River Community College \$500
 Pelican Institute for Public Policy \$25,000
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$7,000
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast \$7,000
 Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition Inc. \$25,000
 PolitiCraft Inc. \$7,000
 Present Truth Prayer Center \$1,000
 President and Fellows of Harvard College \$250,000
 Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$3,000
 Public Education Foundation of Marion County \$2,500
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge \$100,000
 Red Shoes Inc. \$2,500
 Reichert House Incorporated \$2,500
 Ripples of Hope \$5,000
 Rocketkidz Foundation \$3,000
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$110,908
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$10,500
 Rotary Foundation of Rotary International \$100
 Runnels School Inc. \$350
 Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. \$750
 Saint Jean Vianney Catholic Church \$2,495
 Sam Houston State University \$1,000
 Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center \$52,500
 Share Our Strength \$25,000
 Single Stop USA Inc. \$62,500
 Southeastern Louisiana Area Health Education Center
 Foundation \$10,000
 Southeastern Louisiana University \$1,250
 Southern Methodist University \$1,000
 Southern University and A&M College \$4,720
 Southern University Law Center \$15,000
 SouthWings Inc. \$2,500
 St. Aloysius Church \$5,500
 St. Augustine Church \$890
 St. Bernard Project Inc. \$625,000
 St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church \$2,000
 St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church \$11,000
 St. Charles Parish Public Schools: Mimosa Park Elementary
 School \$1,250
 St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church \$3,500

St. Francisville Area Foundation Inc. \$500
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church \$2,000
 St. Gerard Majella Church \$10,500
 St. James Episcopal Church \$30,100
 St. James Episcopal Day School \$500
 St. Jean Vianney Catholic School \$3,868
 St. John Interparochial School \$960
 St. Joseph Cathedral \$1,000
 St. Joseph Seminary College \$1,000
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$5,752
 St. Joseph's Academy \$2,000
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$39,706
 St. Luke's Episcopal Day School \$389
 St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church \$1,500
 St. Mary's Episcopal Church \$500
 St. Michael Special School \$1,250
 St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church \$1,000
 St. Paul's Holy Trinity Episcopal Church \$560
 St. Philip Parish \$3,513.04
 St. Theresa of Avila Catholic Church \$500
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$13,717
 Stuart Hall School for Boys \$5,000
 Teach for America - South Louisiana \$69,350
 The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund \$1,600
 The Ascension Fund Inc. \$12,541
 The Chapel \$350
 The Education Foundation of Alachua County \$2,500
 The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$2,200
 The Idea Village \$10,000
 The Loft \$2,500
 The Mustard Seed Inc. \$500
 The Norwegian Seamen's Church of New Orleans Inc. \$25,000
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$797
 The Salvation Army \$104,000
 The University of Mississippi \$1,500
 The University of Tampa \$500
 The Walls Project \$1,000
 THRIVE Baton Rouge \$102,500
 Tostan Inc. \$4,000
 Trinity Episcopal Church \$20,500
 Trinity Episcopal Day School \$250
 Troy University \$1,500
 Union Congregational Church Crested Butte \$5,000
 Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge \$2,500
 United Southern Express Track Club \$700
 United Way of Beaumont and North Jefferson County \$10,000
 United Way of Greater Houston \$15,000
 United Way of Lamar County \$15,000
 United Way of Morgan County \$7,500

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.

United Way of Southeast Louisiana \$32,500
 United Way of Southwest Louisiana \$15,000
 United Way of the Coastal Bend \$7,500
 University of Alabama at Birmingham \$1,500
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$4,500
 University of Louisiana at Monroe \$3,000
 University of Mississippi Foundation \$1,000
 University of South Alabama \$144,308.37
 University of Southern Mississippi \$4,000
 University Presbyterian Church \$73,750
 University United Methodist Church \$5,000
 Urban League of Greater New Orleans Inc. \$75,000
 Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$4,000
 Volunteers of America Inc. \$5,229
 VWH Racing \$2,000
 Washington & Lee University \$100
 West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$5,963
 West Feliciana Historical Society \$150
 William Carey University \$1,500
 Woman at the Well Outreach Ministry \$600
 Women's Foundation of Mississippi \$100
 Woodlawn Foundation \$1,000
 World Connect Inc. \$25,000
 WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$500
 YMCA of the Capital Area \$26,500
 Young Aspirations/Young Artists Inc. \$15,000
 Youthanasia Foundation \$1,000
 YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,000



Mangroves on the march

*With warming climate, they are taking over salt marshes.
Is that good for Louisiana's coast?*

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by The Water Institute of the Gulf



Probably nobody mistakes a mangrove for an oak. The shrubby trees grow low to the ground. Their mosquito-friendly swampy habitat emits the rotten-egg stink of sulfur.

Mangroves compensate for lacking romance with ecological importance. American Forests describes mangrove forests as “among the most valuable and sensitive ecosystems in the world” for their role in the health of wetlands.

Mangroves are of growing interest in Louisiana, where they are bellwethers of a landscape rapidly changing as a result of climate change. The subtropical trees have another developing role in Louisiana: defenders of the eroding coast.

Long established on barrier islands and Louisiana beaches, native black mangroves have expanded inland into coastal marshland since 1989, the last time there was a hard frost on the coast. In some marshes, mangroves have displaced large tracks of marsh grasses.

“Some of the salt marshes are turning into mangrove forest,” says coastal ecologist Melissa Baustian of The Water Institute of the Gulf. “They are expanding like crazy due to climate change.”

Louisiana is expected to see northward expansion of mangroves more clearly than elsewhere because it has the largest share of marshland of any state, Baustian says.

Notably, the expansion of mangroves here is at odds with sharp reductions in their population worldwide as a result of

industrial fish farming in Asia and coastal development. Mangroves are better protected in Florida and Louisiana, where they provide habitat for shorebirds, buffer fragile soil from wave erosion and serve as marine nurseries.

(Of note to lovers of Louisiana seafood and coastal habitat: A 2012 report by American Forests advised eating Louisiana shrimp instead of imports as a way to help protect mangroves around the world.)

Mangroves are good at preventing soil erosion because their root systems trap and stabilize sediment. Tierra Resources, a New Orleans startup, has developed a fast and inexpensive method of dispersing mangrove seedlings in Louisiana marshes as a means of slowing land loss.

In 2015, the company completed a three-year “air-seeding” pilot project with energy giant ConocoPhillips, which owns 638,000 acres of marshland in Louisiana. Tierra Resources debuted the use of crop-dusting aircraft to drop mangrove seedlings over test sites during the pilot. It also developed technology that uses remote sensing to identify the best sites for planting.

In effect, Tierra Resources’ work speeds the expansion of mangroves that is happening naturally in Louisiana due to climate change, although not fast enough to stop land loss and protect energy infrastructure and vulnerable coastal communities.

The marshland where it is planting mangrove saplings is at risk of becoming “open water” without such intervention, explained Sarah Mack, the firm’s founder and CEO.

“We’re trying to expedite what nature is doing, but that is not happening fast enough to save our marshes,” Mack says. “Our goal is to save habitat by planting mangroves.”

Much about mangroves’ coast-protecting properties is well understood. Their extensive root systems are effective in stabilizing soil. They are also good at storing of carbon in their woody branches instead of releasing it into the atmosphere, making them good climate-change combatants.

In moving into marshes, they provide a new form of habitat that could draw species to coastal zones and potentially increase diversity.

But fundamental questions about how expansion of mangrove forests will affect coastal ecosystems in Louisiana are not well understood.

The Water Institute’s Baustian and LSU researcher Mike Polito are exploring what displacement of salt marshes by mangroves means for the “food web” in estuaries that nurture young fish

“We know this important nursery habitat is physically changing, but we don’t yet know what that means.”

—Melissa Baustian, Water Institute of the Gulf

and other juvenile marine creatures.

Mangroves create a new source of carbon—food, in plain language—when they move into coastal marshes. But do the woody plants really provide food? Studies in Tanzania and the Persian Gulf concluded the trees played little role as food sources. Animal inhabitants of mangrove forests often travel to adjacent habitat for food.

Baustian and Polito are analyzing the carbon composition of tissue from juvenile blue crab and brown shrimp collected from grass only, marsh only and mixed grass-and-mangrove habitat to gain insight on the role of mangroves as food.

The carbon “signature” in the tissue of the sample creatures, collected from south Louisiana wetlands, will reflect their varying sources of food.

The team also will look at issues related to diversity and abundance and hopes to learn whether fish and other established coastal animals are changing their feeding habits as mangroves move in.

“That is something we don’t know,” Baustian says. “We know this important nursery habitat is physically changing, but we don’t yet know what that means.” •

The Water Institute of the Gulf was created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, local and state leaders, and university and science agencies. The Institute provides independent science to help policymakers and offers solutions to save threatened coasts, where more than three billion people live.



Best therapy? *A horse, of course*

*Nonprofit wants to triple
service to children and
adults with disabilities*

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller

When Patrick Finnan was lifted onto the back of a horse for the first time five years ago, he could not hold up his head or sit unassisted in the saddle. He struggled to breathe—his diaphragm too weak to expand effectively and pull air into his lungs.

Born missing a chromosome, muscular weakness makes everything from blinking to digestion difficult for the 9-year-old Prairieville boy who also does not speak.

Equine-assisted therapy at GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship, a 12.5-acre nonprofit riding center in St. Gabriel, has transformed Patrick. His mother says the gains he has made in strength, movement and flexibility are distinct from the benefits of other types of therapy he receives.

"Riding has been huge for us," Courtney Finnan says. "The results were visible and almost immediate after he began riding."

The 11-year-old organization recently embarked on a wide-ranging effort to extend the reach, scope and impact of its therapy programs.

The effort includes examining existing programs and exploring the possibilities for adding new ones, such as therapy designed for veterans and people with mental-health conditions.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is assisting GaitWay Therapeutic in implementing its strategic and marketing plan. To learn more or to donate, visit GaitWay.org.



ONPROGESS

GaitWay Therapeutic
Horsemanship trainer Laura Powell
helps Patrick Finnan during a recent
session at the facility's arena.

It has increased its full-time staff and developed new marketing and outreach initiatives.

GaitWay will develop closer ties with Baton Rouge-area physical therapists and mental health professionals to promote awareness of its programs and the research-backed benefits of equine-assisted therapy.

And this summer, for the first time, its staff will include two riding instructors certified by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, or PATH, which promotes equine-assisted therapies for adults and children with a wide range of special needs, injuries and diagnoses.

“Our goal is to build a first-rate therapeutic-riding center,” says Barbara Caldwell, GaitWay’s executive director, whose extensive nonprofit experience includes running The Green Project, a post-Katrina building materials recycling organization headquartered in New Orleans’ 9th Ward.

Caldwell says growing the organization will involve every member of her team, from the folks who feed the horses to members of the board of directors. “This is going to be a collaborative, team effort,” she says.

GaitWay has its sights on significant expansion this year. Increasing the number of riders it serves each week from 28 to between 70 and 100 is among its goals for 2017.

Volunteers age 14 to 60-plus are essential to GaitWay’s operations for tasks from cleaning stalls to helping during therapy sessions. It will work to more than double the volunteer pool from 50 to 120 or more in 2017.

The physical benefits of therapeutic riding, also known as hippotherapy, come from the interplay of movement between horse and rider. In essence, the rhythmic motion of the walking horse facilitates contraction and extension of the muscles of riders who may be unable to move those muscles on their own.

As much as 20% of hippotherapy’s overall benefit comes from simply being atop the “dynamic surface” of a horse’s back, explains Marieke Budo, a PATH-certified instructor who joined GaitWay in January.

“The movement, the tactile input, the warmth of the horse—these contribute to the restructuring of the rider’s neural path-

ways,” Budo says.

Additional benefits include improved confidence and the pure pleasure of riding a horse. “Part of what this offers is joy,” Budo says.

Twice-a-week, 30-minute riding sessions have helped Patrick Finnan do what once seemed unimaginable to his family. On a muggy morning, he sits atop a small, Norwegian draft horse, the boy and the horse making steady trips around GaitWay’s covered outdoor arena.

Patrick holds a special handle attached to the front of the saddle. A volunteer “side walker” stays alongside the horse for safety. Another volunteer holds the horse’s lead rope. His instructor remains close at his side, offering instruction and encouragement.

Like better-known types of therapy, the goal of equine-assisted therapy is improved function for daily living through physical movement. It does not replace other forms of therapy, but enhances them in a way that is unique.

The riding sessions are hard work for rider and therapist alike. Patrick must be repositioned every few minutes to work a different set of muscles. Laying him across the saddle stretches the muscles of his back, which tighten due to Patrick’s reliance on a wheelchair. Crouching on his knees on the horse’s back improves balance and core strength.

Equine-assisted therapy is well established and widely used in some parts of the world, such as western Europe. There is growing evidence of its benefits for children and adults with diagnoses that include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, brain injury, autism, post-traumatic stress disorder and stroke.

Its benefits are particularly well-established for children with cerebral palsy, who show significant gains in control of their heads and trunks after treatment, according to numerous studies. Research shows improvements in balance, core strength, flexibility, circulation, energy, confidence and endurance for riders with many other diagnoses.

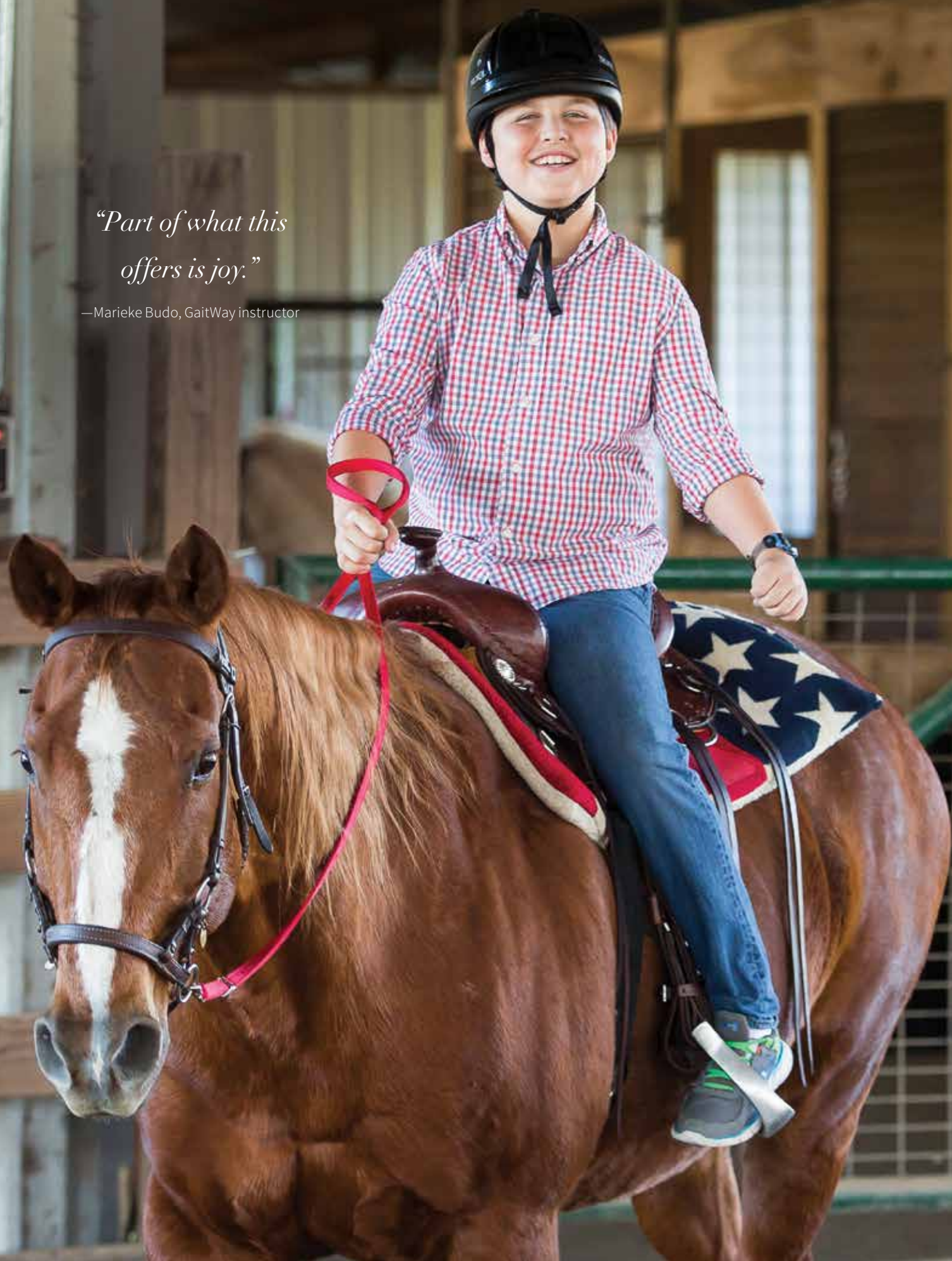
An additional change planned for GaitWay is active participation in research, including collection and submission of data to PATH, Caldwell notes.

“Riding has been huge for us. The results were visible and almost immediate after Patrick began riding.”

—Courtney Finnan

*“Part of what this
offers is joy.”*

—Marieke Budo, GaitWay instructor





Horses' natural sensitivity to human emotions underlies the benefit to riders with disorders like anxiety. If a rider is nervous or anxious, the horse senses that and responds to it. To control the horse's anxiety, the rider must learn to control his or her own nerves, a skill that, with practice, can be applied to stressful situations outside of therapy.

Running a therapy-horse program isn't cheap. The cost of riding sessions covers about 25% of GaitWay's overhead, which runs from about \$3,000 to as much as \$5,000 per year per horse. An adopt-a-horse sponsorship, a Derby Day fundraiser—this year on Saturday, May 6—and grants and donations from individual and corporate supporters are important sources of revenue to cover the difference between what riders pay and the center's costs. Most insurers do not cover the cost of sessions.

Courtney Finnan was not familiar with therapeutic riding when Patrick's physical therapist suggested she look into it five years ago. She concedes she was skeptical at first.

Her outlook changed as Patrick made rapid progress in several functions, including what she describes as nearly immediate improvement in his breathing.

Equine-assisted therapy also helped to reshape the boy's hip joint and made hip surgery—something that once appeared unavoidable for Patrick—unnecessary, Finnan says.

"His physical therapy has also been excellent, but I believe the momentum of the horse was essential in helping his hip bone fit better into its socket," she says. "Several months after being told he would need surgery, Patrick's doctor told us that it was off the table because he no longer needed it."

His digestion also has improved, and sensory problems have diminished. Patrick once recoiled from textures such as carpet and animal fur.

"Now he will reach out to touch the horse or touch the dog at home," she says. "He would not have done that before. Riding has made that difference for him." •



**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.

*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

2017 *John W. Barton Awards*

*Winners answer a
few questions*

By Mukul Verma | Photos by Tim Mueller

Four nonprofit leaders have won the 2017 John W. Barton nonprofit management awards, which are given each year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Two veterans were picked for the Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award and two were picked for a new honor—the Rising Star Award.

Beth Courtney and Melissa Juneau won the nonprofit management award, while Sarah Broome and Lucas Spielfogel won the rising star honor.

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.

Donors with charitable funds at the Foundation nominate nonprofit executives for the recognition; former Foundation chairs choose winners each year. The award is in its 16th year.

Each year, we ask the winners a few questions, offering a glimpse of who they are outside their professional life.



NONPROFITS



Melissa Juneau

Emerge Center executive director

Juneau has worked as executive director of the Emerge Center for nine years and for nonprofits for three decades. Her leadership was instrumental in rebranding the Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation to Emerge and in building the Emerge Center. Her nonprofit raised \$7 million to build the new facility.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?

Making homemade bread on Saturday mornings with my grandmother.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?

Any meal when the Juneaus are able to gather as a family.

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

Brussels, Belgium. This is where our family spent almost eight years. It was a wonderful growth opportunity for our family and I have the most wonderful memories from our time there.

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

Education is the key that opens up doors to all people. A strong investment in our education system for all children from universal preschool through college will yield great dividends to our community.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO IN FICTION?

Charlotte from *Charlotte's Web*

WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?

A citywide urgency in regards to higher quality of place, focusing on controlled growth and planning, connectivity of neighborhoods through bike paths and sidewalks and acceptance of different cultures and belief systems.

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?

The person I most admire is my husband. I admire him for his strength, humility and strong sense of fairness.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

I have no one material possession I truly treasure most. The most precious treasure in my life is being a mother and having the wonderful opportunity to raise four beautiful children and to share in their lives now that they are adults.

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

I don't believe I would choose to come back to experience life differently or be anything else other than myself. I believe we have one shot at life, and we should all make the most of it.

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

I would spend it to support our nonprofit sector. I believe strongly that nonprofits are change agents and have ability to quickly respond to the needs of the community with innovation. Funding challenges often stifle this ability. One billion dollars would certainly be the game changer.

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

I am torn between two places on my bucket list: An African safari to Kenya or Tanzania, or a trip to Australia and New Zealand. With this gift, now I can decide.

Beth Courtney

*Louisiana Public Broadcasting
president and CEO*

She has served as head of the statewide public TV network for three decades. During that time, LPB has grown the network to become one of the best in the nation. Courtney is active in community and civic organizations, including Rotary Club, Baton Rouge Press Club and the Women's Network.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?

It's Christmas and I feel the warm breeze from the ocean. Our family has gone to the far side of Oahu and my brothers and I are paddling out on our rafts to the small islands offshore. There is a smell of ginger and plumeria in the air and we have sung, "Mele kaliki maka, it's the Hawaiian way to say merry Christmas to you." The sky is blue and we are swimming on Christmas Day. I make a mental note as a 12-year-old to remember this day forever.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?

Anything my husband cooks but especially his crawfish etouffee.

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

Every time I fly into Washington, D.C., I am overcome with nostalgia. If the plane flies down the Potomac I can see our last home there, Quarters #7 at Ft. Macnair. Built in 1900, it had nine bedrooms and three stories and overlooked a parade ground. If we arrive from another direction, I can see the Pentagon and our earlier home in Virginia. Finally, I can see the white headstones of Arlington National Cemetery where both my mother and father are buried. Joy and tears in the same glide path.

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

Well, of course, it would be improving education, especially for our youngest children. There are about 1,000 preschool children in Baton Rouge who arrive with limited skills for kindergarten. I have seen how dramatically you can improve a child's chances to succeed if you start at an early age with very basic instruction and the attention of a caring adult. We need to better use PBS Kids programs.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO IN FICTION?

I have always been drawn to Peter Pan. Flying, Neverland, never growing up. Living in London, I thought about Wendy flying around Big Ben every time we drove into the city.

WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?

A sense of cleanliness. How can decent honorable people throw trash everywhere? How can we ignore polluted waterways and littered highways?

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?

Ken Burns. I admire his skill as a storyteller and his passion for history. His work as a documentary filmmaker is extraordinary but he also has a wicked sense of humor.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

My dimples. As an eight-year-old, I wrote a poem about them. "Most girls want dimples just like me but they think of two and

I've got three. But that's what the Lord provided and it tends to make my smile one sided."

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

A grateful daughter who would better appreciate a remarkable mother whose life was far too short.

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

Well, I would start by developing a master plan for the region prepared by the world's smartest city planners. I would then actually start building new roads, bridges, sidewalks and bike paths. I would recruit an army of young volunteers to help keep it all clean and then pay them a stipend to use for their education. Oh, yes. We would document all of this in an award-winning documentary on PBS that would inspire the rest of the state.

HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE BARTON AWARD?

I will take my grandchildren on a trip that will open their eyes on a world that is full of limitless possibilities.

★ RISING STAR ★

Sarah Broome

Thrive BR executive director

Sarah is the perpetual motion machine behind Thrive, a five-day charter school. Students live in new dorms on Brightside Drive during the week and spend their weekends at home.

In just five years, Sarah has built Thrive into a school that educates 140 of the most at-risk students in our parish. In five more, she expects to double the number of students Thrive is serving.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?

Not one specific memory, but I grew up in a town where we could ride our bikes to the pool in the summer. Every day during the summer, all the kids on our street would ride to the pool together and spend the whole day swimming and playing. We came home just in time for dinner and did the whole thing again the next day.



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?

Any kind of sushi

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

Washington, D.C. I went to college there and have wonderful memories of my time there. It's the perfect blend of city and suburb.

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

Serious economic development and opportunity in North Baton Rouge.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO IN FICTION?

Matilda Wormwood, the lead character and protagonist of the bestselling children's novel *Matilda* by Roald Dahl.

WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?

Fully integrated public transportation

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

Pope Francis

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

I have a set of boxes where I keep every card, handwritten note, invitation, program that I have ever received. It's always great to look back through such amazing memories.

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

Multi-faceted investment in North Baton Rouge including housing, commerce, health care and transportation.

HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE \$5,000 BARTON AWARD?

I plan to take a major trip as soon as I can carve out some time.

★ RISING STAR ★

Lucas Spielfogel

Baton Rouge Youth Coalition executive director

The Youth Coalition mentors high-achieving students from under-resourced backgrounds, helping them prepare for college entry exams, fill out the forms and find the money to get a higher education degree. In almost every case, the students are the first in their families to attend college.

Spielfogel has quadrupled the number of students served by the Youth Coalition. And with the help of Lucas and his staff, 38 seniors in the graduating class of 2016 secured more than \$3 million in scholarships.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM CHILDHOOD?

Some of my favorite memories were spending winter Saturdays in Manhattan with my late Grandpa Shelly. He would take my brother Ross and me to get hot dogs and soft pretzels from street vendors, and to tour the Natural History Museum. I was infatuated with gemstones. At the end of our visits, Grandpa Shelly would always let me choose a stone from the gift shop. I still have all of them.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MEAL?

Gary Spielfogel's pasta with homemade meat sauce. It's not even close.

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

My parents' home in Boca Raton, Florida—the house I grew up in—is my Mecca. I love simply visiting and talking with my parents, walking around our neighborhood and playing basketball at the park. Being there is like getting in a time machine, but it's also one of the places I feel most present.

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

A long-term investment in education will always yield the greatest, most enduring return, so we ought to focus on closing our region's massive educational opportunities and resources gap that disproportionately impacts low-income students and students of color. For the state of public education in our region to improve, people with resources cannot only be civically and philanthropically active. Their personal interests must be





John and Scott Duchein Barton

commingled with those of the students and families enrolled in the system.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO IN FICTION?

Robin Hood

WHAT DOES BATON ROUGE LACK THAT YOU WISH IT HAD?

A fitness culture and an urban infrastructure to support it; also, a good kosher deli (but I hear we're getting one).

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?

I most admire my mom, Stacie Spielfogel. She has faced considerable adversity in her life but has always powered through for our family. She's the toughest person I know.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

When my Grandpa Shelly died, I inherited his gold watch, an elegant, nearly-century-old timepiece he wore to work every day for more than 50 years. I wear it infrequently, but when I do, his tenacious spirit empowers me.

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

I would come back as my Grandpa Sidney. I want to experience firsthand the hundreds of stories he's told me over the years. I would also like to come back as a fly on the wall.

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

I would focus on interrupting the racialized, intergenerational poverty that socially and economically immobilizes thousands of Baton Rouge families by constructing a web of interlocking, beyond-school supports to close all resource and opportunity gaps standing between low-income youth and their wealthy peers.

From college access to mental health counseling, computer science to remedial math, and nutrition education to LGBTQ solidarity, this out-of-school ecosystem would, like BRYC, offer what public schools and low-income households often don't have the resources or time to, thus alleviating pressures that keep educators stressed and parents/guardians having to choose between their livelihoods and their children's safety and development.

There are no "at-risk" youth, only youth who live in environments that poverty has made risky. Well-resourced and low-income youth alike make questionable choices. But, the former enjoy a quantity and quality of social and educational reinforcements that enable them to safely learn from failure, while the latter suffer much graver consequences when they err. With \$1 billion, I would work to ensure an equitable distribution of those reinforcements.

HOW WILL YOU SPEND THE \$5,000 BARTON AWARD?

I'm not sure. I'm going to invest it and decide later. •



WE TAKE **RALEIGH'S** ROOTS PERSONALLY

Nestled among the schools and home sites at 5401 North in Raleigh, NC is The Purple Martin Community Farm, a Wilbur Marvin Foundation/LSU AG partnership. The farm's mission is to create a plan to replicate in other communities of similar size and scope to show that even in a small urban area, enough produce can be harvested to support an entire community. Greenhouses will have webcams for distance learning and the farm programming will encourage a passion for eating well, living healthy and nurturing friendships with great food.





PURPLE MARTIN

— COMMUNITY FARM AT 5401 NORTH —

To learn more about 5401 North and The Purple Martin Community Farm, visit 5401North.com.

RALEIGH

5401 NORTH

NORTH CAROLINA

COVER



For more information on Jason Hughes and
Project 70805, visit Project70805.org.

A man with short dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark blue polo shirt, is leaning over a wooden workbench. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. His hands are positioned near a large, black tire with a deep tread pattern. A red-handled tool is visible on the workbench. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Automotive for the people

Jason Hughes returns to help the next generation from his neighborhood

Story and photos by Jeff Roedel

It is early on a hot Monday morning, but if Jason Hughes moves slower than usual as he walks into the north Baton Rouge auto body shop he opened in the fall of 2015, it's because he spent last night locked in an intense pick-up basketball game with, among other former local stand-outs, ex-LSU Tiger and Chicago Bulls forward Tyrus Thomas.

"I might still be in bed right now if there wasn't so much to do," Hughes says as he makes the rounds, looking over lines of cars in various states of rehabilitation and greeting his team of mechanics, body and alignment specialists at Capital City Collision.

Hughes smiles wide as he stops and peeps into a prismatic alcove of the Scenic Highway complex, checking in on a salty-haired employee mixing colors with the precision of an old master painter. "We're looking good today," says Donald Dixon, his hands steadily stirring a small batch of fire engine red like someone else might swirl sugar into their favorite cup of hot tea.

"Alright, Mr. Donald!" Hughes says.

Whether its walking off the soreness from posting up against an All-SEC dunk-machine or winning over naysayers whose collective double-take never slowed Hughes' plans for establishing a state-of-the-art garage in the heart of a dilapidated stretch of North Baton Rouge, Hughes is skilled at pushing ahead without blinking in the face of adversity.

The 34-year-old graduate of Scotlandville High School and Southern University strategically placed Capital City Collision near his old high school, not for the area's immediate market potential but for the shop's fundamental purpose as an instrument of change.

"This is more than just *my* shop," Hughes says. "Capital City Collision is an incubator. Ask anyone in automotive in Baton Rouge, and their biggest problem is a lack of techs. I employ seven guys in the garage, and all of them are old enough to be my father."

Baton Rouge is not alone. Nationally, *Automotive News* describes the industry's aging workforce as "sputtering," with a widening workforce gap that is putting a major strain on

both splashy dealerships and locally-owned auto repair businesses alike. Meanwhile, demand for young mechanics will only increase at least through 2022, with 9 percent more auto techs needed, or an estimated 120,000 jobs becoming available, according to a recent report from the nonprofit Career Education Colleges and Universities.

Locally, Baton Rouge Community College recently cut the ribbon on its \$25 million, 83,000-square-foot McKay Automotive Training Center, a development built specifically to meet workforce demands, according to LCTCS President Dr. Monty Sullivan.

For those not planning to attend college or those who want to learn essential automotive skills as soon as possible, there stands Jason Hughes.

"My parents worked for someone else their entire lives, so I went the entrepreneur route. But because of my mom, I've had a passion to teach. And with everything going on in this city, I just feel like I'm meant to be here right now."

—Jason Hughes

The entrepreneur's vision is to meet this growing need and simultaneously improve the community that raised him, the one he now goes to work in every day.

Last spring, Hughes launched Project 70805 as a nonprofit working to empower, support and increase economic and social capital in North Baton Rouge and across the city at large. Hughes' concept is to equip high school students with the mechanical automotive skills they will need to get hired right after graduation.

Creating more quality career opportunities for African American young men particularly, and at a low cost, will have a huge positive impact on North Baton Rouge, Hughes says, while being industry specific with skills targeted at meeting existing and grown workforce gaps is simply the best way to see immediate results.

"We can't legislate all that needs to be done, which is where nonprofits come in," says State Rep. Edward "Ted" James, a longtime friend of Hughes and a Project 70805 board member. "Plugging in community support with policy is key. You always need strong nonprofits like this one."

Project 70805 aims to begin its Capital City Apprenticeship Program this August with between six and 12 students at Madison Preparatory Academy and a goal of growing the program there before expanding it to other area schools like

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Jason Hughes, center, with board members Courtney Scott and Ted James.





“Our generation wants things to happen quickly; as fast as our pictures upload. But Jason is different. He knows you have to put in the work. And he’s doing it.”

—Ted James, Project 70805 board member

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Scotlandville, Hughes' alma mater.

"He's studied, and he's mastered his expertise," James says. "And the fact is we need an educational piece put into schools to meet this workforce gap in the auto industry and to give these kids hope."

This instructional curriculum for high school seniors is one that Hughes has spent years fine-tuning. The son of a school-teacher, Hughes earned a degree in family and consumer science, and he worked through drafts of materials for educating teenagers with the basics of auto mechanic skills even before Project 70805 officially began. If his curriculum gets certified this summer, students can begin learning from Hughes and his instructors this fall.

"My parents worked for someone else their entire lives, so I went the entrepreneur route," Hughes says. "But because of my mom, I've had a passion to teach. And with everything going on in this city, I just feel like I'm meant to be here right now."

His other collaborator at Project 70805 is veteran business strategist Courtney Scott of the BYAN Group. Hughes also is in the process of adding a fourth member, someone magnetic from the faith-based community, he says, to establish a well-rounded and well-connected board of directors.

"Jason is a goer, a doer," Scott says. "And he expects everyone around him to be the same way. He believes in giving back and the connection between really helping those around you and them supporting your business."

That call to give back sounded loud and clear last August when historic flooding struck Baton Rouge and the region. Though designed to develop an automotive workforce, Project 70805 quickly mobilized to provide flood relief to those affected in North Baton Rouge. Hughes' team collected nonperishable foods, clothing and supplies for distribution to hurting families. With a donation from the NBA and other local campaigns, Project 70805 brought in more than \$40,000 in flood relief in just a few months.

"The flood was a setback in the sense that it changed the nonprofit's mission for a while, but it was so humbling because we were able to help a lot of people," Hughes says.

Getting the nonprofit back on track and keeping it focused on the original mission statement is one of Courtney Scott's main responsibilities.

"We want to grow the Capital City Collision facility to house in-classroom training on site," she says. "Then we can really begin identifying young black males in this community and give them opportunity to see more career options."

While James has been the group's go-to consultant on the

legal aspects of a nonprofit and for connecting the group with decision-makers at the Baton Rouge Area Chamber and in the mayor's office—"Sharon [Weston Broome] has shown a lot of support in her first few months in office," Hughes says—Scott has been actively building community engagement and working with Hughes to create partnerships designed to lift the community.

"I don't want to just plant something here for me, and it not be a part of the community," Scott says.

Even as his auto repair business grows, funding Project 70805 remains Hughes' biggest hurdle going into this summer. He's hesitant to put a number on his organization's short term budget, but sustainability for future growth is a necessity that's not going to go away.

"I don't need to draw any income from the nonprofit, I just want the project to make a difference," Hughes says. "But if I'm going to ask my employees to be instructors for high school students, I need to make sure they get taken care of for that work, and it's not just me asking them to do more work *pro bono*."

Hughes' drive to impact his community is one born from his desire to set the best example he can for his young son, and it's a goal fostered by a devoted group of friends who meet weekly to discuss ways they might improve Baton Rouge. Hughes encourages everyone to form similar groups for encouragement and accountability. That pick-up game of basketball? Some of those hoopsters are in Hughes' community group, James included.

"Our generation wants things to happen quickly, as fast as our pictures upload," James says. "But Jason is different. He knows you have to put in the work. And he's doing it."

That work includes a strong thread of mentorship, because Hughes believes that to enact lasting socioeconomic change, his program must convey soft skills, provide positive role models and showcase strong personal leadership for the city's next generation.

"While we have these students, we do life skills as well," Hughes says. "It's not just about what they'll be doing for work, it's about getting them engaged with the community and learning about everything from how to balance a checkbook, to how credit cards and finances work—everyday things."

Millennials would call this process "adulthood." Hughes, Scott and James just want to see it happen sooner for the youth of North Baton Rouge.

"We can take kids and help them see automotive as a great career opportunity," Hughes says. "But beyond that we do life skills and entrepreneurship skills and everyday skills. At the end of the day, we want to carve out for them a real path to follow." •

Better together

The nonprofit campus, Northshare, opens in Covington

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photos by Chuck Billiot

Nationwide, co-work spaces have become the preferred professional habitats of many start-ups. Sleek and modern in design, these inspiring hubs provide hopeful entrepreneurs an affordable place to get things done and network with others who share similar aspirations. It's an idea with a lot of upside.

Entrepreneurs are able to keep expenses down while reaping intangible benefits that come from making connections in a community of highly motivated individuals.

That kind of inspiring work environment also befits nonprofit organizations, believes Susan Bonnett Bourgeois, CEO of the Northshore Community Foundation.

Bourgeois recently oversaw the launch of the foundation's new 7,000 square foot co-work center for nonprofits in Covington named Northshare. Mimicking for-profit co-work spaces, Northshare features offices, desks and shared resources like equipment, educational programs and meeting space available to members. Housed on a visible corner in the West 30s neighborhood, Northshare's purpose is to foster nonprofit productivity and collaboration by bringing agencies devoted to Northshore causes under one roof.

"This represents the culmination of several goals for us," says Bourgeois. "It's really exciting to see it come together and to begin to see what we can accomplish on this campus."

The Northshore Community Foundation occupies Northshare and leads its programming and administration. A handful of member nonprofits have also moved staff into the shared space. Those currently include the United Way of Southeast Louisiana's Northshore division, Keep Louisiana Beautiful, representatives from Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, the National Alliance on Mental



NORTHSHARE

“This represents the culmination of several goals for us. It’s really exciting to see it come together and to begin to see what we can accomplish on this campus.”

—Susan Bonnett Bourgeois, Northshore Community Foundation





Illness, the animal rescue nonprofit Big Sky Ranch/Catnip Foundation, and Excelling Youth, a mentoring program.

Northshore is also home to the foundation's Coatney Center for Philanthropy, established by philanthropist Doyle Coatney in 2008 to help regional nonprofits increase their capacity to better achieve their missions. The Coatney Center has long offered resources and training for nonprofits, and now it also has two permanent meeting spaces that hold up to 30 and up to eight guests. Local nonprofits who join Northshore as members are able to reserve these conference rooms for events, workshops or community meetings.

Members can also drop by and take advantage of "hot seat" open desks and free Wi-Fi and coffee. By offering both private offices, open desks and indoor and outdoor communal spaces, Northshore is designed to facilitate both focused productivity and dynamic collaboration, says Bourgeois.

The space also accomplishes another important objective. Located within the West 30s neighborhood, it furthers the foundation's commitment to this area, a historically significant but economically depressed neighborhood that has experienced poverty and decay. In 2008, the foundation funded a master plan to help the West 30s become more sustainable through quality affordable housing and other projects. By occupying a spot in the neighborhood at the corner of North Columbia Street and West 29th Avenue, the foundation demonstrates a palpable commitment to the community.

The idea for Northshore sprouted when Coatney gave the foundation an additional gift of \$300,000 to establish a permanent home for the Coatney Center for Philanthropy, leading Bourgeois to look for options. The corner lot in the West

30s owned by the Parish of St. Tammany presented a unique opportunity. Bourgeois worked with Parish President Pat Brister to obtain a no-cost 99-year cooperative endeavor agreement that allowed the foundation to build a campus for nonprofits. The vision of the Coatney Center expanded into a larger vision. Along with the center itself, the campus would include carefully designed shared work space. Matching the \$300,000 and the land, Bourgeois and her board raised an additional \$1.4 million to complete the project. Northshore opened officially in January 2017 and held its dedication in April.

One of the most important byproducts of Northshore is the ability for its members to showcase their willingness to collaborate to donors, says Michael Williamson, president and CEO of the United Way of Southeast Louisiana.

"Susan and I have been meeting for years to discuss ways we could work together, and when the opportunity came up to move our Northshore staff into Northshore, we jumped on it," says Williamson. "Our goal was to show that by having a United Way, a community foundation and other partners under the same roof we can begin to create a whole new collaborative environment. We're not competitors. We're partners. And I think this project is a great showing of that. Not to mention, it's just a really hip place to be."

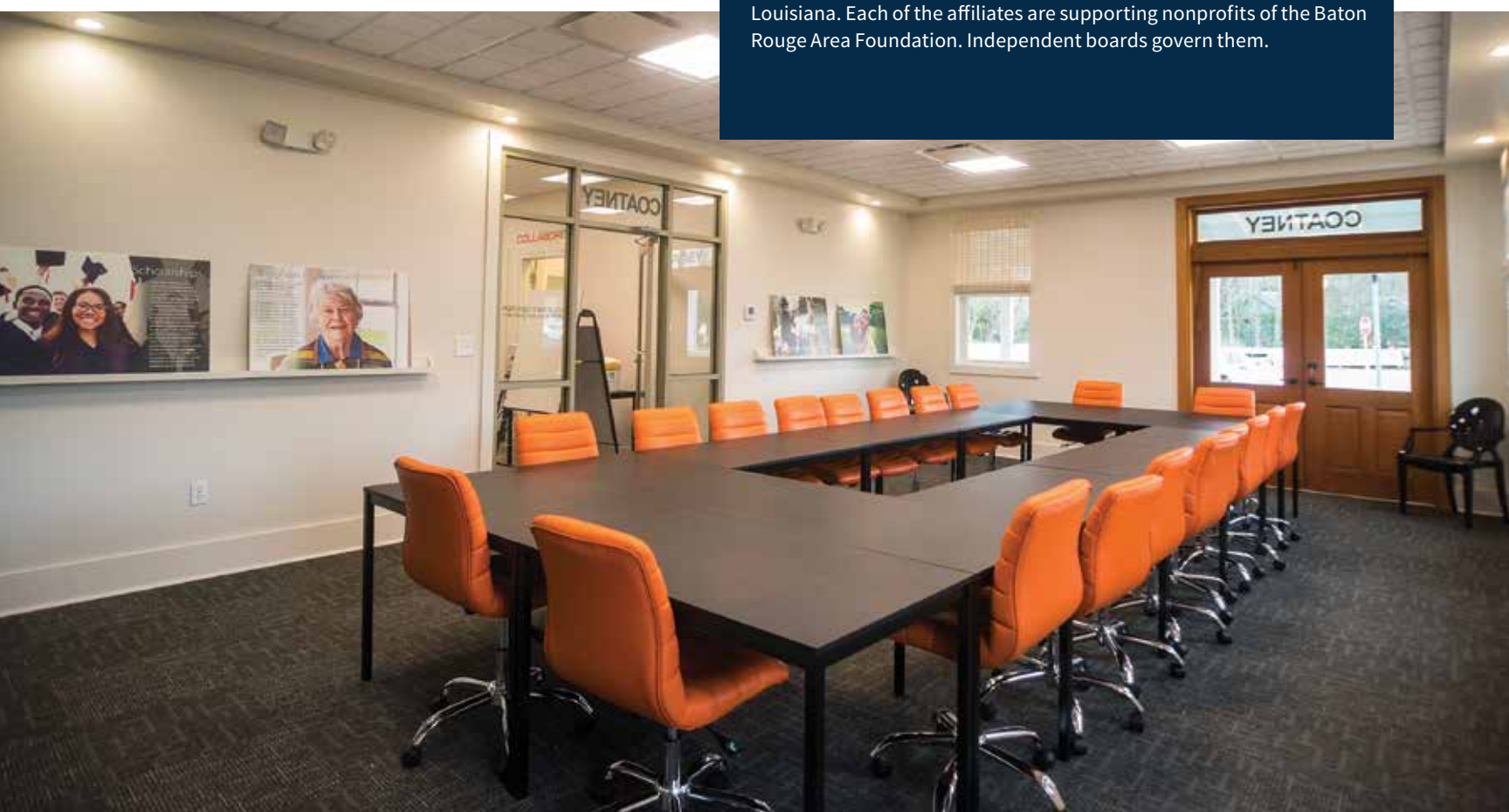
Indeed, an energetic, coffee shop vibe is something that was important to Bourgeois and her staff as they worked with architects to shape Northshore's design and interior flow. The goal was to create a place that drew in members with an atmosphere that felt both progressive and productive.

Quiet spots for working are balanced with communal spaces that accommodate members dropping by to grab coffee, exchange ideas, eat lunch outside and get some work done. The campus invites all sorts of dynamic interactions that surpass water cooler exchanges, since member agencies are in and out daily, and each motivated by the same purpose—to make the Northshore stronger for all residents.

"I think this idea is very forward-thinking and brave," says Williamson. "I like the idea of having our donors come in and see us working together, learning about our work and finding ways to invest in all of us." •



The Northshore Community Foundation is an affiliate of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, as is the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana. Each of the affiliates are supporting nonprofits of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Independent boards govern them.

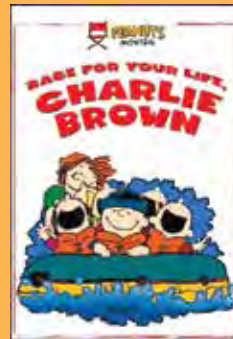




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An American singer-songwriter from San Antonio, Texas, his debut album earned him five Grammy Awards. Cross is perhaps best known for his US Top Ten hit songs, "Ride Like the Wind", "Sailing", and "Arthur's Theme (Best That You Can Do)" the latter recorded by him for the film Arthur starring Dudley Moore. "Sailing" earned three Grammys in 1981.

CHRISTOPHER CROSS

JUNE 1 • 7:30 PM

Quinn Sullivan has shared the stage with Buddy Guy, Eric Clapton, Los Lobos, The Roots, Derek Trucks & Susan Tedeschi and Joe Bonamassa, and he opened for B.B. King, who later invited him to play his treasured "Lucille" guitar.

Yes, Sullivan has packed some extraordinary experience into his decade-long career, and that's even more remarkable when you consider that he's only 17.



QUINN SULLIVAN

JUNE 17 • 8PM





Serving opportunities

BR charity hosts top wheelchair tennis tournament in country

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photos by Tim Mueller

Alfie Hewett of Great Britain competes in the men's final doubles match during the 28th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament in March at the Paula G. Manship YMCA.

The Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association produces an annual "Hallowheel" charity tennis tournament to raise money for the Cajun Classic, the only Level 1 wheelchair tennis tournament in America.

Like high school seniors across the country, University High School student Alex Saporito has spent the last several months visiting colleges. But in addition to finding schools with strong biology programs, Saporito is also weighing institutions that want him as an athlete. The 19-year-old Prairieville resident is an accomplished wheelchair tennis player.

"It started about eight years ago when my mom was looking for something to keep me active," says Saporito, who has spina bifida. "She found a wheelchair tennis program, and I started playing."

Saporito began taking lessons from Carlos Roldan, a certified wheelchair tennis coach in Baton Rouge who had formerly coached professional wheelchair tennis athletes in Argentina. Moldan had moved to Baton Rouge as a result of his wife's employment with LSU.

While the sport seemed tough at first, it didn't take Saporito long to discover he had a natural talent in tennis. Within a year, the then-preteen had mastered enough skills to start playing in youth wheelchair tennis tournaments across the country, something he's done consistently since then. He and his father, Scott, take to the road a few times a year and head for tournaments on the West Coast, or in places like St. Louis, Missouri and Nashville, Tennessee. In 2014, Saporito was selected to participate in the United States Tennis Association Junior Wheelchair Tennis Camp in Mission Viejo, California, the same year he was named the Louisiana Wheelchair Tennis Player of the Year by

the Louisiana Wheelchair Tennis Association.

But one of the events that Saporito has returned to routinely—and one where he can both play and hobnob with professional wheelchair tennis players from around the globe—happens to be in Baton Rouge. Since 1989, the city has hosted the Cajun Classic, an internationally known wheelchair tennis tournament held at the Paula G. Manship YMCA Lamar Tennis Center. The event is presented by the Greater Baton Rouge Community Tennis Association and is produced by the Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association. It attracts professional athletes from around the world, and is the only Level 1 wheelchair tennis tournament in the United States.

“The players that come are the equivalent of watching Roger Federer or Serena Williams,” says Rusty Jabour, former GBRCTA president and a volunteer with the event. “It’s incredible to be able to watch them play.”

One of the Cajun Classic’s distinguishing features is that it incorporates different levels of play, from ranked professionals, to experienced amateurs like Saporito, to local novices getting involved in the sport for the first time, says Tournament Director Jennifer Edmonson. This year’s event, which took place in late March, featured 13 top International Tennis Federation stars, as well as beginners playing in their first tournament. Nine amateur Baton Rouge players, Saporito among them, also competed.

“One of the things that people find most interesting is that you watch a match for a few minutes and the wheelchair disappears,” says Edmonson.

Indeed, wheelchair tennis is fast, furious and satisfying to both watch and play. Athletes demonstrate remarkable athleticism as they hit the ball with the same accuracy as a player who can use her legs, with the added task of having to maneuver their wheelchairs into position using specified turns and figure-eights. Once in place, they quickly return the ball with an eye on placement.

Professional players, as well as many serious amateurs like Saporito, play in sport wheelchairs, which are outfitted with trim, angled wheels that allow for nimble, precise movements on

the court. Tournament organizers at the Cajun Classic donated a chair to Saporito several years ago to foster his national participation in the sport.

For an athlete, a sport wheelchair means the game is as fulfilling – and at times as frustrating—as it is for any player. And for spectators, watching a player target his chair to the perfect mark on the court adds another exhilarating layer of competition.

“The only difference in play for a wheelchair athlete and an able-bodied athlete is that a wheelchair athlete gets two bounces,” says Roldan. “But a lot of the time, they don’t need that second bounce.”

Roldan has coached several local wheelchair tennis players over the years, as well as numerous able-bodied players through his work with well-known local tennis pro Johnny Wahlborg. He says he sees little difference between the two types of players.

“I never see wheelchair tennis players as disabled athletes,” says Roldan. “I challenge them just like I do any other player. I tell them, ‘I’m the coach and you’re the player, and I don’t feel sorry for you.’ In a short time, they realize what they can do.”

Insiders also point out that wheelchair tennis athletes can play able-bodied athletes. Saporito, in fact, plays on the University High School tennis team.

“One of the things that’s so awesome about tennis is how inclusive it is,” says Edmonson. “An abled-bodied athlete can play with a wheelchair athlete and everybody can be on the court enjoying the sport.”

To support the Cajun Classic, the BRWTA produces the annual “Hallowheel” charity tennis tournament during which wheelchair and able-bodied players team up in doubles competition. The event raises funds for the Cajun Classic and proves the point that wheelchair tennis can be a regular component of tournament play. The BRWTA also hosts the annual Hallowheel Adaptive Tennis Clinic in the fall for kids and adults who are new to the sport of tennis.

For some, it might just become a personal passion. •

“One of the things that people find most interesting is that you watch a match for a few minutes and the wheelchair disappears,”

—Jennifer Edmonson, tournament director



Doubles teammates, from left, Stefan Olsson of Sweden and Eliphas Maripa of South Africa celebrate a winning shot during the 28th annual Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Tournament at the Paula G. Manship YMCA. The tournament featured 115 top-ranked professionals and amateurs from 19 countries, 23 states and the Baton Rouge area.

Factory made.

Made affordable.

*A manufactured home that blends
into neighborhoods could revive them*

By David Jacobs | Photos by Tim Mueller

The new raised cottage on West Drive in Bernard Terrace that Mid City developers Jak Kunstler and Susannah Bing are showing off doesn't look much different from its older neighbors. But unlike the other houses on the block, this one wasn't built here; it was shipped from a factory, shiny appliances included.

"This house shipped with the light bulbs in and the shower curtain already installed," Bing says.

There are a few things left on the punch list—the molding needs a bit of paint, a few shutters need to be installed—but otherwise, this three-bedroom, two-bathroom, 1,256-square-foot modular house is move-in ready and, to the untrained eye at least, indistinguishable from a stick-built house.

The house meets International Residential Code building standards and can withstand winds of up to 130 miles per hour, which probably can't be said for nearby houses built decades ago. The foundation alone costs \$8,500, Bing says. "It is so far over-engineered for this house, but that's what they require it," she says.

It's also cheaper than houses around it. Kunstler and Bing expect to sell the house for \$10 to \$15 less per square foot than the neighborhood average.

They plan to invite local officials, nonprofit leaders and other stakeholders with an

Jak Kunstler and Susannah Bing



SPARK



interest in affordable housing or infill development for a tour, to demonstrate the quality that's possible in a factory-built modular home.

"We are only doing urban redevelopment," Kunstler says. "But this model can easily be replicated anywhere in the parish, and anywhere in the state," Bing adds.

A NEW APPROACH

Factory-built manufactured homes usually represent about 10% of new single-family homes in a given year, says Mark Bowersox, senior vice president of industry relations with the Virginia-based Manufactured Housing Institute. While other types of manufactured houses are built to a federal standard set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, modular homes are regulated by the states and typically held to the same standards as traditionally built homes.

Manufactured housing is most popular in rural areas that aren't attractive to traditional builders, Bowersox says. But since the houses are made in a secure factory, where theft of tools and materials is not an issue, and can be ready in weeks instead of months, they potentially could be a boon to urban infill development, he says.

"We will never rebuild the inner cities of our city, our state, our country, without using factory-built housing," says

Steve Duke, executive director of the Louisiana Manufactured Housing Association. About 40 or 50 factories will ship to the Louisiana market, Duke says. While some only offer certain models, many are willing to customize.

Modular homes are not a separate category from site-built homes, they're just built in a different way, says Steve Payne, director of business development for the U.S. operations of Champion Home Builders, a leading builder of manufactured and modular housing. While modular homes may be cheaper than homes built the old-fashioned way, he says, that's not necessarily the case. As with any type of construction, cost will vary depending on materials and amenities.

However, modular homes can reduce construction time by more than 35%, Champion says, and while you still need skilled labor to finish construction on site, you don't need as many workers.

So there's plenty of potential savings to be had for a smart developer, particularly in markets like post-flood Baton Rouge where construction costs are rising and contractors are in demand.

"You can have one electrician complete a multitude of modular units in the same time frame as he could do just one site-built house," Payne says.

Louisiana residents who want to get into this business as manufacturers, retailers, installers, salespeople or developers have to complete a training program and obtain a license from the Louisiana Manufactured Housing Commission.

Bing and Kunstler's K.C.K. Real Estate & Development is the only licensed manufactured home developer based in Baton Rouge.

Duke says obtaining a license requires a one-year apprenticeship and a minimum net worth of \$50,000. He says the standards were loosened after Hurricane Katrina, which created problems for consumers, but says things have been tightened up since then.

Kunstler says he's been interested in modular housing since the 1970s. But today's modular homes have come a long way from their prefabricated, A-frame predecessors.

"The small-lot infill house is really critical for providing affordable housing, and to bring a new population into older neighborhoods."

—John Fregonese, FuturEBR lead planner

REVIVING THE CORE

Bing and Kunstler want to fill the need for affordable and market-

rate houses in Mid City, and they want to do it with houses that are high-quality and still match the aesthetic of the older neighborhoods.

They're working with two manufacturers, and they hope to develop relationships with more, but it's not easy to find factories with enough excess capacity to take on new customers. Bing and Kunstler pick their features, and the houses are built on an assembly line, much like an automobile. Bing says watching the process is "mind-boggling."

"It seems so odd that this already-built bathroom is going down an assembly line," she says.

The house on West Drive was shipped in two pieces and put together along what's called a "marriage line" by contractors on-site.

Bing and Kunstler's current modular project consists of three lots and the one house. Navigating the red tape to get to this





point has not been easy or cheap. Just getting their license from the Manufactured Housing Commission was a difficult process, Bing says.

They fought for and obtained a waiver from the city-parish so they wouldn't have to put in a sidewalk. There is no existing sidewalk on their block, so their sidewalk would have been 120 feet long and connected to nothing, and building it would have necessitated cutting down two mature live oak trees.

The city-parish's outdated, suburban-oriented development code, currently in the midst of an update, also has been an obstacle. The code only allows for lots that are 50 feet wide, even though most lots in Mid City are only 40 feet wide, Bing says.

Small lots are the norm in many of the city's older neighborhoods, so the development code makes urban development more expensive and therefore a riskier investment than it needs to be, she says. Bing says they had to get their three lots rezoned to an ISPUD just to get three houses on their property, adding thousands to their project costs.

"The traditional developer is not going to do that," she adds. "How do you expect to be able to solve the housing crisis in our older urban areas when the lot sizes are not in compliance with what is regulated by the city? We need to loosen up some of those regulations."

Small lots tended to be the norm in most cities before the 1950s, says Portland-based planner John Fregonese, who led the creation of the FuturEBR master plan and has worked on the development code update.

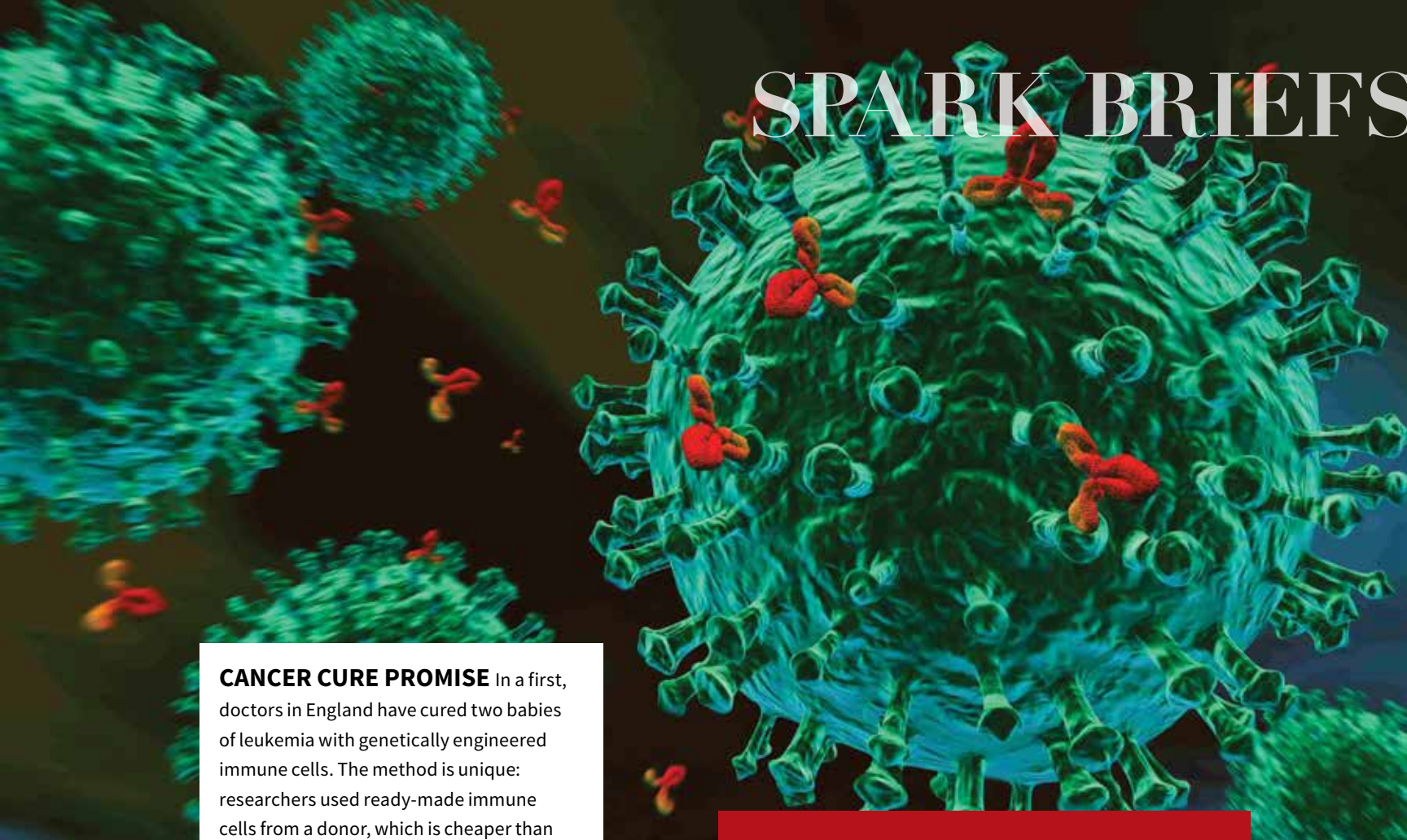
Fregonese has recommended making it easier to develop on the city's existing small lots. He says Baton Rouge has thousands of such lots, mostly concentrated within the city limits, and many of them are vacant.

"The small-lot infill house is really critical for providing affordable housing, and to bring a new population into older neighborhoods," he says.

In Portland, for example, houses on lots as narrow as 25 feet are very popular, he says. Houses on such lots can accommodate homes that fit the traditional character and development patterns of their neighborhoods, often better than mixed-use buildings or townhomes would.

"The modular house can match that architecture and avoid the look of a trailer," Fregonese says. The consistency and economies of scale provided by factory-built modular housing can help developers provide a product that is both affordable and high-quality, he says, and adds that bringing in new homeowners, as Bing and Kunstler hope to do, is a crucial element of revitalizing the city's core. •

SPARK BRIEFS



CANCER CURE PROMISE In a first, doctors in England have cured two babies of leukemia with genetically engineered immune cells. The method is unique: researchers used ready-made immune cells from a donor, which is cheaper than re-engineering and infusing the patient's own cells. Rights to the treatment have been sold to biotech company Collectis.

↓ 40%

Drop in costs for batteries since 2014. Global energy-storage capacity is forecast to grow to 15 times current levels by 2024. Giant batteries appear to be the future.



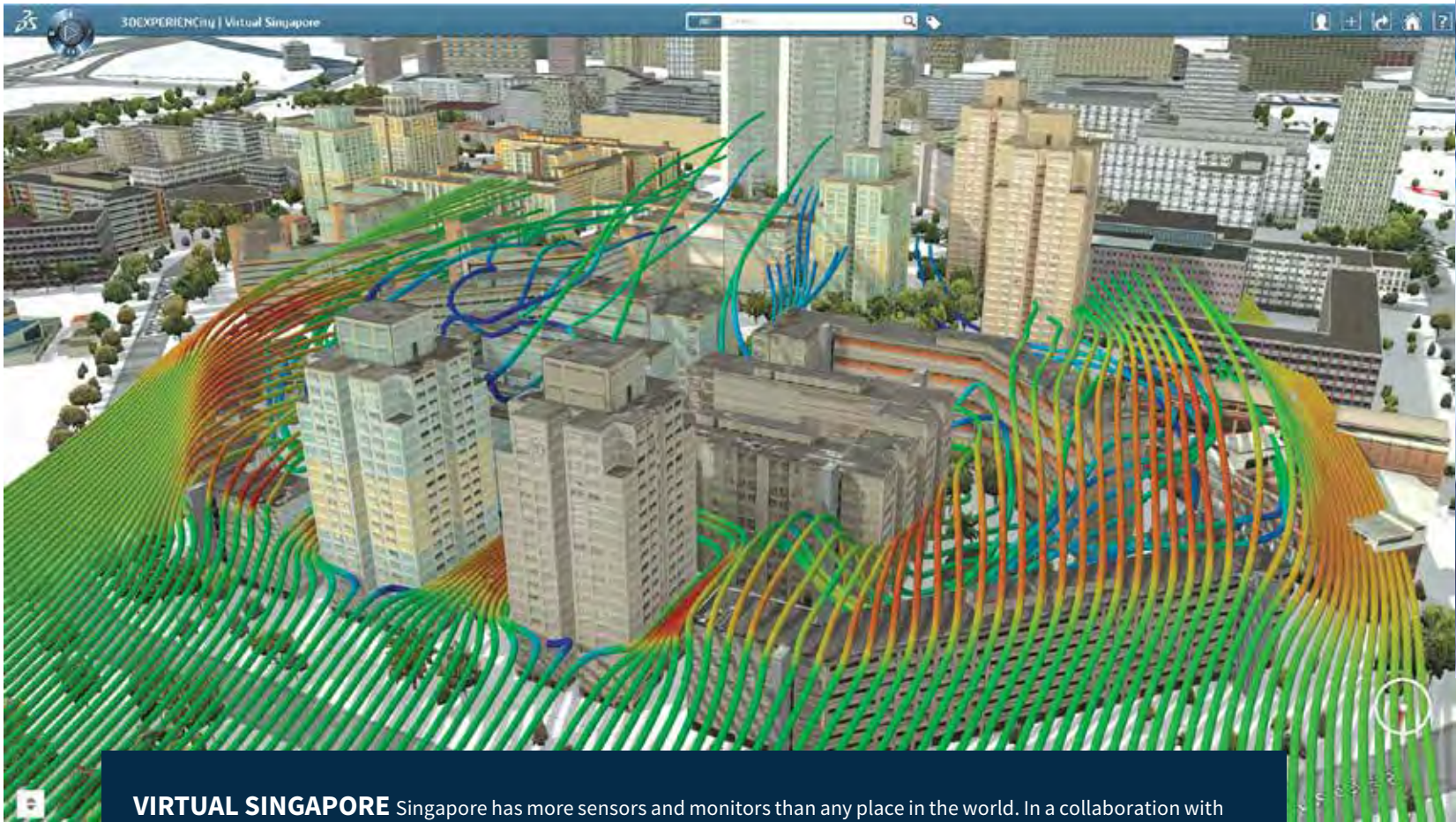
“LOOK MA, NO HANDS.” SOMEWHAT.

Cars that drive themselves are getting better at navigating the world.

Drivers took control from computers 124 times over the 636,000 miles that Google Waymo's automated cars traveled in 2016, a

19% decrease over the previous year. The improvement was reported by Google to California authorities, who require all companies with self-driving cars to submit such data.

All other firms also reported sharp drops in human interventions of self-driving cars. Later this year, Tesla pledges that its car will travel across America without a single human intervention.



VIRTUAL SINGAPORE Singapore has more sensors and monitors than any place in the world. In a collaboration with French software company Dassault Systems, the city-state is taking the firehose of data from its digital infrastructure to create a virtual replication. City officials and urban planners will have real-time 3D visuals of what's happening in the city. They can click on an apartment building to see energy use, building materials, how many people live there. They can look at transit connections, congestion, weather and public health data, such as disease outbreaks. The simulation cost \$73 million.

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RELIEF FROM GOVERNMENT Across the country, 9 million Americans are missing out on more than \$13 billion in food stamp benefits. The poor are missing out because they don't know they qualify, partly because the process imposed by government beats them down, sometimes intentionally.

mRelief is providing relief. The Chicago startup has simplified the government's suffocating process, asking people to answer 10 online questions to determine whether they can receive food stamps. The service is available in 42 states, including Louisiana.

mRelief is working with some willing state governments on delivery of benefits as well.



SOLAR GETTING CHEAPER

When it begins operating this year, SolarCity's factory in frigid Buffalo will produce 10,000 panels each day, enough to power more than 300,000 homes. Each year those bright numbers are only a part of the story. SolarCity will be virtually integrated, capable of selling and installing the panels on homes. And because of that, the company will reduce the cost of solar electricity below \$2.50 per watt by the end of this year from \$4.73 in 2012. The costs include sales and marketing, manufacture and installation. More than 1,500 workers will be employed by Tesla, which owns Solar City.

FAR OUT Acme Corp., the company that supplied Wile E. Coyote with products that went kaput, is *not* behind the idea of an autonomous plane. Airbus is. The world's second-largest passenger aircraft manufacturer is building a prototype of Vahana, an electric plane that would transport passengers on trips of around 50 miles. The company plans to test the plane in 2017 and have it available in a decade. The Vahana will fly like a plane, with wings and propellers facing forward, for most of its time in the air. A helicopter version was ditched because it required twice the energy to travel the same distance. (More at Vahana.aero)



FAIRPHONE Smartphones are disposable, and expensive. Fairphone is an alternative. You can upgrade and repair the modular phone with tools found in your junk drawer. Want to upgrade the camera or headphone jack? A screwdriver is all you need. The phone is available this summer at Fairphone.com for \$560.

CODA



WATERCOLOR

Art salvaged from the old city dock will be placed in the Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions, which is the building that will be headquarters for The Water Institute of the Gulf on the levee in downtown. The Center is part of The Water Campus, which is being developed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust. More at TheWaterCampus.org.



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SUMMER FESTIVAL



FRESH FEST CELEBRATES LOCAL FOOD AND FARMERS IN AN TEN WEEK SUMMER FESTIVAL.

Each week highlights a different local agricultural product at the Red Stick Farmers Market with thematic cooking demonstrations, food sampling, kids' activities and local music.



FRESH FEST 2017

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|---------|------------------------|
| MAY 27 | Butterfly Extravaganza |
| JUNE 3 | Dairy Day |
| JUNE 10 | Blueberry Bash |
| JUNE 17 | Tomato Me Crazy |
| JUNE 24 | Corn & Squash-Tastic |
| JULY 1 | Star Spangled Saturday |
| JULY 8 | Just Peachy |
| JULY 15 | Everything Eggplant |
| JULY 22 | Cool as a Cucumber |
| JULY 29 | Melon Mania |

Find recipes and market updates at www.breada.org.
Facebook.com/breada ~ Instagram: @redstickfarmersmarket ~ market@breada.org ~ 225-267-5060

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