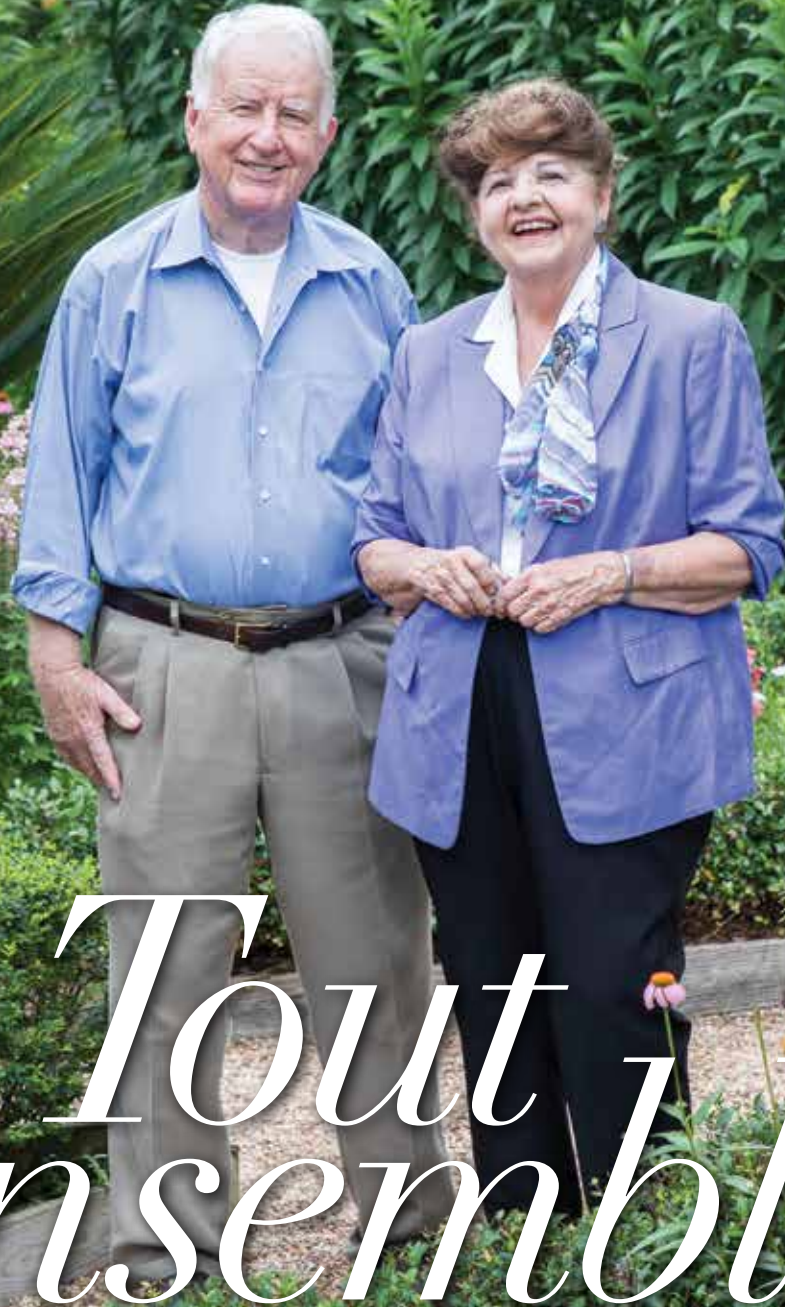


CURRENTS

third quarter twenty-seventeen . baton rouge area foundation



Tout ensemble

*A Pointe Coupee couple spent 50 years gathering
French Louisiana's material culture*



Cutline here





A NEW COLLABORATION WITH WORLDWIDE SOLUTIONS

Deltares of the Netherlands and The Water Institute of the Gulf will pursue world-class solutions in coastal protection and restoration. The Water Campus will be the global leader for the very best minds in coastal management. Come be a part of the solutions that will save our coast and many others around the globe.

- Work in a collaborative environment of scientists, engineers and researchers all dedicated to enhancing the efforts to restore and enhance coastal environments.
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- Home of The Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority, LSU Center for River Studies, The Water Institute of The Gulf and The Center For Coastal & Deltaic Solutions.



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THEWATERCAMPUS.ORG



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*Baton Rouge
Area Foundation*

100 North Street, Suite 900 | Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802 | braf.org

LETTER



As a city and parish, we've sorted ourselves by how much we earn and what color we are. Rich people live in one place, poor people in another. Blue collar workers in the southeast, white collar in the south. These same-same communities are mostly at the borders of the parish.

But at the center is a place that's quite different: Mid City is diverse. People of all types—old, young, black, white, rich, poor, middle class—get along just fine in shared public places. In a few parts of Mid City, people of different means actually live next to each other. And now, with a little renaissance underway in the neighborhood, there's a growing sense that Mid City could become a model for other parts of the parish, giving hope that we can mend the many divisions and increase our shared prosperity.

To understand what's happening in Mid City, it helps to know a little history.

As Baton Rouge's first true suburb, Mid City thrived in a vast area stretching from just outside downtown all the way to Lobdell Avenue. Retailers lined the streets. Three of our largest high schools were—and still are—within Mid City's boundaries. Public spaces like parks and churches brought together people of all kinds. Many remember the Piccadilly in Westmoreland

Shopping Center, for example, as a great gathering place for people of all types who lived around it.

The flourishing district was disrupted by two forces around the same time in the 1960s. Desegregation and the interstate enabled white flight to surrounding parishes.

Mid City was left behind, struggling. Real estate values plummeted and, with established neighborhoods coming unwound, crime increased. To counter this decline, the parent of Baton Rouge General created the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance. It has done well to halt the deterioration and sustain what remained of Mid City.

And now, the unexpected: over the past few years, Mid City has started coming back. One reason for its revival is the neighborhood's diversity. Drawing on its tradition of social mixing, a number of younger entrepreneurs have chosen Mid City as the place to make their mark on Baton Rouge because, once again, it's the cool place to open a business.

Old warehouses and homes are being converted into music venues, restaurants, art galleries, and coffeehouses. It's a smart move too: cheap real estate and rising property values in some of the surrounding neighborhoods make Mid City attractive to investors. In some cases, owners have started asking for more than their properties are worth, slowing down the progress but also assuring that the future is in Mid City.

If you want to see the rising prosperity, I recommend driv-

Mid City has started coming back.

One reason for its revival is the neighborhood's diversity.

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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ing down Government Street. You'll see reconstruction, new construction and shiny new businesses in old places. The street itself will get a makeover, starting either later this year or early next. Twelve-million in state money will transform it from four to three lanes with bike paths, making it less dangerous and slowing it down, giving a chance for the people who now thunder through there to see what they have been missing.

In this issue, you'll meet two people who are helping to lead the revival. Lynley Farris and William Doran started Mid City Studio. They organize gatherings where you can see the diversity of Mid City—poets, singers, restaurant owners, artists, and residents show up to talk about new ideas for resurrecting this old place, once home to so many families and successful businesses.

Here, at the Foundation, we see much hope in what's happening in Mid City. One of our goals—some see it as folly—is to create places where a wealthy business owner lives next door to a schoolteacher who is a neighbor to a restaurant worker, each one enriching the other. In a small way, this dream of ours is already happening in Mid City.

Sincerely,



S. Dennis Blunt,
Chair

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 reduce 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.

LEAD IN



Tim Mueller

ICONIC BUILDING COMES INTO VIEW

The Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions has come into view. Commercial Properties Realty Trust, which manages the Foundation's real estate assets, has razed warehouses on Nicholson Drive, making the Center visible from the main road. The Water Institute of the Gulf will shift to the Center next year, and the building will be the centerpiece of the Water Campus, a 35-acre development focused on researchers, engineers and others working on coastal issues. With the warehouses gone, the city-parish, with state funding, will build new roads to create a street grid for the Water Campus. Water Street, the main thoroughfare, will link Nicholson to the Center. The Center itself will be connected to the old city dock via an amphitheater. You can place your name on an amphitheater riser for \$5,000. Money raised will be used to complete the Water Campus to the highest standard in the world. For more information on naming a riser, contact Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 or ehutchison@braf.org.

WATER INSTITUTE, DELTARES ALIGN TO GROW WORLDWIDE

The Water Institute of the Gulf and Deltares signed an agreement to leverage their tools and applied research to compete in the growing global market for managing water resources and adapting to rising seas and eroding coasts.

Deltares and The Water Institute have been working under more limited agreements since The Water Institute was created in 2011 by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Louisiana leaders. The Institute informs and supports the state's \$50 billion Coastal Master Plan and uses its science to benefit imperiled coasts across the country and world.

Meanwhile, Deltares has provided water management solutions for decades in the Netherlands, and is recognized as the premier scientific institution in adapting to the challenges and opportunities of living with water.

Under its signed agreement, the two science nonprofits will focus on strategic water resources planning, tools to understand coastal dynamics and forecasting, nature-based solutions to coastal challenges, regional-scale sediment management for coastal adaptation, research for managing watersheds, improved predictive tools and training for modeling across many water issues, and real-time monitoring of levees and control structures.

GOOD THINGS



TAKE TWO

Downtown's largest theater will become a spectacular venue. The River Center Theatre for the Performing Arts opened 40 years ago. Not much has changed since then. Bathrooms and seating are outdated, and reaching your seat requires crawling over too many patrons. An \$18.1 million makeover will add lounges, improve access to seating, create more aisles and expand and improve bathrooms and concession areas. Construction is expected to begin in a year and the theater should reopen in 2019. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation provided some strategy and fundraising expertise to theater managers and the city-parish.

LIBRARIANS ARE PIONEERS Baton Rouge's library system will tag its entire collection with RFID chips. At a cost of more than \$1.5 million, the tiny chips and readers will be good for patrons and library workers, who won't have to wander the stacks to hunt and file misplaced books. The library will be able to offer self-check machines and intelligent returns at all 14 locations. Spending less time on circulation will let librarians spend more time assisting users. Read a Q&A with EBR librarian Mary Stein about technology at BRAF.org under "Stories."

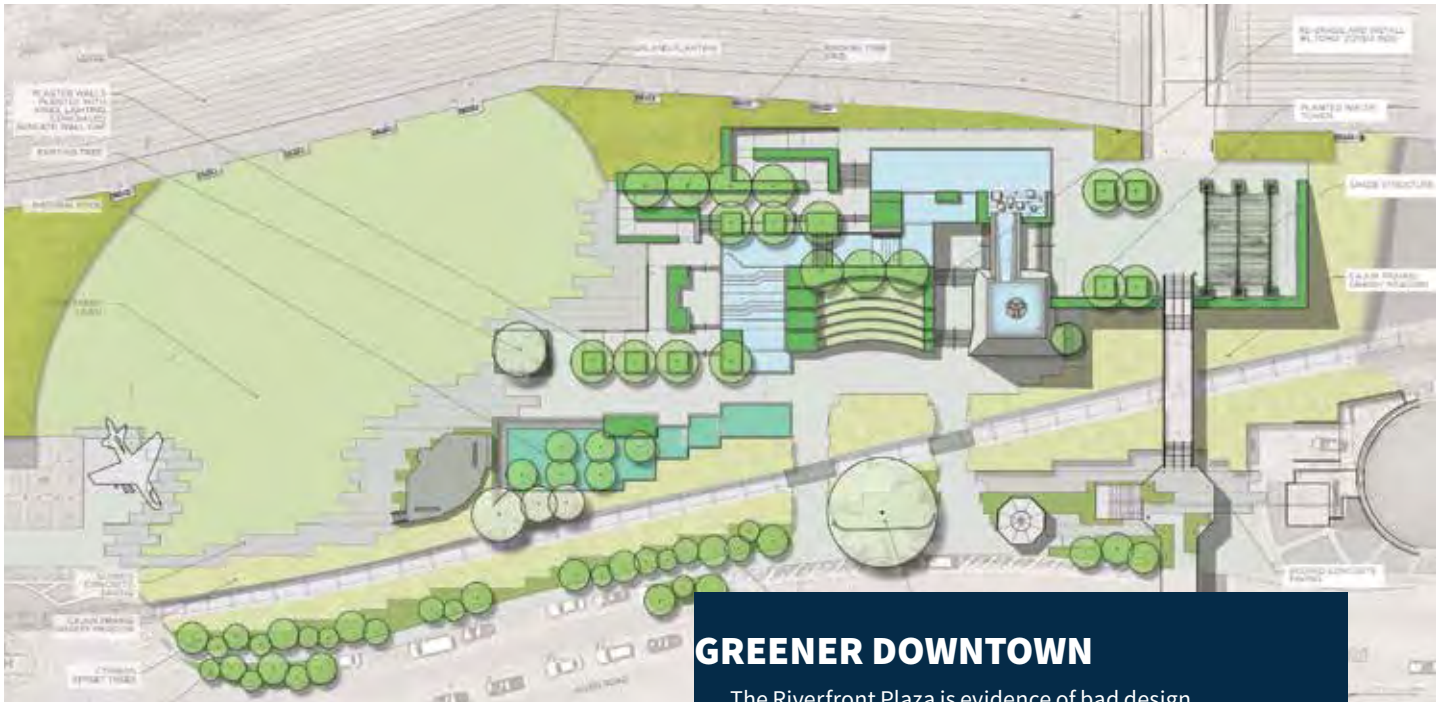
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Assistant Library Director Mary Stein will spend less time in stacks, more time with patrons.





YES, IN MY BACKYARD Capital Heights is a YIMBY neighborhood. Each Friday evening during fall and spring, Dave Mooney and Penni Guidry invite the community over to their funky backyard for live music. A collection is taken for the musicians, and the civic association raises money at the concerts for neighborhood improvements. As well, the neighborhood has built a new pocket park in the 4500 block of Capital Heights. The park was the winning idea in a Mid City Redevelopment Alliance challenge, and received support from the nonprofit.



GREENER DOWNTOWN

The Riverfront Plaza is evidence of bad design. The Downtown Development District will change that. Located next to the Louisiana Art and Science Museum, the plaza will be remade for about \$450,000 within the next year. The retrofit from Jeffery Carbo Landscape Architects includes decorative lighting, landscaping and a sound system. The plaza will have grasses, seasonal flowers and a levee green. In the past five years, the DDD has created a Town Square and renovated a park between the River Center and the Old State Capitol. A new lawn is being installed at the foot of the governmental building.

CIVIC PROJECTS



TOP OF THE CLASS

Two of the nation's best charter school operators are setting up in Baton Rouge, thanks to New Schools of Baton Rouge, an independent nonprofit started by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

New Schools recruits only high-performing charter schools and provides financial and staff support to them.

BASIS, which took the top three spots in U.S. News and World Report's annual ranking of the best U.S. high schools, will open an elementary/middle school on the Woman's Hospital campus within two years. It will build a second elementary/middle school in North Baton Rouge. The two schools will send graduates to a new BASIS high school at a site to be named later.

Meanwhile, IDEA Public Schools will open two charters in fall 2018, and two more by 2021. One would be on LSU's South Campus, another near Cortana Mall. The Washington Post ranked IDEA schools among the most-challenging for students in the country. The East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System is authorizer of the charters schools.

SCHOOL CHOICE

Gov. John Bel Edwards has pledged \$8 million to expand and renovate the Baton Rouge Community College Acadian Campus. Dual-enrollment high school courses will be taught there, including skills for well-paying industrial jobs. BRCC will collaborate with Istrouma High School, which is being reopened next door as an EBR Public middle and high school.

"Now more than ever, we must ensure access to life-changing academic and workforce training," says Louisiana Community and Technical College System President Dr. Monty Sullivan. "The renovation of the BRCC Acadian Campus is a clear message of investment and opportunity for the people of north Baton Rouge."

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has allied with LCTCS and the EBR School System on Ardendale, a 200-acre development of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. EBR schools is building a high school to teach trades and LCTCS operates an automotive training academy on Lobdell Avenue in Ardendale.



BATON ROUGE

TRY, TRY AGAIN Last December, a small property tax failed. It would have paid to treat people with mental illness instead of jailing them, as happens now. Treatment would have been provided by the Bridge Center, an independent nonprofit created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and overseen by a board that includes mental health professionals and justice system officials.

In June, the Bridge Center hired Emergent Method, a consulting and communications firm, to explore collaborations among mental health service organizations, alternative funding streams and where the Bridge Center may fit in that matrix.

The Foundation's plan for the Bridge Center was modeled after one in San Antonio. Research showed the Center would save more than \$50 million in taxes over a decade because treatment is cheaper than imprisonment.

When the rains came, companies were there for their employees.

Nearly 80 of them opened charitable funds at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to write emergency checks to their workers. Our Employees 1st program handled all the work. We made sure employees were qualified and they received assistance as quickly as possible.

Employees 1st is not only for disasters.

More than 40 companies are taking care of their employees who have suffered unexpected hardships, such as a fires and illnesses.



Learn more by contacting **Elizabeth Hutchison**
(225) 387-6126 or EHutchison@braf.org.

BR
Health
District
*moving
fast*

*Hundreds of millions in
investments coming to Essen,
Bluebonnet*

By David Jacobs



OLOL Children's Hospital is under construction in the health district.

Cancer is the second-leading cause of death in the United States, exceeded only by heart disease. But chemotherapy and radiation treatments can damage healthy organs and tissues along with the tumor, making the cure seem almost worse than the disease.

That's why cancer researchers and health care providers seek ways to target the tumor cells directly while sparing the healthy cells. One of those options, proton beam therapy, is on its way to the Baton Rouge Health District.

In May, Gov. John Bel Edwards and Provident Resources Group CEO Steve Hicks announced plans for the Louisiana ProtonCare Center. The \$85 million project, to be built near the intersection of interstates 10 and 12, is expected to begin treating patients in late 2019.

The proton center announcement is perhaps the biggest win so far for the District, which seeks to improve the Baton Rouge area's health outcomes while drawing more health care customers from outside the region.

"It's a great piece to solidify Baton Rouge as a destination for health care," says Suzy Sonnier, executive director of the Baton Rouge Health District. "We certainly hope that it will be one of many others."

The project is part of a wave of more than \$450 million in investments planned for the area along the Essen Lane, Perkins Road, Bluebonnet Boulevard corridor. A master plan adopted by parish government is blending all that new stuff with what's already there, creating something greater than the sum of its parts.

A decade ago, proton therapy centers were rare. Today, there are about two dozen nationwide, with a few more on the way.

Provident ProtonCare is a division of Provident Resources

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation paid for and oversaw a plan to create the Baton Rouge Health District. A nonprofit with the same name has started implementing the plan, which was requested by the city-parish and is a part of FuturEBR, the parish's comprehensive master plan. For more, visit brhealthdistrict.org.

BRHD PROJECTS

PROTON RADIATION CANCER THERAPY The district has teamed up with Provident Resources Group to bring an \$85 million advanced proton therapy center to Baton Rouge by late 2019. The center, which is expected to employ 95 people, will utilize a proton therapy that destroys tumor cells with a targeted dose of radiation that spares healthy tissue and organs.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN The district has hired WHLC Architecture to craft guidelines for landscaping, signage, design and other physical characteristics, in hopes of creating a coherent sense of place for the district. The plan could be ready by the end of the summer.

COMMUNITY HEALTH DATA BRHD is working with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Institute, pulling together public- and private-sector data to identify clusters of chronic disease and health care service gaps in the Baton Rouge area. Once the information is ready to present, district members hope to work with relevant community partners and clinics to raise awareness and improve health outcomes.

RESILIENT BATON ROUGE PROJECT District members are working with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to address mental and behavioral health needs in the wake of last year's unprecedented flood, funded by an \$800,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

NURSE RECRUITMENT The district coalition is working with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber to craft a message that hopefully will attract experienced nurses with local roots who currently work out of state. A recruitment effort will begin this fall.

ANTI-MICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP The more antibiotic medications are used, the less effective they become. A district task force is working on recommendations to address this problem at the community level.

SHARED SERVICES District representatives meet regularly to discuss opportunities to reduce costs by creating economies of scale. Shared services could include laundry, security, maintenance and lab work, among others.



Above: Aerial looking North
 Below: Approach to Bluebonnet from South/West-bound I-10
 Right: Existing condition



The Health District has hired WHLC to write design guidelines. WHLC envisions gateways for the district.



Tim Mueller

Steve E. Hicks, Chairman & CEO of Provident Resources Group Inc., is partnering to build an \$85 million proton radiation cancer treatment center in Baton Rouge.

Group, Hicks explains. While he had discussed a Baton Rouge proton center with Baton Rouge Area Foundation leaders as far back as 2008, the Louisiana ProtonCare Center arguably was birthed last October in a meeting with Foundation Executive Vice President John Spain.

Bringing competitors together for a common goal isn't easy, as Hicks knows firsthand. A similar project he worked on in Cleveland fell apart when the providers who would have used it couldn't reach an agreement, he says.

While Provident is involved in projects around the country, Baton Rouge is the company's home. Hicks wanted the Louisiana ProtonCare Center to be a community asset, rather than a tool for a single provider.

Provident ProtonCare will build and finance the project with

bonds. At press time, a specific site had not been announced. Provident's partner, Ion Beam Applications, will provide proton therapy technology.

When the bonds are retired, hopefully in less than 20 years, Provident plans to donate the project to the Foundation for the benefit of the Baton Rouge Health District. "That's our commitment to our hometown," Hicks says. "I'm not doing that anywhere else."

While it's not for every type of cancer, he says the technology has been shown most effective in treating cancer in children. It uses a precise beam, or "pencil beam scanning," to target and eliminate the tumor without damaging nearby tissue and organs. Years of treatments for side effects can be avoided.

"There's either no, or substantially less, collateral damage,"

Hicks says.

A SENSE OF PLACE

The Essen/Bluebonnet corridor has long been a health care center for Baton Rouge. The local health district concept dates back to the approval of FuturEBR, the parish's master plan, in 2011.

But the Baton Rouge Health District doesn't have a distinctive look or character. If someone from out of town drives through it, they wouldn't know they're in any specific neighborhood.

Baton Rouge-based WHLC Architecture has worked in the health care sector for 30-plus years, including projects for Baton Rouge Health District members such as the Baton Rouge General, Our Lady of the Lake, Baton Rouge Clinic and the Pennington Biomedical Research Center.

WHLC recently was chosen to create the district's Infrastructure Implementation Plan.

The plan would establish design strategies for the district's physical infrastructure, including signage, lighting, landscaping, sidewalks, bike paths, and everything else drivers, walkers and bikers experience, explains WHLC principal Rex Cabaniss.

"It becomes a guidebook for how best to develop the area," he says.

The finished plan has three primary goals: 1) as the district grows, district leaders want to make sure the development is high quality; 2) they want to foster a sense of shared community, so that the district is an inviting place to live, work and play; and 3) they'd like it to be a model district for healthy living. It's a "health district," after all, so it should foster a healthy lifestyle.

For example, WHLC is working with BREC and the city-parish on the Ward's Creek bike path, part of a larger "health loop" for Baton Rouge, Cabaniss says. "As it passes through the health district, we want it to be the best example of what a nature-friendly bike trail can be," he adds.

Cabaniss envisions a clear entry point or "gateway" to the district, while also focusing attention on improving key intersections. When visitors enter the district, he wants them to feel that they've entered an environment where they can expect to receive first-class health care.

"The building blocks of any city are the streets, the lighting, the signage, and the landscape," he says. "It's just bringing all of those into cohesive components of character for the area, so it feels a little different." •

INVESTMENTS, BY THE NUMBERS

More than \$450 million worth of health care, real estate and infrastructure investment is expected in the Baton Rouge Health District over the next three years, including:

OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

\$230 million; anticipated opening: Fall 2019

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL, OFFICE AND RETAIL PROJECT BY DANTIN BRUCE DEVELOPMENT

PHASE 1: \$25-\$27 million; anticipated opening: March 2018

PHASE 2: \$35 million; anticipated opening: Late 2019

MARRIOTT ELEMENT HOTEL

\$18-\$23 million; anticipated opening: Late 2018

BATON ROUGE GENERAL CRITICAL CARE TOWER AND REGIONAL BURN CENTER

\$40 million; anticipated opening: 2019

DIJON EXTENSION AND MIDWAY DRIVE

\$23 million; anticipated completion: Summer 2019

LOUISIANA PROTON CARE CENTER

\$85 million; anticipated opening: Late 2019

GRANTS

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation's fund donors make thousands of grants from their charitable accounts. Grants for the second quarter of 2017 are listed below. They total \$6.0 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's Tent Association \$1,000
Acacia Church of Baton Rouge Inc. \$500
Academic Distinction Fund \$46,212
AIDS Foundation Houston Inc. \$3,800
All Hands Volunteers Inc. \$100,000
Alley Theatre \$1,667
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$25,050
American Brain Tumor Association \$3,000
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$311
Annunciation Orthodox School \$3,500
Armstrong, Renee \$690
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$8,122
Arts Council of New Orleans \$25,000
Associated Marine Institute Inc./AMIKids \$10,000
Aubin Pictures Inc. \$15,000
Baton Rouge Bar Foundation \$8,966
Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation /
The Dunham School \$2,838
Baton Rouge Crime Stoppers Inc. \$2,200
Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center \$3,535
Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion
Magnet School \$500
Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$125
Baton Rouge Opera Guild \$3,358
Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation Inc./
The Emerge Center \$22,165
Baton Rouge Youth Coalition \$44,500
Be the Change Inc. \$100,000
Big Buddy Program \$1,000
Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust/Cath Diocese \$207
Blindness-Learning in New Dimensions Inc. \$10,000
Boy Scouts of America Istrouma Area Council \$20,500
Boys and Girls Club of the Mississippi Delta \$1,000
Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge \$5,000
Bridge Center for Hope \$100,000
Calcasieu Parish Voluntary Council on the Aging Inc. \$1,000

Cancer Research and Life Foundation \$7,500
Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$27,750
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$311
Capital Area CASA Association \$1,500
Capital Area Human Services District \$2,000
Capital Area Law Enforcement Foundation \$6,000
Capital Area United Way \$19,500
Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of Mobile Inc. \$500
Catholic High School Foundation \$14,127
CCA Louisiana Foundation \$500
Cenikor Foundation Baton Rouge \$5,000
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$5,000
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./
McMains Children's Development Center \$56,000
Children's Cup \$4,536
Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$290
Christ School \$10,000
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$11,557
City Year Inc. \$50,000
City Year Inc.—Baton Rouge \$22,500
City Year Memphis \$50,000
Communities in Schools New Orleans Inc. \$14,000
Community Outreach Academy \$1,000
Companion Animal Alliance \$77,250
Congregation of St. Alphonse Liguori Church \$1,000
Contemporary Arts Center \$10,000
Cool Cooperative Inc. \$25,000
Court Appointed Special Advocates of St. Landry \$1,000
Creole Wild West Inc. \$20,000
Cristo Rey Baton Rouge \$5,000
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation \$1,000
Dante's Hope \$1,000
De La Salle High School \$5,000
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$21,481
Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge \$611
East Baton Rouge Parish 4-H Foundation \$29,729
EBRPSS—Belaire High School \$2,500
EBRPSS—Glen Oaks Park Elementary School \$1,000
Education's Next Horizon \$2,500
ELLA Project \$25,000
Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$53,000
Exceptional Lives Inc. \$60,300
Fellowship of Christian Athletes \$1,000
First United Methodist Church \$3,450
Forum 35 \$2,500
Forward Arts Inc. \$15,000
Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$2,000
Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. \$2,393
Foundation for Woman's \$22,000
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University—
Our Lady of the Lake College \$1,000
Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$1,000

Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$1,000
 Friends of Magnolia Mound \$7,200
 Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo \$1,100
 Front Yard Bikes \$5,000
 GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship \$25,000
 Gardere Community Christian School \$2,200
 George Rodrigue Foundation Inc. \$10,000
 God's Light Shining Ministries Inc. \$5,000
 Good Neighbor Foundation \$27,000
 Good Shepherd Nativity Mission School Inc. \$10,000
 Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$1,500
 Greater Baton Rouge Hope Academy \$7,500
 Greater New Galilee Baptist Church Inc. \$900
 Greater New Orleans Educational Television Foundation \$500
 Gulf Coast Restoration and Protection Foundation \$15,000
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,000
 Harvard Business School Interactive Inc. \$100,000
 Healing Place Serve \$10,704
 Heritage Ranch \$55,000
 Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation \$1,000
 Holy Family Catholic Church \$11,807
 HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$7,500
 Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$5,790
 International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$1,073
 International Society for Krishna Consciousness of New Orleans \$3,753
 International Students Inc. \$6,000
 Isidore Newman School \$2,500
 Israelite Missionary Baptist Church \$2,000
 Ivy Foundation Inc. \$1,000
 Jess' Bra Closet Incorporated \$3,000
 Jubilee Pioneers \$6,000
 Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge and Acadiana \$1,972
 Junior League of Baton Rouge Inc. \$150
 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International \$1,000
 Karnival Krewe de Louisiane Inc. \$1,000
 Kids' Orchestra Inc. \$2,576
 King of Kings Ministries Inc. \$1,000
 Kingsley House Inc. \$30,000
 Knock Knock Children's Museum \$6,000
 Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$2,000
 Lake Charles Softball \$1,000
 Lambda Kappa Kappa Foundation Inc. \$500
 Life of a Single Mom \$5,200
 Living Word Church of Muskegon \$800
 Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$8,480
 Louisiana Housing Corporation \$5,000
 Louisiana International Film Festival \$9,500
 Louisiana Key Academy \$50,000
 Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$6,500
 Louisiana Success \$2,500
 Louisiana Symphony Association/Baton Rouge Symphony
 Orchestra \$26,106
 Louisianachildren.org \$5,000
 LSU Alumni Association \$10,000
 LSU CxC Outstanding Faculty Award \$1,500
 LSU Foundation \$183,867
 LSU Foundation—E.J. Ourso College of Business \$2,000
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 LSU Foundation—University Lab School Foundation \$1,000
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NONPROFIT



TS

from the air

SouthWings shows devastation, hope from high above

By Sara Bongiorno | Photos by Tim Mueller



D

avid Muth, director of gulf restoration for the National Wildlife Federation, peers through the window of a Cessna Skylane flying 2,000 feet above the vast, damaged Mississippi River Delta south of New Orleans.

“When you go through it by boat, it looks deceptively healthy,” Muth says. “You don’t see the same thing from a boat that you see from the air.”

The view from the plane is shocking. Shredded marshes crisscrossed by canals and pipelines stretch for it seems like forever. There is open water in places where oaks and farms thrived, and cattle roamed the Louisiana prairie.

Wispy barrier islands look unlikely to protect much, including nearby New Orleans. Dark striations of underwater plants are missing from the milky water. Muth compares the pocked landscape to “rotten cloth.”

“It’s hard to understand the scale of the problem until you see it from above,” he says.

Environmental nonprofit SouthWings partners with conservation groups across the Southeast to fly elected officials, journalists, policymakers, scientists, artists and others over fragile ecosystems to build the resolve to save them.

SouthWings’ work includes measuring and reporting environmental damage in remote and hard-to-reach sites. Passengers have documented mountaintop removal in West Virginia and exposed a coal-ash dam leaking arsenic and mercury in Tennessee.

The nonprofit played a critical role after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster when its pilots helped to document the extent of the spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

SouthWings turns single-engine planes into flying class-

“You don’t understand how all the pieces fit together until you get to a certain elevation. It’s not the same as looking at maps or photographs.”

—SouthWings co-founder Hume Davenport





The Bayou Dupont marsh restoration and ridge creation is located within the Barataria Basin in Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes. The project has renourished and restored more than 1,000 acres of marsh and 1,000 linear feet of ridge using sediment dredged and piped from the Mississippi River.

rooms. Pairing passengers with experts like Muth helps them gain an understanding of complex environmental issues in a couple of hours.

“You don’t understand how all the pieces fit together until you get to a certain elevation,” says co-founder Hume Davenport. “It’s not the same as looking at maps or photographs.”

The 50-year, \$50 billion plan to save Louisiana’s coast has generated wide interest in SouthWings’ work. *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* have written about it. SouthWings was featured in BBC and CBS’s “60 Minutes” segments. It has taken news crews from Denmark and Canada over the delta.

“Land loss is such a huge issue, and so many people are trying to figure out how we are going to address this in an equitable,

meaningful way,” says Meredith Dowling, SouthWings’ associate executive director.

The Asheville, N.C.-based organization makes more flights in Louisiana than any place else—last year 46 of 130 SouthWings flights in its 12-state operating area were made here.

Its 2016 passengers included researchers from The Water Institute of the Gulf in Baton Rouge, *Rising Tide* author John Barry, six state- and parish-level elected officials, and representatives of the Rockefeller, McKnight and three other foundations.

SouthWings teams flew over Baton Rouge after last August’s historic flooding in search of environmental hazards. Most Louisiana flights are coast-focused, as are its partner organizations in the state. They include Restore the Mississippi River Delta Coalition, Vanishing Earth, Atchafalaya Basinkeeper

and Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, among several others.

SouthWings paired us with Muth and volunteer pilot, Ken Knevel, a droll, North Dakota-born retired architect, for a two-hour, 200-mile tour over the delta this summer.

It was not a sightseeing trip, but it also wasn't a doomsday tour. That's because Knevel's high-wing Cessna passed over sites in the delta that show the coast can be saved if there is enough willpower and money to do it.

"We know what needs to be done," says Dowling.

Scofield Island is illustrative. Building the barrier island has expanded it by 429 acres in recent years.

The Caernarvon freshwater diversion project has generated about 1,000 acres of lush new delta. Building new land using sediment carried through a slot in the levee mimics the natural forces that built the delta to begin with.

Caernarvon provides a smaller version of a project planned for the storm-damaged Mid-Barataria area, where controlled gates will let 75,000-cubic-feet per second of Mississippi River water flow into the delta. The permitting stage of that project will take 3 to 5 years, Muth notes.

The BP spill is tied to SouthWings work in Louisiana. The organization opened a New Orleans office in 2012, two years after the disaster created a big increase in the need for flights over the delta.

Volunteer pilots gathered near the Louisiana coast to help environmental groups, journalists, researchers, coastal advocates, and others document the disaster for the state and the Gulf, Dowling explains.

Additionally, \$16.5 billion in BP Deepwater Horizon settlements will fund much of the land-building work ahead.

Louisiana is still where SouthWings is most in needs of pilots. To fly with SouthWings, pilots must have completed 750 pilot-in-command hours and have access to a plane, preferably one with wings fixed above the windows so views are unobstructed. Pilots don't just fly for free; they also cover the cost of fuel, time and aircraft maintenance.

Hume co-founded SouthWings in 1996 with his cousin and friend, all pilots. Hume was training Air Force cadets in Colorado and flying fire-suppression missions in southern Utah when he began volunteering for Lighthawk, the Western-state model for SouthWings.

"I learned the power and the glory of using an airplane as a classroom from Lighthawk," Davenport says.

Davenport started SouthWings with Bobby Davenport and Jay Mills after moving back to his hometown of Chattanooga,









“It’s important to understand that this isn’t about being anti-energy, it’s about taking responsibility for damage. This is similar to what parents teach their kids—to clean up their mess.”

—Emmet Bartholomew, SouthWings pilot recruiter

Tenn., in the late ‘90s. Initially, the three men were the extent of the operation. Hume Davenport used a borrowed plane for early flights.

The first volunteer pilot outside the founding trio was Susan Lapis, a Virginia housewife with a Ph.D. who was SouthWing’s go-to pilot and guide over West Virginia and Kentucky coal country for 20 years. Its ranks have included retired military officers, a Harvard-trained surgeon-and-lawyer, attorneys, architects, aviation hobbyists and retired and active professional pilots.

Emmet Bartholomew was already a volunteer pilot with the U.S. Air Force Civil Air Patrol and a volunteer diver for the Audubon Institute Aquarium of the Americas when he signed on with SouthWings in 2014. (He is also a flight instructor, professional pilot, stand-up comedian and musician—he plays piano and guitar.)

He oversees pilot recruiting for SouthWings. “It’s not a hard sell,” he says. “For most pilots, flying is in their DNA. And when you are up in the air, you are in the position of seeing great beauty but also great damage in the world below.”

Bartholomew grew up in New Orleans, and he understands the reflexive defensiveness of some whose families made a living in the energy industry that’s left scars on the delta.

“It’s important to understand that this isn’t about being anti-energy, it’s about taking responsibility (for damage),” he says. “Any time there is profit involved, that can get in the way of people doing the right thing. This is similar to what parents teach their kids—to clean up their mess.”

Bartholomew recalls an epiphany on a clear November day in

The first stop during the SouthWings aerial tour of coastal Louisiana is a view of the Lake Borgne Surge Barrier. After Hurricane Katrina the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the \$1.2 billion surge barriers to protect New Orleans from storm surge.



SouthWings volunteer pilot Ken Knevel, left, and David Muth, Louisiana State Director of the National Wildlife Federation, stand outside Knevel's Cessna 182 after a tour of the Louisiana coast.

2007. He and some friends had flown over Head of Passes, where the mouth of the Mississippi flows into the Gulf. He had recently completed his initial pilot's license. It was a heady moment.

After Bartholomew nosed the plane back toward New Orleans—he remembers the distant curve of the Superdome—he was stunned to see how little marshland remained between New Orleans and open water of the Gulf.

"I could not believe that was all there was protecting the city," Bartholomew says. "I thought, if people could see this, if they knew this was all we had, that so much land had gone away, they'd be kicking and screaming that something be done about it."

That gut-check reaction—the realization of the scope and often proximity of environmental damage—explains what co-founder Davenport describes as SouthWings' unofficial motto: I had no idea.

"Everybody says that after a flight," he says. "You have an 'Aha!' moment where suddenly the problems and often the remedies come into view. And it's not just the problems. We want people to have a sense of hope, because there are solutions." •



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Take me to the river

St. Francisville pursues a bold plan to re-establish its connection to the Mississippi

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photos by Ryan Benton, CPEX

It's lunchtime at the Magnolia Café in St. Francisville, and the crowd bustles. Neighbors are greeting each other and sharing family news. Business meetings are being held, but there's really no hurry to get deals done. Tourists have dropped in for food before heading to their next destination, maybe a historic plantation, kayaking on the bayou, bike riding.

To locals, the restaurant is warmly called "The Mag." The menu meanders like the parish that surrounds it—pizza, Mexican food, salad, pub grub. You need a big selection at a village eatery to feed the same folks several times a week.

Long known for its friendly people, historic charm and lush landscape, the town of St. Francisville is picturesque and untamed. Those defining characteristics are at the core of a project that promises to bring new opportunities to residents, while also drawing a steady stream of tourists.

Spearheaded by the St. Francisville Area Foundation, the project proposes a sustainable riverfront redevelopment plan for two

parcels of land located in the heart of town near the Mississippi River. A former canning factory surrounded by woods and a public high school, the parcels could be converted to a quiet residential housing development, new low-impact visitor accommodations and retail and recreational amenities.

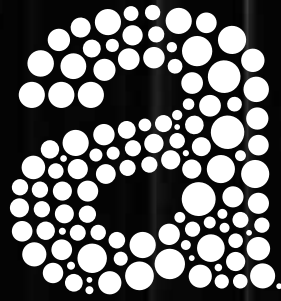
The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has partnered with the St. Francisville Area Foundation to underwrite a master plan to develop 90 acres on a Mississippi River bluff in West Feliciana Parish. BRAF's other project to bring people back to the river is the Water Campus on Nicholson Drive in Baton Rouge.

"This gives us a chance to add some things we need as a community, and to capitalize on our relationship to the Mississippi River," says St. Francisville Area Foundation Executive Director Lauren Field. "We are a rural river town, and increasing that relationship will help us preserve our history and bring new ways to appreciate it."

The parcels include the former Princeville sweet potato processing plant and an adjacent site currently owned by the West Feliciana School Board. Together, the sites form more than 90 acres of land located between a bluff and the riverfront. Located minutes by car from the quaint shops and historic houses in nearby downtown St. Francisville, the area is enveloped by hardwoods and wetlands.

What's most promising about the parcels is their proximity





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“We need additional convention space and hotel rooms. From the Audubon Pilgrimage to the Walker Percy weekend, there is something going on almost all the time in this community.”

—Lauren Field, Executive Director of the St. Francisville Area Foundation

to the river, says Haley Blakeman, director of implementation at Center for Planning Excellence, which guided the community through an initial idea-gathering session about how best to develop the land.

“It’s an amazing site because you don’t often find access to the Mississippi River without the levee system,” says Blakeman. “In this case, you have the potential for direct access and incredible views.”

Input from stakeholders was gathered for the St. Francisville Area Foundation to determine how the parcels could be developed with the town’s bucolic identity in mind. The results of their work have been assembled in an initial riverfront development plan. It serves as a launch pad for a second, more intensive phase of planning, which will be led by Pittsburgh-based firm Urban Design Associates in late July.

UDA Managing Principal Eric Osth, who also worked on the Water Campus project in Baton Rouge, will lead his team. They will spend five days in the community, holding community feedback sessions and design workshops that will ultimately result in a final plan for the site, says Field.

Residents have expressed enthusiasm for the project. Fueled by a clear identity, some of them recommend development ideas they believe will assert the parish’s reputation as a destination for both day trippers and weekend travelers wanting to take in the town’s quiet beauty.

The hauntingly beautiful abandoned Princeville site is an expansive tin-roofed warehouse surrounded by woods. Community feedback suggested it could become a brewery with an adjacent restaurant and brewpub. Other ideas include more shops, a possible boutique hotel and event space.

“We need additional convention space and hotel rooms,” says Field. “From the Audubon Pilgrimage to the Walker Percy





weekend, there is something going on almost all the time in this community.”

A section of land down the bluff from the Princeville warehouse is wetlands, and this will be maintained. It could also be expanded into a pond and birding habitat with an onsite recreational outfitter. The plan intends to capitalize on the town’s growing reputation as a naturalist’s paradise.

“We’ve seen a big growth in ecotourism in St. Francisville over the years and feel like this is a real opportunity for us,” says Field. “We already draw lots of biking tours, birders and we’ve seen an increase in river traffic with our local company, Bayou Sara Kayak Rentals.”

Between the Princeville site and the adjacent wetlands, and the river itself, is a facility run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to produce erosion control mats used up and down the Mississippi. Residents want the site to be seen as an opportunity, rather than a hindrance.

Modeling a similar project in Vicksburg, Mississippi, the facility could feature an interpretative center or small museum that showcases the importance of sustaining and protecting the Mississippi.

Further, a levee road running along this Corps of Engineers facility could be used by locals and visitors to access a public dock for launching boats and kayaks, or for fishing and birding. The community has long valued having direct access to the river in the form of a public dock, and the blueprint could provide the momentum to see it through.

Upland from the Princeville site on a natural ridge is the swath of land owned by the school board. It’s being proposed as a small 41-lot residential development with houses. Because the parcel is next to the Pecan Grove neighborhood, it will be developed with the neighborhood in consideration.

The school board land is also large enough for a sprinkling of bluff-side cabins for visitors. Whatever structures are built there will have stunning views of the river, helping to fortify the community’s connection to the Mississippi.

“We’ve had overwhelming positive response from stakeholders,” says Field. “We see this as an opportunity for putting St. Francisville on the map and a way of encouraging responsible, sustainable growth that fits with our identity.” •



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COVER

*Tout
ensemble*





The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is offering assistance to Jack and Pat Holden as they decide how to turn their collection into a public place for education and activity in Point Coupee.





A Pointe Coupee couple spent 50 years gathering French Louisiana’s material culture and putting it “all together”

By C.E. Richard | Photos by Tim Mueller

V

isitors arriving at Maison Chenal might be left a little disoriented. The 18th century Creole cottage in Pointe Coupee is quite unlike the houses we’re accustomed to these days.

Coming out from under the moist shade of low-hanging oaks and into the sun, I stepped through a gate in the jagged cypress *pieux* fence and hesitated, unsure where I should look to find the front door. Characteristic of Creole architecture, the placement of doors, columns and the chimney were subtly asymmetrical, and even the steps leading up to the porch were off-center—not by mistake, but by design. There was no modern lawn, no front walk directing me to a central entrance. Rather, visitors to Maison Chenal are greeted by a formal garden, laid out in angular beds and interlaced with gravel paths. The beds were all precisely planned, but the wooden planks and privet hedges that bordered them could barely restrain the lush, riotous growth. Here, the sun was bright and hot, steaming off the remainders of that afternoon’s summer downpour, and the air was fragrant with the scents of jasmine, sweet olive and Cherokee rose. I lingered, breathing it in, when the homeowner, Jack Holden,



44

*“Creole is not English or American or German or African or French...
It’s frontier reality with a French flair. That’s how we live in it.”*

—Pat Holden



emerged from among the cool brick pillars that raised the cottage high above the ground. After I introduced myself and remarked on his lovely garden, Dr. Holden invited me to follow him up the front steps to the gallery.

“You can appreciate it better from up here,” he said. It was true. From the gallery, the gardens below were striking, a beautifully peculiar blend of orderly cultivation and chaotic increase. Jack’s wife, Pat, greeted us on the porch and led us inside.

“They’re *parterre* gardens,” she explained. Everything planted there was meticulously modeled after drawings and descriptions of Louisiana *parterres* found in 18th and 19th century archival documents. European settlers came to Louisiana and planted their gardens to resemble the ones they knew in France, patterned according to a carefully controlled geometry.

“They were designed to be viewed from above,” Pat continued. “Now, that worked perfectly here in Louisiana because all these homes had elevated galleries.”

But Louisiana is not Europe.

“In France, the plants were there simply to enhance the design. But here, the growth of the plants often overpowered the design.” To the Holdens, this juxtaposition of Old World refinement with the rustic wild is what makes Maison Chenal’s gardens an ideal expression of Creole character.

“Creole is not English or American or German or African or French,” Pat said. The term is notoriously difficult to define, even for native Louisianans. “It’s more *‘a la francaise’* than anything else, although it can be parts of each. It’s frontier reality with a French flair. That’s how we live in it.”



LIVING IN HISTORY'S MIDST

Many aspects of the couple's life at Maison Chenal would seem familiar to Pat's ancestors, Creole colonists who settled in 18th century New Orleans. Not only have the Holdens assembled what's arguably the most comprehensive private collection of early Creole artifacts and architecture, but they've made their home in its midst, incorporating the objects of 18th and 19th century daily life into their own. More than mere showpieces, the things in their collection remain in use according to their intended purposes, allowing the Holdens extraordinary insights when it comes to understanding and appreciating the way of life enjoyed by early Louisianans.

"It started in a very thoughtful way," Pat recalled. "We began this project 50 years ago when our third daughter, our last child, was born. We decided we wanted to do something that we could do together. Something we could build our lives around."

In the 1960s, Pat left her job in social work to care for their children. Jack was busy launching his medical career. But he also possessed the almost obsessive drive of a collector, Pat says, while she was a tenacious researcher by nature. Their shared love for old things animated these character traits and informed their lives together.

"I had a very busy career and active lifestyle, so we would have dates going to Hill Memorial Library at LSU together," Jack said. There, the young couple would spend their time browsing archival documents and trying to unravel one mystery or another surrounding items they were adding to their collection.

"We read countless inventories, countless narratives about Louisiana and we tried to weave all that material together," Jack said. It was quite a challenge. Writings about early Louisiana were mostly concerned with politics of the era, current events, agriculture and business; all the big affairs that history textbooks focus on.

"But we were really interested in the objects that people lived with," Pat said, noting that the more personal aspects of history tend to be overlooked, and studies of Creole material culture are especially scant compared to what's been done with America's Anglo colonies on the East Coast.

"ALL TOGETHER"

One of the few scholars devoting attention to the subject at that time was Tulane University's Sam Wilson (1911-1993), an architecture professor who has been called New Orleans' "dean of historic preservation." His accomplishments include rehabilitating the Cabildo, the Ursuline Convent and the Pontalba apartments. At the time, Jack was in New Orleans, complet-

CREOLE PROGRESSION

As Vice President for Field Projects at the World Monuments Fund in New York from 1990 to 2011, John Stubbs has carried out preservation work for historic sites in Pompeii, Angkor in Cambodia, and the Royal Monastery of Guadalupe in Spain. But he describes the Maison Chenal/ LaCour House in Pointe Coupee as "one of the darnedest, most interesting things I've ever worked on."

Today, Stubbs is the Director of the Preservation Studies Program in Tulane University's School of Architecture. He served as the moderator of a two-day workshop in May, bringing together experts to craft a vision for the future of the Holdens' collection. The couple wants to place the entirety of their life's work in the public trust.

"They are looking at the options for making their resources into a very effective educational offering," Stubbs said. "It's not just preservation for preservation's sake."

Life on a Creole farmstead in Louisiana's early days was not well understood, and what the Holdens have contributed to scholarship in this field should not be underestimated, Stubbs said. "There simply was no expertise on the subject until they came along."

All that the Holdens and their children have built at their site will be bequeathed as a family legacy to Louisiana and the nation. "The Maison Chenal complex really is a unique resource, a holistic assemblage of Louisiana's material heritage from that era," Stubbs said. "It has to be seen to be believed."

ing his residency, when he and Pat signed up for a few evening classes with Professor Wilson. What they learned would direct their own preservation efforts for the next half century.

"An underlying theme of Sam Wilson's courses was his concept of *tout ensemble*," Jack said. "The idea that everything should blend together integrally." This approach to preservation emphasizes that historic objects should be assembled in relation to each other so that, more than just a collection, they comprise a context.

By way of explanation, Pat is fond of quoting the French writer Antoine de Saint Exupery: "What is valuable is a certain order-

ing of things; that civilization has to do not just with things, but with the invisible ties that join one thing to another.”

The Holdens find Creole culture so compelling because it’s the product of unique combinations, a retention of Old World identity that was transformed by the conditions of the New World—Louisiana’s landscape, climate and available resources—and by the different settlers encountered here. These evolutions are encoded in their material culture and can be deciphered, the Holdens said, if we devote sufficient time and attention to the small, ordinary things of daily life.

“So it’s more than the objects themselves that we’re interested in,” Pat said. “It’s how they’re connected to the way people lived.”

Understanding the way they lived began with a look at *where* they lived.

“Anyone who’s done some historical research knows how exciting it is to find something new that sheds some light. We really relish those moments. And we’ve had a lot of them.”

—Jack Holden

“We said, ‘Let’s find an old house, let’s fix it up and we’ll go from there.’” The couple wanted a very particular kind of historic home, however, quite different from the grand antebellum plantations visited by tourists. “We didn’t want Tara. We didn’t want the big Greek Revival mansion. We wanted the more vernacular, plebian architecture of the people. It was rarer and more proportional. So we started looking for a house.”

In 1974, the Holdens purchased land along Pointe Coupee’s Bayou Chenal, a former channel of the Mississippi River once connected to False River. The next year, they relocated onto that land a Creole cottage, built sometime in the late 18th century and renovated in 1820, and named it Maison Chenal. Once commonplace, Creole cottages have all but vanished from the Louisiana landscape.

The house, which once belonged to Julian Poydras, one of Louisiana’s founding fathers, wasn’t much more than a crumbling ruin when the couple began rehabilitating it. They worked to restore the cottage to its 1820 condition, guided by painstaking historic research in every detail. The Holdens and their children took up residency in the home in the early 1980s, and by

then they’d already acquired many of its furnishings.

“We tried to involve our children from the very start,” Pat said. “We would give them certain pieces of furniture that would be their own, or we’d have them help with the restoration of the house.”

Maison Chenal was only the beginning, however. Along with furniture, ceramics, silver, weavings and tools, their collection expanded to include more and more period-specific architecture, such as outdoor kitchens, an overseer’s house, a garconniere cottage, a pigeonnier, and various other historic buildings spread out over 75 acres.

“Some people rescue stray dogs,” Pat joked. “We were the rescuers of threatened buildings.”

Of special note is the LaCour House, an unusually large building that’s counted among the earliest extant structures in the Mississippi Valley. Precise dating of the LaCour House is difficult, but several elements suggest that it was once part of the original military post from Pointe Coupee’s founding. Large enough to feed a small garrison, the *salle*, or dining room, features long tables that were once in the Ursuline Convent. Today, the Holdens gather their extended family all together there for big holiday dinners.

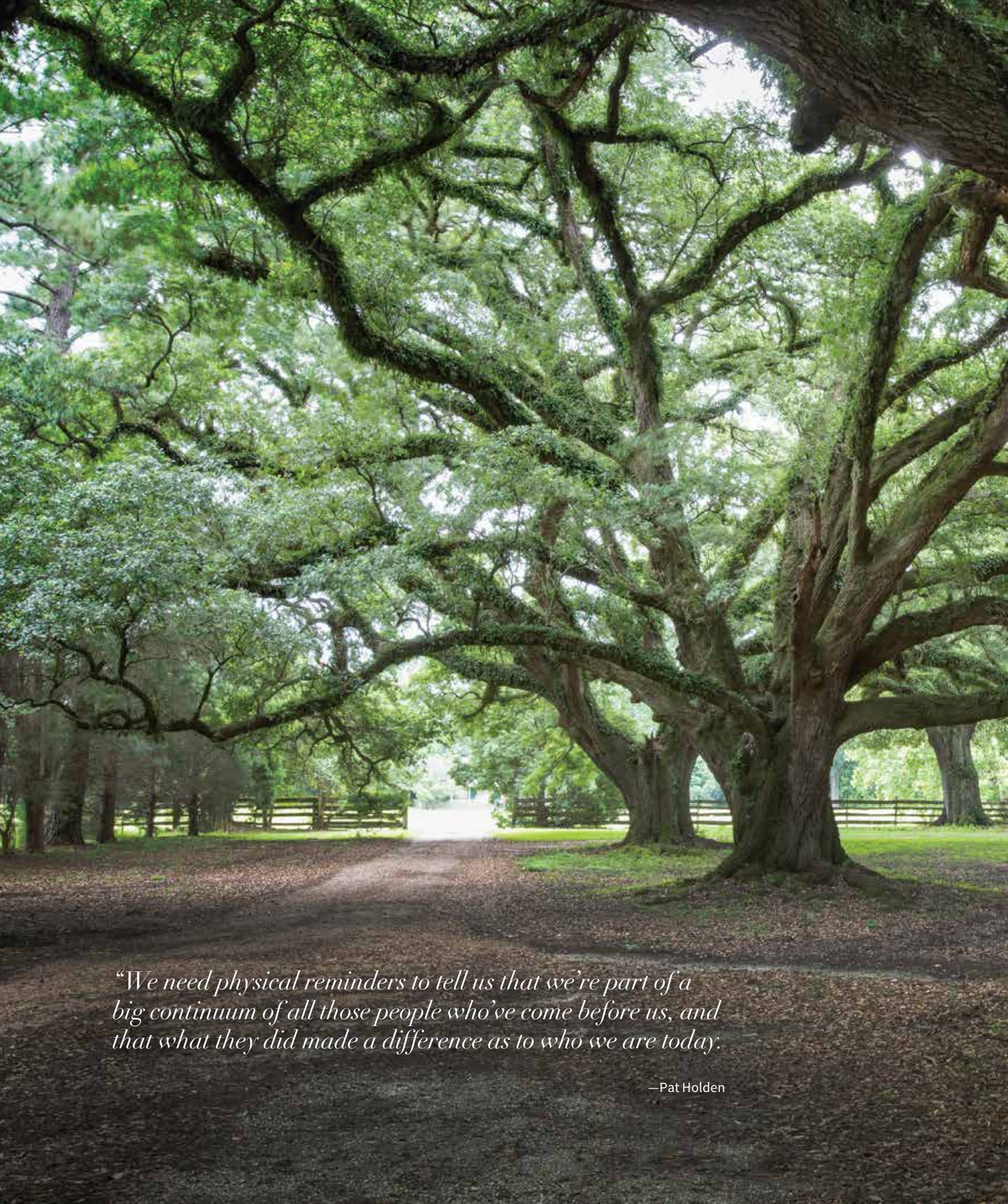
DISCOVERIES

“Anyone who’s done some historical research knows how exciting it is to find something new that sheds some light,” Jack said. “We really relish those moments. And we’ve had a lot of them.”

The smallest discoveries are no less important to the Holdens than grander finds.

“One of my favorites is the goldfish bowl over there,” Pat said, gesturing to an antique glass globe placed on a table beside a sunny window. It contained two gallons of water and a pair of goldfish. The Holdens acquired it and only later discerned its significance when they happened upon a traveler’s account of his visit to a New Orleans home in the early 19th century. It described a two-gallon glass globe housing two golden carp, imported from France.

“Then later we found this French painting,” Pat said. She showed me a small print that depicted a scene matching exactly what the traveler described and identical to Holden’s arrangement. Getting this goldfish bowl right was important to the Holdens. Apparently a common feature in both French and Creole homes, it’s a small detail, perhaps inconsequential in the



“We need physical reminders to tell us that we’re part of a big continuum of all those people who’ve come before us, and that what they did made a difference as to who we are today.”

—Pat Holden

eyes of some historians, but even picayune aspects of domestic practice can signify much about our Louisiana forebears.

“Now look at all the information you get from that,” Pat continued excitedly. “You get to know that these Creoles are not just people hacking out an existence on some frontier land—they were, of course—but they also wanted to bring something of that French way of frivolous beauty to it.”

The Holdens’ work is the product of intense passion, combined with dogged research. “You take one element and you pursue it, learn a great deal, and you finally come up with something that puts it all together,” Pat said. *Tout ensemble*.

To illustrate, Jack recounted the extensive detective work surrounding a curious wooden paddle they’d acquired. Its purpose eluded them.

“It finally dawned on us that it was a peel for an outdoor baking oven,” Jack explained. This led to more questions, particularly about how baking was done in the colonial era—an essential aspect of everyday life. Across Louisiana, they chased rumors of ancient outdoor ovens but found nothing. Made of mud, none survived, making the ovens’ use and operation something of a mystery. So the Holdens set out to ascertain everything they could about the ovens the Creoles used to bake their French bread and galettes. In time they learned enough to construct an accurate replica of their own. Their son-in-law uses it to bake homemade pizzas when the family gets together for special occasions, Jack laughed.

“We don’t want to retreat to the past, or say that the old days were better,” Pat concluded. “It’s just that, as human beings, we need physical reminders to tell us that we’re part of a big continuum of all those people who’ve come before us, and that what they did made a difference as to who we are today. And therefore the big message is that what we do now makes a difference for those who come after us. That’s what we always told the children as we were spending so much time, energy, and money on these old things.” •

C.E. Richard is a writer, filmmaker and English professor at University of Louisiana Lafayette. He wrote *Coastal Sketches*, a book about the endangered and evolving Louisiana coast and its people, for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.







This Fall at Manship Theatre

BATON ROUGE'S PREMIER NON PROFIT THEATRE

SEP 21 • 7:30PM

IBERIA BANK PRESENTS:

THE DRIFTERS

Up on the Roof, Under the Boardwalk, This Magic Moment, There Goes My Baby, Dance with Me, Spanish Harlem, and Stand by Me: The list of hits goes on and on. The Drifters...one of Rock & Roll's founding vocal groups is once again touring the U.S. under the auspices of their original management team.



SEP 29 • 7:30PM

TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

FEATURING CHARLIE MUSSLEWHITE, WILLIAM BELL & BOBBY RUSH

Featuring Charlie Musselwhite, Bobby Rush, William Bell, Frayser Boy, Al Kapone, The Hi Rhythm Section and the Stax Alumni Band and produced by the TMTR Education Initiative group, a live concert journey through the soul of American music.



OCT 1 • 7:00PM • MEMBER EXCLUSIVE EVENT

CHRIS ISAAK

For Chris Isaak, first comes the song. And for First Comes The Night—Isaak's stunning first album of new material in six years—this gifted singer-songwriter and bandleader is bringing us a bumper crop of strong and intriguing songs from which to choose.



OCT 19 • 7:30PM

DEL MCCOURY PLAYS WOODY GUTHRIE

Led by the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Famer, 2014 Grammy Winner for Best Bluegrass Album and 2011 National Endowment for the Arts Lifetime Achievement winner, the Del McCoury Band presents a unique concert featuring new songs of completely unheard lyrics from America's folk poet, Woody Guthrie.



OCT 26 • 7:30PM

CHARLES BRADLEY & HIS EXTRAORDINAIRES

Charles Bradley has made a name for himself as a riveting live performer and was named to the top spot on Paste Magazine's Best Live Acts of 2015. He has taken his show to venues and festivals across the globe including Coachella, Glastonbury Festival and Primavera Sound.



NOV 5 • 2:00 & 7:00PM

BATON ROUGE BALLET THEATRE & MANSHIP THEATRE PRESENT:

BODYTRAFFIC



This performance is funded in part by a grant from South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



Named one of Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch in 2013 and Best of Culture by the Los Angeles Times, BODYTRAFFIC has been instrumental in establishing Los Angeles as a center for contemporary dance. With their versatile repertoire BODYTRAFFIC is internationally recognized as bridging both new audiences and experienced dance enthusiasts with works by today's most distinctive choreographic voices.

SCHOOL SHOW: NOV 5 • 10:00AM



NOV 6 • 7:30PM

JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

Ray & Greta Corona

Since launching his recording career a decade ago, Justin Townes Earle has established a reputation as a singular leading light in the Americana music community. With fearless, personally charged lyrical insight and infectious melodic craftsmanship, the young veteran singer-songwriter has built a rich, personally charged body of work.



NOV 9 • 7:30PM

NOAM PIKELNY—SOLO PERFORMANCE (OF THE PUNCH BROTHERS)



Noam Pikelny has emerged as the preeminent banjoist of his generation. He is a founding member of Punch Brothers, a 3-time Grammy Nominee and was awarded the first annual Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass in 2010.



NOV 12 • 2:00PM

DOKTOR KABOOM! LOOK OUT SCIENCE IS COMING



The original Doktor Kaboom! show in which the good Doktor takes his audience on an educational tour of the modern scientific method, using humor and comedy while demonstrating spectacular applications of the physical sciences. Aimed at grades 4-8.



NOV 13 • 7:30PM

AMOS LEE



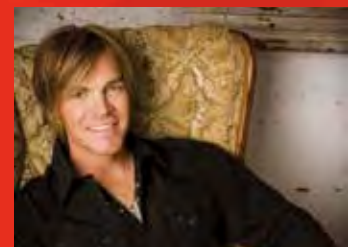
American singer-songwriter whose musical style encompasses folk, rock and soul, a well-known artist manager and new artist development agent, submitted a demo recording to Blue Note Records which resulted in a recording contract and an association with singer Norah Jones.



NOV 24 • 7:30PM

JACK INGRAM

Throughout a recording career that has spanned more than 20 years, American country music artist Jack Ingram has maintained a reputation for uncompromising songs and energetic performances that has earned him prominent stature in a prestigious tradition of iconoclastic singer-songwriters. After a seven year hiatus, his eighth studio album *Midnight Motel*, was released in August 2016 (Rounder Records).



FOR TICKETS: MANSHIPTHEATRE.ORG • (225) 344 - 0334



David Fennelly (left) and Carlos Sanchez at Summergrove, their home in Folsom, Louisiana.

*Northshore Community Foundation
Donor Spotlight:*

David Fennelly & Carlos Sanchez

By Jeanne Martin

F

unny how it all comes full circle.

In 2007, the early days of the Northshore Community Foundation, we were given the privilege of granting \$1 million to nonprofits on the Northshore that were still dealing with the impact of Hurricane Katrina. To

meet and start relationships with the local nonprofits and their board members, we decided to deliver all grant checks in person. David Fennelly greeted us to receive a modest grant on behalf of New Heights Therapy Riding Center. That has become one of the greatest ironies of ten years of the Foundation's success: We met David, who has become one of our most impactful and prolific donors, when we first handed him a check.

Care, deliberation and going beyond the expected are what philanthropy is all about. It is being an involved giver, and few people are more involved in the Northshore region than David Fennelly and Carlos Sanchez. Always humble, easily moved and quick with their generosity, the two are the embodiment of the modern philanthropist.

THE GIVING GENE

Originally from Ireland, David's mother ran a nursery school, which was connected to their home. "Every day, 30 or so kids would come to the school," said David. "Some came skipping or running but others did not. Some of the kids had real physical and developmental challenges. My mother never saw any of that. She treated every one of them with the same love and respect. The kindness she showed instilled in me a sense of equality that drives much of what I do today."

David moved to the U.S. at 21 to chase his American dream. At 27, he arrived in New Orleans as a fledgling businessman. Today, he is chairman of maritime services companies Associated Terminals and Turn Services, and has become one of the Super Region's leading visionaries, philanthropists and businessmen.

David's philanthropy, leadership and generosity inspire the people around him to get involved. From those of modest means to those of great wealth, David's compassion is as infectious as his humble nature is endearing, inspiring others to give.



Carlos, his mother Nila Dominguez Sánchez, and David at the Grand Opening of the NCF's Northshare Campus.

FROM HIS EARLY DAYS

Carlos was born in Venezuela, and his family moved to Mexico, where he learned about generosity by watching his parents. “During our time living in Mexico, while my father was finishing his studies for a medical career, he was very much in touch with the community. We were living by the foot of a mountain and every day I saw the farmers come down the mountain and pass in front of our house to sell their produce and meats in the nearby farmer’s market. Everyone knew about the soon-to-be-doctor in town and would ask my father to “fix” their children. He never refused and he always wanted to help. In exchange, they paid my father with either produce or meat, especially live chickens. It was funny to see the live chickens running in our backyard as payback for his good deeds.”

“In the last few years before his death, he took great pleasure in hearing about what David and I were accomplishing here with New Heights and other organizations. I think it brought him as much joy as it brings us.”

After graduating from Loyola in Business Management and Finance, but recognizing the important role of the arts in the cultural life of the community, Carlos worked with his true passion as an art collector and patron. Today, when he is not working as the director of Fenchez LLC, he brings his arts expertise to the many organizations and boards he serves, such as the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Foundation Board. Their Healing Arts Program helps to bring healing through beauty to people hospitalized and suffering with cancer and other illnesses.

“When I was first approached about the program by Ms. Diane Winston, I initially assisted on a few projects at the Women’s Pavilion in Covington. I remember the story of a patient who was battling cancer. While she was undergoing chemotherapy treatment, she shared the difference of staring at a blank wall space during this difficult process as opposed to having a beautiful piece of art to look at and admire. Visual art has a strong, positive physiological effect on the brain and is being used in hospitals across the world to aid in healing. I was absolutely going to be a part of that!”

FENNELLY SANCHEZ FUND AT THE FOUNDATION

David and Carlos have woven their love for the Northshore and their desire to impact the causes that move their hearts into the very purpose of the Fennelly Sanchez Fund at the Northshore Community Foundation. They call this place home and look to the systems and expertise of the Foundation to be their compass in local philanthropy. Their fund has now become the vehicle they use to impact this region in very powerful and

“Some of the kids had real physical and developmental challenges. My mother never saw any of that. She treated every one of them with the same love and respect.”

—David Fennelly

creative ways.

Among the many other organizations and missions they support through the Fennelly Sanchez Fund is lead funder of the Northshore Community Foundation’s newly opened Northshare Campus. They see the immense value in everything it represents. Northshare is a co-working campus of collaborative space used to help nonprofits maximize the impact of community solutions on people’s lives. “The building is a beautiful physical representation connecting the business and social corridor of Columbia Street with the opportunities and challenges facing the adjacent West 30’s neighborhood,” said Susan Bonnett Bourgeois, CEO of the Foundation.

YIN AND YANG

David and Carlos have been partners for 23 years, and it is evident that they complement each other’s giving spirits. Their drive to invest in the community where they felt an instant connection is both inspiring and infectious.

In 2006, the two first channeled their energy and resources to benefit New Heights Therapy Center. The combination of David’s soft heart for special needs children and his personal passion for horses with Carlos’ love for and contacts in the art world provided a remarkable foundation for New Heights support. Hosting their annual fundraising garden party and silent auction highlights the talents and passions of both men to help serve the mission of the therapeutic riding center.

Carlos and David consider Summergrove Farm in Folsom their home base. Both enjoy the rich culture of New Orleans and maintain a residence there as well as another in Kentucky. They are active in the arts and the economic development in downtown Covington, frequenting small businesses, restaurants and attending community events throughout the year. •

Bridge for CIVICS

*Entertaining card game
teaches government,
politics*

By Sara Bongiorno

Effective civic engagement takes know-how—and practice. American high school students have had less of each as a federal focus on math, science and language, coupled with standardized tests targeting those areas, has squeezed out civics.

The result: less than 1 in 4 U.S. high school students is proficient in civics, according to a 2014 study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

A new classroom card game developed by former Baton Rouge Area Foundation Chairman and Board Director Kevin Lyle takes aim at the U.S. civics gap. The game's name is PolitiCraft: An Action Civics Card Game.

Released in late 2016, non-partisan PolitiCraft prepares students for future civic participation by helping them understand actions they can take to make a real impact on issues that are important to them.

Role play is a central feature of the game. Depending on the cards they draw, players may start a blog, attend a public meeting, buy a billboard advertisement, organize a fundraiser, or run for office to advance issues as varied as global warming to establishing video games as a sport.

It takes about 45 minutes to play the game.

"The idea is to help students understand how they can get involved in the political process," Lyle said. "But we knew it had to be fun. The learning had to be under the cover."

The game was created in partnership with the National Council for the Social Studies, which also endorses it. Teachers, high

school students and the National Institute for Civil Discourse also provided input.

A Los Angeles artist designed the game's colorful cards in categories that include media relations, policies and practices and elections.

The game is run by a Baton Rouge nonprofit of the same name—PolitiCraft—and has additional ties to both the Foundation and the region. Phyllis Taylor, the wife of late TOPS founder Pat Taylor, was a key supporter of its development from early on.

"Without her we would not have gotten anywhere," Lyle said. "She's been our biggest supporter."

"The idea is to help students understand how they can get involved in the political process.

But we knew it had to be fun. The learning had to be under the cover."

—Kevin Lyle

The game is designed for ages 13 and up. It sells for \$24.95 on amazon.com and through the organization's website, politicraft.org.

Proceeds will be used to cover cost of the game for schools and districts that cannot afford it, Lyle said. "We want it to reach as many students as possible," he said.



Louisiana is among states moving in recent years to shore up lagging civics education.

In 2015, it became the eighth state to pass legislation making a test of basic knowledge of U.S. government a requirement for high school graduation.

The law requires high school civics courses in Louisiana to include a unit of study that covers the same material as a 100-question test given to immigrants seeking to become U.S. citizens.

Civics isn't just about facts, of course. Poor understanding of civics erodes how individuals and communities interact with each other. "It's really about how we live together," Kei Kawashima-Ginsburg, director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, told the *Christian Science Monitor* in 2016.

To that end, PolitiCraft puts a focus on interaction and action. Participants must be ready to respectfully debate their issue with opponents. They earn bonus points for ethical actions.

A winner is determined by the number of "social impact" points he or she accumulates as each player works toward a solution to a particular issue. Each student-player constructs a narrative made up of actions they choose over the course of the game.

PolitiCraft has been on the market for only a few months, but Lyle said in time it might be used outside the classroom in

community forums, where facilitators could help those with opposing viewpoints gain the skills to work together more effectively.

In time, his organization might develop local or state versions of the game or versions for younger, middle-school children.

"We believe it could help provide a fun and safe way for many groups to learn how to discuss polarizing issues," he said.

The game's genesis links back some years to work consultant Lyle did for a nonprofit organization that was exploring developing a digital game about how a bill becomes a law.

One of the things he learned in the process: how little civics some children were learning. "There are schools in this country where civics is no longer taught," Lyle said.

In some cases, U.S. school libraries are offering civics in the form of after-school programming. Lyle will visit the National School Library Association in 2017 as part of the effort to get the game to more students.

PolitiCraft's use of paper playing cards was a deliberate deviation from the pervasive digital format. During tests of the game prototype, teachers and students alike said they loved the break from digital provided by the handheld cards.

The game is being used in several states, although not yet in any Louisiana classrooms.

"We're still in the early stages," he said. •

Mid City Studio

Duo launch nonprofit to encourage more development in the city

By Jeff Roedel

The patio fills quickly as residents lean in for better views of poster boards showing BREC's renderings and proposals for improvements to Spain Street Park. A community garden, a picnic pavilion and playground, and park benches that wiggle and curve like ocean waves are on display.

On the wall, a giant hand-painted crawfish looks down on the steamy, Friday morning crowd in late June as hosts and Mid City Studio founders William Doran and Lynley Farris greet visitors and direct them to coffee, a classic biscuits, grits and eggs breakfast, and the new maps of the area's soul food restaurants the duo created and is releasing today. This is Coffee on the Porch, the nonprofit's monthly meet-n-greet that has become the unofficial gathering for the entire neighborhood.

Karla King, community radio WHYR board member and artist, makes a plate of food for a stranger who looks hungry. Local poet Eric Stewart, a self-professed "Coffee on the Porch addict," catches up with friends and warmly introduces himself to anyone he doesn't recognize. Minus the Saint singer Peter Simon rattles out a rolling bar-room boogie on Pit-N-Peel's piano as this eclectic collective of Baton Rougeans gets louder with advocacy and affection.

A few weeks earlier, over shrimp salad at Pit-N-Peel, Doran and Farris are talking about the carcasses of old shopping malls, and what cities and developers can do together to revitalize the increasing number of burrowed-out big boxes that mark the current U.S. map.

This is indicative of the conversations this pair has all the time. Ideas flow fast across a spectrum of topics—development, social justice, education—but solutions somehow always weave back into the fabric of their agenda for Mid City. They connect the dots.

“Originally I didn’t intend to stay this long in Baton Rouge. But I fell in love with this city, and its potential—so much so that I felt compelled to start a nonprofit.”

—Lynley Farris, co-founder of Mid City Studio



SPARK



Jeff Roedel

Encompassing about eight square miles, and one of the first major expansions of Baton Rouge outside of its 1817 boundaries, the area reached a peak of commercial and residential development in the 1950s when it was incorporated into the city proper. What happened next is a familiar pattern across the country.

“What you saw in Mid City for years is what people just like us have seen in other cities: The integration of schools and subsequent white flight, the arrival of interstates and this push of the suburban American Dream—and they all hit at the same time,” Doran says, while stressing that any solutions to the complex issues need to be responsive and adaptive to this shifting landscape. “Working on the scale of a neighborhood in Baton Rouge that’s changing rapidly, you’re setting yourself up for failure if you make a plan that you have to stick to by the letter.”

Farris puts a button on Doran’s point: “We can’t just do what worked 20 years ago.”

That’s why Mid City Studio focuses less on public policy and more on curriculum development, design initiatives and all-welcome events to impact the area.

The nonprofit founders love frequenting Pit-N-Peel, not only for the Louisiana-inspired seafood and BBQ, but for owner Von Raybon’s consistent support of their cause. Formerly in the nonprofit sector working with juvenile offenders, Raybon built his restaurant out of an old dress shop on Government Street in hopes that it could become a community rallying post not only at the restaurant, but through his catering of Mid City Studio events and pop-ups like those he does often at The Radio Bar.

For more information on Mid City Studio, Coffee on the Porch, and a complete archive of the nonprofit’s cultural maps of the neighborhood, visit midcitystudio.org.

“I know it is programs like [Mid City Studio] that make a huge difference on a personal level and city-wide level, so anytime I can help those efforts, I’m all in,” Raybon says. “Mid City is making a valiant effort even in the two years I’ve had my restaurant here. And it’s not just business. It’s art and

music and a unique community culture that is really growing right here in the city.”

Mid City contains a state-recognized Arts and Culture District and a Historical District, too, while upcoming developments like concert venue Mid City Ballroom, multi-tenant food court White Star Market and the 50,000 square-foot Electric Depot imply that new money should continue to flow into the area. A revitalized mixed-use development in a series

of old Entergy buildings near Circa 1857, the Electric Depot will include a restaurant, coffee shop and brewpub, an upscale bowling alley, event venue, healthy lifestyle center and more by the end of 2018.

According to a recent Nielsen study, Millennials, a highly social generation that accounts for 24% of the population, much prefer cities to suburbs, density over distance, walking over driving. One Instagram post from Doran in late June captioned a photo Government Street’s Smoking Aces BBQ with: “A good overcast day for canvassing neighborhoods and eatin’ BBQ! #iammidcity”.

“Go for a walk down the street, and you’ll experience the city in a different way,” Farris says. “As an organization that’s important to us, to invest the time to meet people and reflect on what is needed, not just what we want to do.”

Mid City Studio began with this spirit of assessment and analysis. Doran has taught architecture classes at LSU for seven years, and he nicknamed a course “Mid City Studio” when he decided to take his students’ design-build projects out of the theoretical—or what Doran calls “designing hypothetical museums for millionaires”—and into the here and now. That reality is the strategically-chosen streets of a section of Baton Rouge that has seen increased interest from entrepreneurs, consumers and homeowners of late. A 2015 feature in *Business Report* proclaimed what the region’s top developers and real estate agents already knew: Mid City is the city’s next great frontier for redevelopment.

As part of her AmeriCorps residency in Baton Rouge in 2014, Farris was working for the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance when she gathered a collection of neighborhood stakeholders to foster dialog about what the community really needs. Doran attended that first meeting Farris organized, and soon after, they began discussing the idea of a nonprofit that expands his architecture class’ work in the area. As creative collaborators, they hit it off instantly. Now they talk in tandem and almost finish each other’s sentences.

“Mid City should be denser,” Farris says matter of fact. “More people should be living here.”

“We are so spread out as a city,” Doran adds quickly. “Some of it just doesn’t make sense.”

One of the group’s earliest projects besides their push of the #IAMMIDCITY hashtag and its wood-carved desktop totems, was a photo exhibit initiated last year with area elementary school students. Children were given disposable cameras at school to document their lives in Mid City. The results are on display indefinitely in a collage-like mural at Spain Street Park.



William Doran

Overseeing and installing the project not only allowed Doran and Farris significant face time with the families immediately surrounding the park, it brought BREC into their inner circle. Now the local parks department leans on Mid City Studio to help gather community feedback on land use and future park improvements in the Government and North Boulevard corridors.

BREC is not alone. Together Baton Rouge and WHYR Community Radio have become stalwart supporters of Mid City Studio.

“WHYR grew out of the Baton Rouge Progressive Network, which was founded to create space for fellow progressives to coalesce around issues that matter,” says WHYR board member Gwen Palagi. “WHYR always intended to be more than a radio station, to be a community beacon and a gathering point, and Mid City Studio’s ideas and vision have helped make that a reality.”

For the past year, Mid City Studio called the WHYR building home, with an office and serving as hosts for the vinyl record sale parties and events held at the station. Doran and Farris also have assisted with developing civic-minded content for broadcast.

“They are connectors,” says Palagi, who moved to Baton Rouge from Hawaii and chose to live in Mid City with her husband for its charm and sense of becoming something greater. “William and Lynley are both so magnetic and have a real vision for what ‘neighborhood’ can mean. They put in tons of effort.”

After more than a year of educational initiatives, strategic partnerships and events, Mid City Studio earned its 501(C)3 status in late 2016, with Doran as executive director and Farris as creative director.

“Originally, I didn’t intend to stay this long in Baton Rouge,” says Farris, an alumnus of Hallmark who works full-time as a project manager at Stun Design and Interactive. “But I fell in love with this city, and its potential—so much so that I felt compelled to start a nonprofit.”

Mid City’s Studio’s most consistently galvanizing event has been its most simple: Coffee on the Porch.

For more than two years now Cafeciteaux Coffee Roasters has been providing fresh, free coffee for these monthly meetups that bounce to different locations across Mid City. After noticing an Instagram post promoting the very first Coffee on the Porch, Cafeciteaux co-owner Chris Peneguy contacted Mid City Studio offering to donate his startup’s rich, locally made brew.

Architect Dyke Nelson, left, and DNA Workshop staff member Abe Kinney inspect the old Entergy building site on Government Street.



Tim Mueller

Q&A: DYKE NELSON

By Mukul Verma

Dyke Nelson and David Weinstein are winning at calculated gambles. They have profited from redevelopments in challenged areas. Seeing the promise in Mid City, for instance, Nelson moved his architecture practice into a warehouse he converted on 14th Street. The duo is redeveloping the Entergy warehouses around the corner from Nelson's office. They won the right to do so from the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. Called Electric Depot, the destination venue on six acres will include a stage for music, high-end bowling lanes, restaurants and apartments. Construction has begun. We asked Nelson, who leads the area's merchant association, a few questions about the future of Mid City.

WHAT MADE YOU INTERESTED IN FIRST LOCATING YOUR OFFICES TO MID CITY AND NOW INVESTING IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENTERGY SITE?

Having worked and developed several projects in Downtown Baton Rouge, Mid City was the logical progression in my mind. We can still find fair value, and it is one of the most—if not the most—convenient locations in town. The physical infrastructure, the buildings and the people are all great. It is a true cross section of all the good things that make Baton Rouge wonderful.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A SURGE OF INTEREST IN MID CITY. WHAT TYPES OF BUSINESSES AND PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN MOVING THERE AND WHY?

It is a wide variety of business that seem to be taking a second look at Mid City. There are the obvious entertainment venues, restaurants and art stores, but now we are seeing tech companies, designers, architecture firms exploring Mid City. I believe it is for the same reasons that we moved here four years ago. Because of the new projects coming on line, it has become a much safer investment.

ARE AREAS TOWARD THE NORTH SIDE OF GOVERNMENT STREET GETTING INTEREST FROM DEVELOPERS AS WELL?

Absolutely. For the record, we are on the north side of Government Street. The wonderful thing about the people that are looking at Mid City now is that they embrace and even seek out diversity. Government Street is not a divider. As new projects come on line, the progression and positive impact will be to the north and the south.

WHAT THINGS ARE STANDING IN THE WAY OF SPEEDING UP MID CITY REDEVELOPMENT?

The challenges for Mid City are the same as they were for downtown, and any other area in any other city. We have

to combat perceptions about safety, and people have to get comfortable with being around people who are not like themselves. The other inevitable problem is property owners waiting to sell or develop because they are waiting to see what happens. Many times the train just passes them by. There are still people sitting on property in downtown to see what happens. Guess what? It has already happened.

Given those challenges, I think that there is the opportunity for Mid City to develop much more quickly than people think. There are a lot of young developers who are not waiting for anyone to tell them that it's OK to be in a diverse neighborhood with a different character than they are used to. They are seeking those things out and putting real money behind it. As long as those guys are encouraged to continue pushing boundaries, Baton Rouge really does have the chance to become something really special. That intangible element is really what people are looking for today.

PICTURE GOVERNMENT STREET IN 10 YEARS. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

In five to ten years, I expect Government Street to be a thriving hub of business that remains diverse and funky. A lot of people say that they want it to be like Magazine Street, but I think it should be something better. With the state Department of Transportation renovations of the street coming this summer, we are making great strides to make Government more walkable and much safer. With the beautification efforts that we will make after DOTD is done, it will be a unique example for the folks in New Orleans to look at and start thinking about how they can make Magazine Street better. We have a ridiculously good opportunity, and I am optimistic that we will not squander it over NIMBY politics.

HOW DOES THE DEVELOPMENT IN MID CITY HELP THE ENTIRE PARISH?

Infill development is always good for a community. By utilizing existing infrastructure and by creating new jobs, the entire parish is made better. Giving people transportation options reduces traffic, and additional tax dollars without the cost of new infrastructure is always a good thing. The last intangible is the coolness factor. It is not something that can be fabricated. It has to happen organically. That is what is happening and hopefully will continue to do so. This helps greatly with tourism and employee retention. It is a quality of life issue, and people, particularly young people, are looking for exactly that.

“While I’m a part of Mid City, I have to get to know my community in order to be capable of doing anything for it that is relevant or impactful.”

—William Doran, co-founder of Mid City Studio

“This is a great neighborhood that has a real chance to be more than strip malls and chains,” says Peneguy, who also works as a CPA. “What Coffee on the Porch does is bring together all these people who may not normally be hanging out, and it’s grown these relationships and started more community conversations.”

Much of the organization’s work in 2016 has been creating cultural maps of the neighborhood. Mid City Studio even posted up at the Arts Council’s Ebb & Flow Festival in spring and created custom maps with detailed input from festivalgoers.

Turning out a new, downloadable map each month, themes include Public Art, Black History, Homeless Services, Community Resources and Soul Food.

“It is one thing to say a neighborhood has little to no food access and another to visually see how a neighborhood is miles away from a grocery store with little access to public transportation,” says Jennie Garcia, a collaborator with Doran and Farris on the Mid City maps who holds a master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning with a specialization in Historic Preservation. “Maps are relatable, and with Mid City Studio mapping different topics every month, it brings an awareness to issues that may be talked about but never fully seen.”

Necessity and invention are driving Mid City’s next project, too. With the WHYR building purchased earlier in 2016, the radio station will remain but Mid City Studio must relocate. Doran and Farris plan to purchase one or multiple shipping containers and redesign them as Mid City Studio offices and community space with a partner who owns an empty lot or greenspace.

“Public space has gone from physical to virtual, and that’s not progress,” Doran says. “Taking empty spaces and looking for ways to pull content that’s already in the neighborhood to activate that space is what we are focused on. So, for instance, hosting pop-ups, markets or concerts for local artists.”

While Doran and Farris see their shipping container office project as the guinea pig for their ideals, they believe even the fundraising efforts for the innovative office concept can be used to cultivate community in Mid City.

“You can build upon existing culture, but you can’t just charge in and invent it,” Doran says. “Especially when you have lots of people already living here. Our job is to set up the

infrastructure.”

While other nonprofits can spend significant resources on outward facing content and communication, Mid City Studio has an almost insular and folk pulse to it. Farris says she wants to be so focused on the neighborhood of their namesake that their work remains nearly a secret to outside parties. Though that route doesn’t pertain to fundraising efforts, it does surface with the duo’s extreme lack of interest in grafting new elements onto Mid City for no other reason than they are working well in other places.

“Government Street shouldn’t be like Magazine Street,” Doran says, picking one ill-fitting idea from the ether. “There’s no need to import things when you have so much here already. You just have to look for it, connect with it and help it grow.”

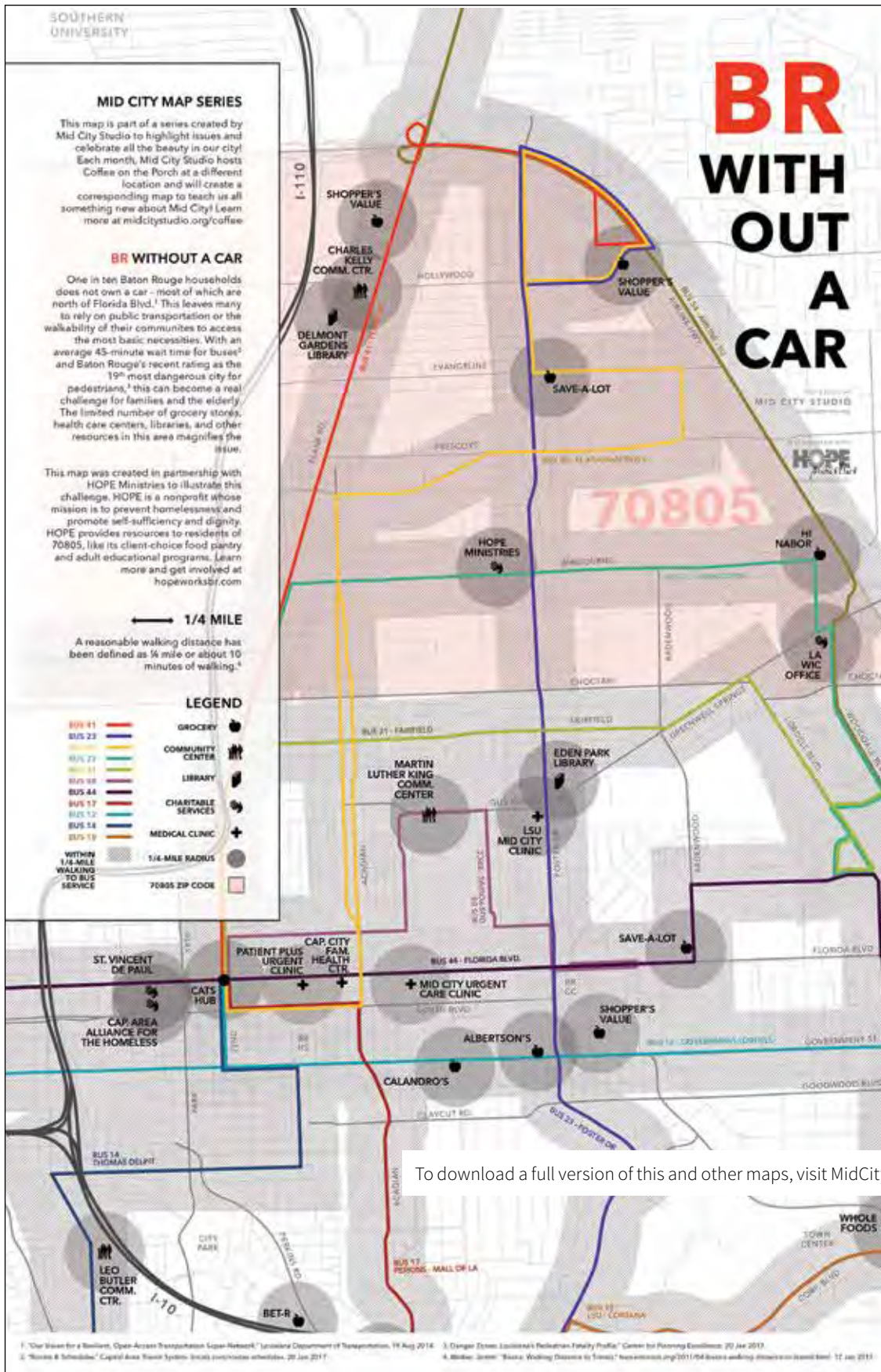
Local entrepreneurs like Peneguy are betting on that growth by putting their resources and faith into Mid City Studio in a way few voters are with politicians today. “Government is not going to solve issues like growing a neighborhood in a healthy way,” Peneguy says. “It’s nonprofits like theirs that are the real fuel for change.”

For Doran and Farris, those scales of change both large and small are intertwined. They view their nonprofit as not only an undertaking of outreach and action at the civic level, but a learning process on a personal level.

“We get one shot at all this, so why not make it worthwhile?” Farris asks. “And in return I hope that [Mid City Studio can help] others get to make their lives worthwhile, too.”

Mid City Studio doesn’t claim to have all the answers to turn a once-forgotten part of the city’s cultural and business heart into a more thriving organ again, but more and more individuals and entities within the neighborhood and outside of it are beginning to recognize the value that lies in the specificity and intimacy of the kind of grassroots work Doran and Farris carry out daily.

“This is about taking care of the place I live,” the architect says. “And stepping outside of my comfort zone to learn about the other people here, the history and the culture, is really important. While I’m a part of Mid City, I have to get to know my community in order to be capable of doing anything for it that is relevant or impactful.” •



To download a full version of this and other maps, visit MidCityStudio.org.

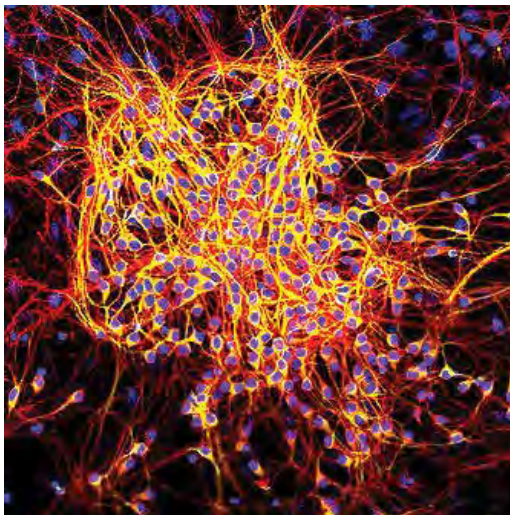
SPARK BRIEFS



ELECTRIC CARS ARE AROUND THE

CORNER The French government plans to ban sales of gasoline and diesel cars by 2040. Norway has pledged to do the same by 2025. Volvo will manufacture only hybrids and electrics by 2019, and Tesla has started delivering its Model 3, a more affordable sedan with more than 400,000 pre-ordered. “EVs are on track to accelerate to 54% of new car sales by 2040,” says Bloomberg New Energy Markets in a report. “Tumbling battery prices mean that EVs will have lower lifetime costs, and will be cheaper to buy, than internal combustion engine cars in most countries by 2025-29.”

SHOOTING VICTIMS OFTEN GET REVENGE Noticing this, a Detroit hospital is treating gun violence as an infection. Sinai Grace Hospital has hired two staff members who know about street violence. Both are reformed troublemakers and shooting victims. What they do is counsel victims, hoping to defuse future violence. “When we look at cancer, stroke, cardiovascular disease, we do lifestyle modifications in those areas. We’re able to move the needle on morbidity and mortality,” says Dr. Tolulope Sonuyi, the mastermind behind the project. “Why should violence be any different?”



SCIENTISTS HAVE DELIVERED A FIRST IN ALZHEIMER’S RESEARCH

They have mapped the chemical structure of the key marker for the malady. Knowing the chemicals that compose tau protein—an abnormal deposit that is suspected of causing the disease—could offer new treatments and preventions for Alzheimers. “It’s clear that tau is extremely important to the progression of Alzheimer’s disease and certain forms of dementia. In terms of designing therapeutic agents, the possibilities are now enormous,” says Bernardino Ghetti, one of the scientists on Indiana University’s team that made the discovery.

GRAIL

GRAIL WANTS TO DIAGNOSE CANCER BY EXAMINING DROPS OF BLOOD

Venture capitalists have invested more than \$1 billion in Grail's pursuit of a mass-market blood test to detect cancer. Grail is spending millions now to gather blood samples that will be searched for tiny amounts of DNA shed by tumors. Spotting cancer DNA could lead to early treatment, when it's most effective. There are several hurdles and questions. Not all cancers shed DNA early on, and the cost of the tests, under the existing technology, would be expensive.

SIRI CAN'T TELL YOU ABOUT A PROBLEM WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Programmers of neural networks—which learn on their own based on data that's fed to them—can't fully explain how the computers are producing results, including diagnosing illness and driving cars. Writes Will Knight in *MIT's Technology Review*, "We've never before built machines that operate in ways their creators don't understand. How well can we expect to communicate and get along with intelligent machines that could be unpredictable and inscrutable?"



BAIL IS A PROBLEM People get arrested on suspicions of minor crimes and get stuck in jail because they can't afford bail. Some of them cop pleas even though they are innocent, just to get out. In some places, charities have been established to bail people out of jail. "By paying bail for New Yorkers who can't afford it, we are keeping people out of jail, protecting the presumption of innocence, and proving that cash bail is not only unjust, but also unnecessary," says the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund on its website."

BYE, BYE PILL BOTTLES One in five Americans take more than three medications a day. An innovation is simplifying that challenge. The PillPack replaces the jangle of bottles on the bathroom vanity with a single medicine dispenser. The New Hampshire-based pharmacy sorts, packages and ships all the medications. Upon arrival, the patient puts the medicine into a fool-proof dispenser, which comes in four colors to match decor. Mistakes are prevented because prepacked medicines are arranged in chronological order with clear and vital instructions. In addition to the dispenser and pill packet, patients can use an app to interact with PillPack pharmacists.



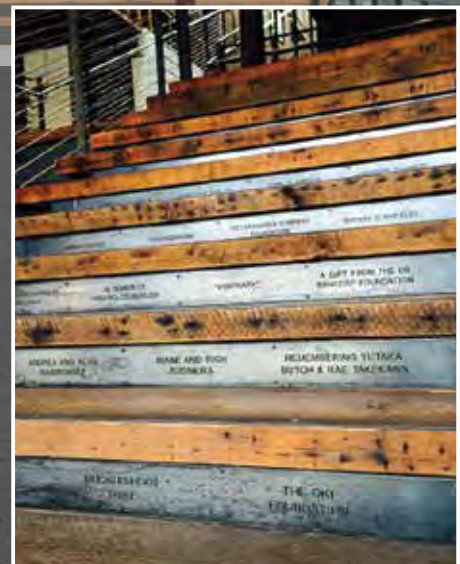
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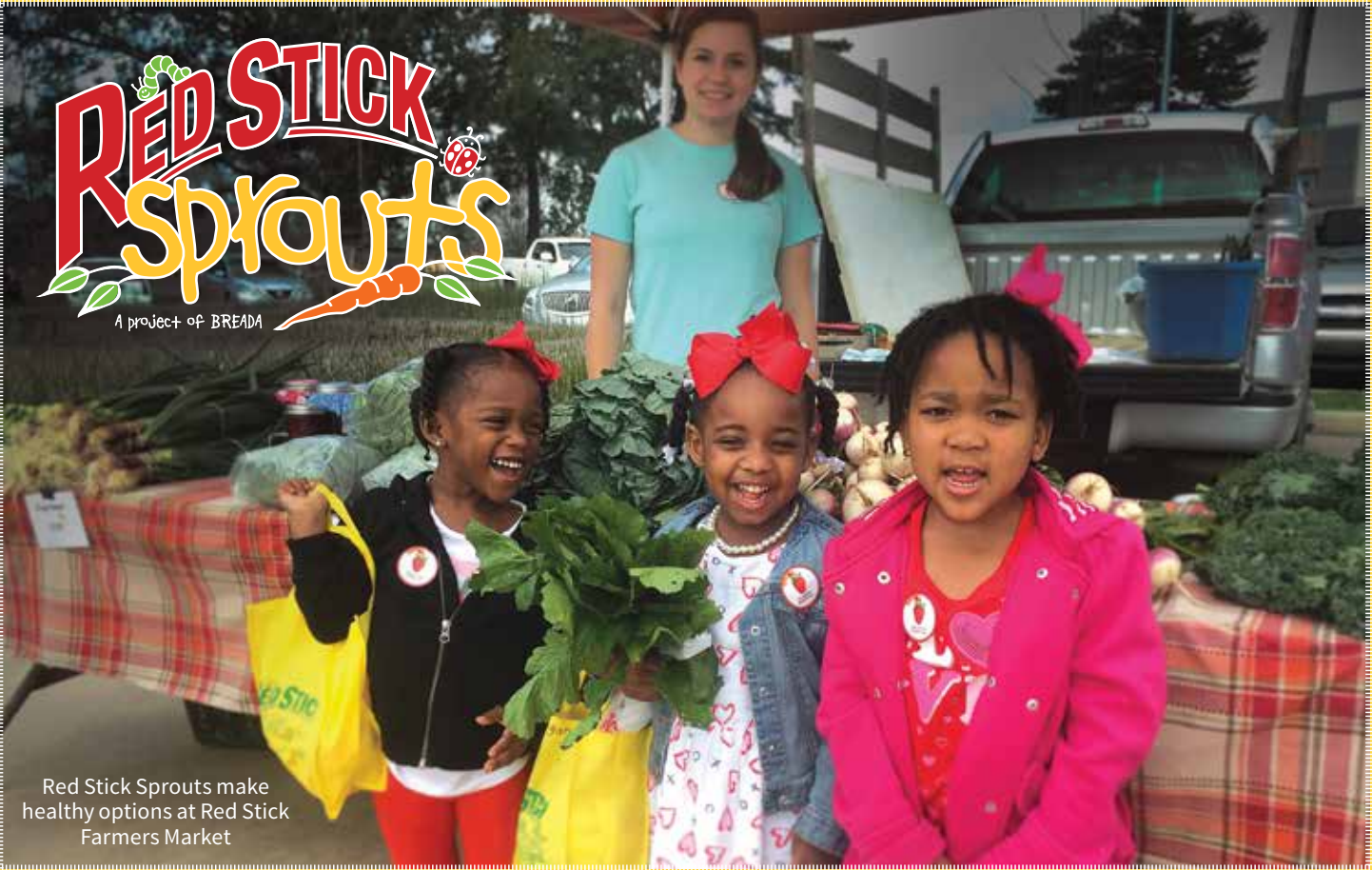


WATER CAMPUS RISERS CAMPAIGN

Baton Rouge's skyline will soon see a bold new addition. In 2017, scientists from The Water Institute of the Gulf will move their labs to the Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions, a new building that will be part of the Water Campus, where scientists are offering solutions to rising seas and vanishing wetlands.

You can support their vital research. A \$5,000 contribution will help us complete the Water Campus to the highest standards in the world. By way of thanks, we'll emboss your name, or that of someone you'd like to honor, on an amphitheater riser made of cypress pulled from the river. You can buy a riser online at BRAf.org/risers or by calling Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126.





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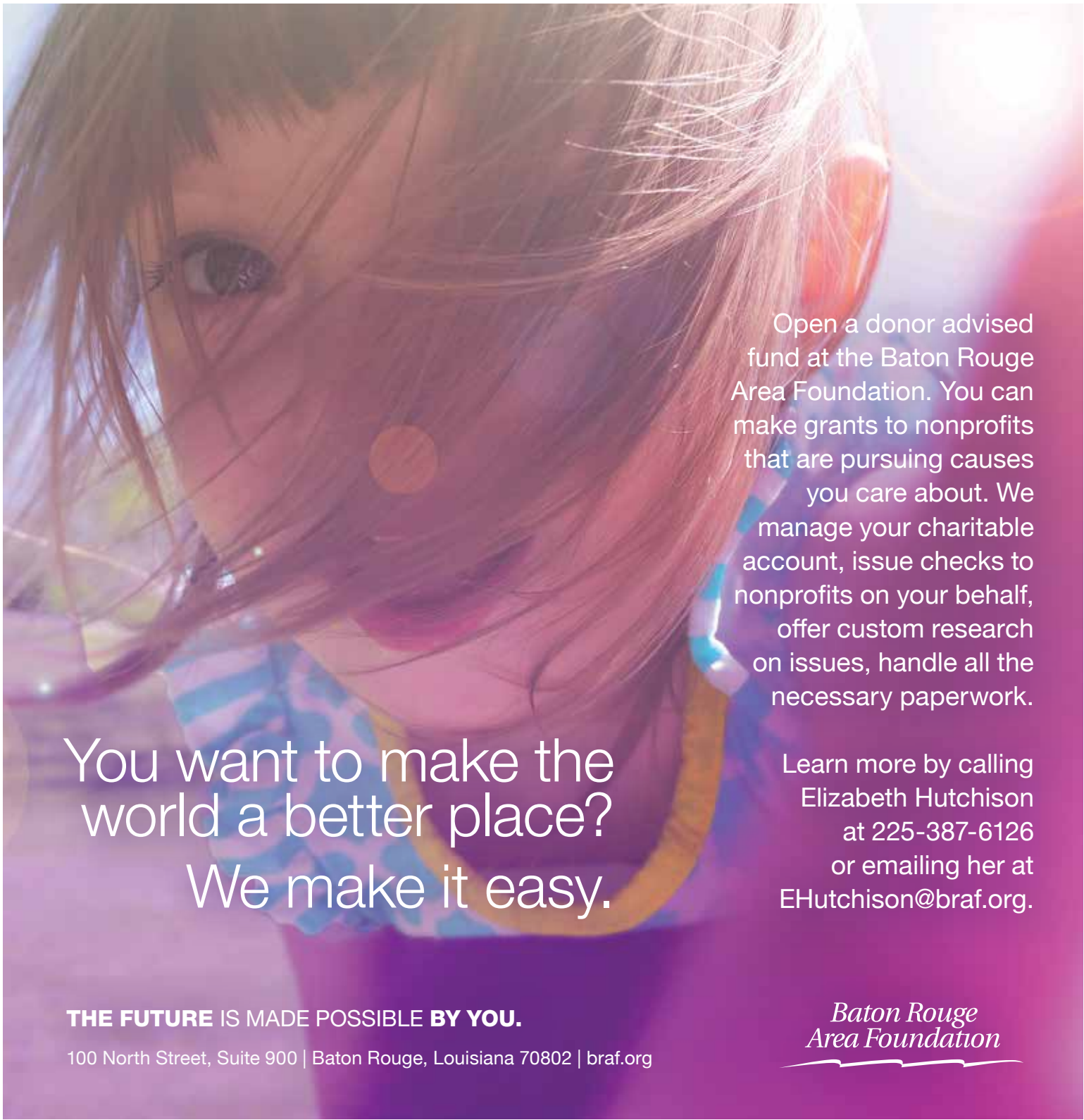
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