

# CURRENTS

*third quarter twenty-eighteen . baton rouge area foundation*

## *Joanna Wurtele:*

Her nonprofit really is  
improving education







Real ramen from Chow Yum Phat at White Star Market, a place that lets strangers become friends.





Photo by Jeff Roedel



# It's the Season to **START PLANNING**

Host your holiday party at the newest unique event space in Baton Rouge.

Make your event one to remember this holiday. At the Estuary Conference & Event center, we work closely with you to bring your dream event to life. This time of year is about bringing people together, and it is important to not only offer an event, but create an experience. Let's imagine the possibilities together.

Overlooking the Mississippi River, The Estuary Conference and Event Venue sets the standard for style and sophistication for any special occasion or symposium. The Estuary features over 6,000 square feet of stunning meeting and event space, including a gallery space with breath taking views of the Mississippi River. Our five conference rooms and Riverfront Gallery with a Pre-Function area allow for a variety of setups for meetings, break-out sessions, workshops, or retreats. The outdoor terrace overlooking the Water Campus is a stylish place for al fresco receptions and parties while the Newton B. Thomas Landing brings your guests out over the river to enjoy the beautiful sunset.

#### Call our Event Team to help you with your:

- Business Meetings, Conferences and Corporate Events
- Fundraisers and Non-Profit Galas
- Rehearsal Dinners, Wedding Ceremonies & Receptions
- Graduation, Anniversary and Birthday Parties
- Private Dinners and Banquets
- Holiday Celebrations
- Reunions and University Events
- Staff Retreats and Board Meetings
- Lunch and Learns
- Training Seminars
- Continuing Education





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# LETTER



Are you looking for some good summer reading? It's in your hands.

Maybe your tastes incline toward thrillers with happy endings. For that, you can flip to the grants section. There, you'll find a shipload of noble doctors docking in hostile countries to treat the poor. Along with medical care, the doctors share thousands of little kindnesses in parts of the world where that kind of compassion is in short supply.

Then there's the story of the scientist from an exotic land with a rich history of discovery. He is using sophisticated sensors and his own original algorithm to detect when floods are coming so families can make a quick escape with their lives before the water rises around them.

How about a little heroism right here at home? For that, read about the twin artists who are marshaling local resources to teach disadvantaged children how to swim, giving hundreds of kids a chance to enjoy—safely—summers in pools and on the open water. That's learning that will follow them the rest of their lives.

These exciting stories, and many more, are brought to you by fund donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and by the Foundation itself. Tom Cruise rakes in \$100 million from an opening weekend. As of 2017, the Foundation has more than six times that to accomplish impossible missions throughout the year—\$656 million in assets.

More than just a large number, our asset level—ranked in the top 35 among community foundations—is a measure of the generosity of people who live across South Louisiana. Hidden within that big figure is a story itself, a tale of how the

Foundation works with donors and members to strive, in many different ways, for a more equitable and prosperous world.

The main characters are our fund donors. They control about half of Foundation's assets in their donor advised funds. Together with the Foundation, our donors have granted more than \$500 million over five decades, with much of that amount in the past decade alone. In the stories mentioned above, donors have given generously to Mercy Ships, the Water Institute of the Gulf and Tankproof.

Our donors work together, too. From time to time, we ask them to pursue bigger civic projects. For example, the Foundation made a case to them for creating a nonprofit that would recruit the best school operators from around the country. The aim was to give Baton Rouge students the kind of good, well-run schools they deserve. Donors who cared about the cause provided more than \$500,000 in annual funding to seed New Schools for Baton Rouge, which has raised tens of millions on its own and proved its worth by recruiting IDEA and Basis—organizations which operate five of the top 10 public schools in the nation, as ranked by *U.S. News and World Report*. IDEA and Basos are opening three new schools in Baton Rouge in August.

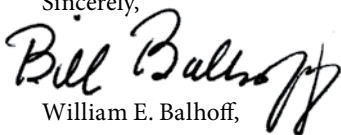
There's also the story of Companion Animal Alliance and the \$12 million shelter we helped underwrite. Or the improved services for children and adults on the autism spectrum that the Foundation bought for Louisiana families. For a happy ending everyone can appreciate, just visit downtown. Years back, we hired planners to deliver the downtown master plan, creating a beautiful setting in the heart of the city where, before, there was blight. The sequel to this will take place in the green spaces between City Park and LSU. That's where the tale of our blueprint for preserving the city's six lakes will unfold in the coming years.

*Tom Cruise rakes in \$100 million from an opening weekend. As of 2017, the Foundation has more than six times that to accomplish impossible missions throughout the year—\$656 million in assets.*

A big share of our assets also comes with another hero story. Wilbur Marvin quietly built a real estate business in Baton Rouge. Wanting his business to outlive him, coupled with a desire to continue doing good after he was gone, Mr. Marvin left his shopping centers in the Southeast and Puerto Rico to a supporting nonprofit of the Foundation. The Wilbur Marvin Foundation has underwritten civic projects and provided grants to improve the lives of our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico. But maybe Mr. Marvin's most substantial impact has been to deliver development in places considered too risky for conventionally financed projects. This is what allowed the Foundation to build new housing in downtown and to renovate the abandoned Capitol House into the Hilton, as well as to establish the Water Campus on the riverfront between downtown and LSU.

Our assets have enabled so much good already, and their value is set to increase again this year. That's the feel-good hit of the summer, with lots more chapters to come.

Sincerely,



William E. Balhoff,  
Chair

## *Baton Rouge Area Foundation*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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](mailto:mverma@braf.org).

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# ABOUT US

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

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

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

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

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

### KEY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROJECTS

#### THE NEW MOBILITY :

The Foundation is trying to make it easier for people to get around the parish. We are participating with local and state government on several projects that give residents transportation choices. Engineers say that more choices 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 2018 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



## REAL ESTATE WITH A PURPOSE

Commercial Properties Realty Trust, which manages the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's real estate assets, has opened The Villages of Americana, a project within one of the largest mixed-use developments in the parish.

Located in Zachary at the entrance of Americana, The Villages has 60 apartments with one or two bedrooms that rent for \$1,300 to \$2,150, with some services included.

Bistro Byronz and Lit Pizza will be the first two ground floor tenants in The Villages. Bistro is opening in late summer; Lit is opening in fall. Each of the buildings has 8,600 square feet for offices or retail. Across the street, Walk-On's is operating in another CPRT built and managed development.

A portion of the profits from Foundation real estate assets support our civic projects.







10 Mayor Sharon Weston Broome chats with Gov. John Bel Edwards (right) and former San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros at the 10X Water Summit. Attendees heard new ideas for managing risk and adapting to an uncertain, watery future.

## SECOND 10X SUMMIT PLANNED

The Water Institute of the Gulf and Arizona State University, with financial and staff support from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, are organizing the second 10X Water Summit.

The first water conference was held in May at the Water Campus in Baton Rouge. It stimulated the creation of key partnerships and shaped Ten Across as a forum for exchanging ideas on shared challenges, the first one being water.

The inaugural 10X Water Summit was sponsored by the Foundation, the City of Baton Rouge, Visit Baton Rouge and CSRS. The second summit will be held in Phoenix in February.

At the first conference, about 200 water scientists, city resilience officers, journalists and elected officials learned about living with too much water, as we do here, and too little, as they do in Arizona and parts farther west.





## PARKS AROUND

Carolyn McKnight and her BREC staff continue to expand and improve the parks system. In the last few months, the system has opened North Sherwood Forest (above) and Howell parks, and the Botanical Gardens at Independence Community Park. Opening soon are Spain Street, Hartley-Vey Gardere and Riverbend parks. Plus, BREC is building a \$300,000 croquet lawn at City Park, with financial support from the Red Stick Croquet Club. The croquet lawn is designed to double as a gathering place.



## A BIG HIT

Knock Knock is knocking it out of the park. The children's museum in BREC's City Park surpassed its first-year attendance goal of 200,000 about two months ahead of schedule. More than 4,500 families have become annual members and, by late May, the museum had welcomed more than 26,755 students on field trips from 178 schools and 21 parishes. The museum's first birthday is Aug. 22. Donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation have contributed more than \$1.3 million to help build and operate the museum.



## WILD ABOUT FLOWERS

If you see wildflowers along Louisiana highways, thank the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and University of Louisiana. The state tapped a federal beautification grant to create a wildflower seed bank with ULL. Seeds will be spread along roadways to make highways colorful, and DOTD won't have to mow as often.



# CIVIC PROJECTS







# By two wheels, by feet

*Bike, pedestrian plans will coordinate construction, link neighborhoods to services*

By David Jacobs

**A**n encouraging number that is a little-known fact: Baton Rouge has 59 miles of trails, 20 more than two years ago. It's still a small amount, but more trails and bike lanes are planned, and a bike and pedestrian plan for the parish will coordinate construction across agencies and could spur new paths across the parish.

DOTD and BREC are overseeing the East Baton Rouge Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan. A major goal is establishing a recreation and transportation system that is well-connected, safe, and fair to users of all ages and backgrounds. Arcadis and Toole Design are writing the plan.

"The goal is to give the people what they want, and to raise the quality of life in Baton Rouge," says Reed Richard, BREC's assistant superintendent for planning and construction. "Our peer cities are far ahead of us in this."

A network of multiuse trails was the No. 1 request made during BREC's own strategic planning meetings in 2004 and 2014. Moreover, young professionals are seeking communities that aren't entirely automobile-oriented, Richard says.

Daniel Helms, senior transportation engineer with plan consultant Arcadis, hopes to lay the groundwork for a "safe, efficient, and equitable transportation network that focuses on





BREC is building paths and underwriting the bike and pedestrian plan, which should bring together various designed paths and add more into a travelable system.

non-motorized users' needs," including vulnerable groups like children and senior citizens. Two public meetings were held in May, and one of the main takeaways was a desire for connectivity, he says.

"There are some pieces of infrastructure in place," Helms says. "There are some bike trails and some walking paths and multi-use paths and trails, but sometimes they're on a very small and very minor scale."

For example, several neighborhoods in Mid City have sidewalks, bike paths and bike lanes. But users would like to be able to travel by foot or bike for longer distances, Helms says.

BREC already has almost 22 miles of multi-use "greenway" trails meant to connect parks and other amenities, says Kathy Stites, the parks department's trail planner. BREC is working to further connect and expand that network, while DOTD is focused on surface streets.

"I think ultimately what we want out of this process is cohe-

siveness," says BREC spokeswoman Cheryl Michelet. "It's not agencies working on important projects in silos. You bring them all together."

The Federal Highway Administration has identified Baton Rouge as a "focus city" with a high rate of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities, so the feds are supporting the planning process with technical assistance and \$750,000 that flows through the state's safety program, says DOTD Transportation Safety Engineer April Renard. FHA's consultant VHB is looking into ways to address the behavioral aspects of that problem, such as driver education, while Arcadis and Toole Design Group are

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation rounded support and coordinated the start of the bike and pedestrian master plan for Baton Rouge. The plan is led by BREC and the state Department of Transportation and Development.

focused on infrastructure.

The finished plan will include a list of recommended projects, though details are not available yet. The plan will provide design guidance for projects that are approved, such as the Government Street road diet. Outside funding agencies are more likely to help





The expressway at night. DDD has plans to link it to City Park and Memorial Park.

out with a project that's part of a larger blueprint, Stites notes.

Capital Region Planning Commission Executive Director Jamie Setze, a member of the plan's steering committee, says the finished plan will help lawmakers identify priorities for improving access and safety. Setze mentions a similar planning process he worked on for West Baton Rouge Parish several years ago. West Baton Rouge has implemented aspects of its plan as funds come in, and he expects East Baton Rouge to take a similar approach.

"That's what you do with a plan," Setze says. "You don't get it all built in one year. It gets built over time."

Both the state and the city-parish have "complete streets" policies, which means all users, not just drivers, must be taken into consideration when roads are designed and built. But in practice, what it means to complete a street will vary by the street.

"You look at what is that street used for?" says Jeanne George, lead volunteer for AARP's Livable Communities initiative in Baton Rouge. AARP is part of the pedestrian/bicycle master plan's technical advisory committee. George is also co-chair of the Baton Rouge Sustainable Transportation Action Committee, an effort by AARP and the Center for Planning Excellence to promote complete streets.

You wouldn't want to put a bike lane or a crosswalk on a high-speed, high-volume highway. But a street with grocery stores, retail and medical clinics should have sidewalks, transit stops and intersections that are safe to cross, George says.

Planners also have to consider the most likely users. An experienced adult cyclist commuting to work might be fine with a bicycle lane set off only by a stripe, while families with young children might prefer a physical barrier, Setze notes.

Several people interviewed for this story mentioned that while many North Baton Rouge residents can't afford cars, the area largely lacks bicycle infrastructure. "It's where the most people ride bikes," says Bike Baton Rouge President Doug Moore. "But there's only one bike lane in that entire section of town north of Florida."

Moore mentions Baton Rouge Zoo and Highland Road Park as important destinations not safely accessible by bicycle, while the Goodwood main library is hard to get to from the southern part of the parish. And while parts of Goodwood Boulevard have bike lanes, a bicyclist may be forced to cross Airline Highway to get to them, which can be intimidating for less experienced riders.

"We want the network to be accessible for people of all skill





Louisiana has the **7th** highest rate of pedestrian fatalities to total population in the nation,<sup>1</sup> while East Baton Rouge Parish has the **2nd** highest number of pedestrian and bicycle fatal crashes in the state.<sup>2</sup>



**7%** of households in East Baton Rouge Parish have zero vehicles available.<sup>3</sup>



In 2016, Louisiana ranked **5th** for the number of deaths due to heart disease and stroke, **5th** in the percentage of obese adults, and **9th** in the percentage of adults with diabetes.<sup>5</sup>



There were **481** bicycle crashes and **822** pedestrian crashes in East Baton Rouge Parish from 2011 to 2015; **62** were fatal crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians.<sup>2</sup>



Replacing a daily 2-mile car commute with a bike trip results in an economic benefit of **\$42.40** per week per person (or \$2,120 per year).<sup>4</sup>



Louisiana ranked **29th** in terms of bike friendliness.<sup>6</sup>

**DATA SOURCES:**

**1:** Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State, 2017 Preliminary Data – Governors Highway Safety Association **2:** Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Crash 1 and Crash 3 Database **3:** American Community Survey 2015 5-year Estimates **4:** The Economic Benefits of Bicycling in Baton Rouge **5:** 2017 Louisiana Health Report Card – Louisiana Department of Health **6:** The League of American Bicyclists

levels,” Moore says.

The LSU campus is a hub for bike riding, he says. But students live right off Highland Road, as little as a mile from campus, and don’t have a safe way to get to school. “People feel forced to drive very short distances,” Moore says.

EBR city-parish planning director Frank Duke says North Boulevard, thanks to the Downtown Greenway, already functions as a partial complete street and could be made to accommodate all modes of travel further into Mid City. Harding Boulevard and portions of Highland also have potential, he adds.

At the May public meeting held at Perkins Road Community Park, 26% of attendees said they would like to be able to bicycle or walk to parks and recreation, while the same percentage wanted to reach amenities like grocery stores and restaurants, according to survey results provided by BREC. Among the same group, 19% wanted to bike or walk to work, 15% wanted to connect with downtown, and 10% wanted to bike or walk to schools.

At Greenwood Community Park in Baker, recreation and parks were the most popular type of destination (24%), followed by jobs (22%), downtown (20%) and neighborhood amenities (19%).

Attendees of both meetings complained about lack of connectivity, lack of infrastructure like sidewalks and crosswalks, and bad drivers who don’t respect the rights of bicyclists and pedestrians. Asked what the top priorities of the plan should be, “safer bicycling and walking routes” was the No. 1 answer of both groups.

More than 100 people attended those meetings, which is a nice start. But that obviously represents a tiny slice of the parish population, so there is a lot more public engagement left to do.

An online portal will be set up for residents to make comments and recommendations: <http://ebrpedbike.org/getinvolved.html>. AARP Louisiana will spread the word to its 42,000 or so East Baton Rouge Parish members, and may hold public meetings of its own.

Planners hope to finish their work by next spring. Then it’s up to the city-parish to officially adopt the plan, which would require approval from the Complete Streets Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission and the Metro Council, in time for the 2020 budgeting process. •





First of its kind for Baton Rouge, from 9 downtown markets per year to 20+ markets annually in multiple locations



In partnership with Red Stick Farmers Market, the market planted the seeds for revitalization in downtown Baton Rouge, culminating in an expansion of the Baton Rouge Arts & Entertainment Cultural District in 2018.



Began with 12 artists in 1998 – now over 200 juried artists and craftsmen



we **ARE** changing lives  
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# CIVIC PROJECTS



## TRANSIT STATIONS REVEALED

The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority revealed the first sketches for transit hubs in downtown and the suburbs. In September, HNTB will issue final designs and financing mechanisms in a report to the RDA, a public-private partnership created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and local government.

The stations would accommodate travel by train, bus, bikes and feet. As important, they would support offices, retail and residences. The downtown station would be on 14th Street, next to the Electric Depot project, the transformation of former Entergy warehouses into apartments, entertainment and retail spaces by Weinstein Nelson Development. The suburban station's location will be sited in the Baton Rouge Health District, an area off Essen Lane, Perkins Road and Bluebonnet Road where hospitals, clinics and labs are clustered.

Train service on upgraded rails between Baton Rouge and New Orleans is among projects of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in partnership with state and local officials from across South Louisiana, as well as economic development groups.



## BRIDGE CENTER ASSISTS MENTALLY ILL, DRUG ADDICTED

Created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, The Bridge Center for Hope operates a pre-trial diversion program to treat people with addictions and mental illness instead of jailing them. The pilot began earlier this year, and three graduates of the program were recognized in July. They completed rehabilitation and secured jobs. The program helps about three people per week, which reduces the prison population while also saving tax money and helping people live productive lives. The Bridge Center, an independent nonprofit, is supported by grant funding and the city-parish. Its services became essential after the state shuttered Earl K. Long Hospital, which offered mental health care.



## **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 50 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](mailto:EHutchison@braf.org).



## RYAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GARDEN IN ITS 2ND YEAR

Growing and digging in the dirt gives a child an amazing experience to learn about healthy food choices. With a follow up field trip to Red Stick Farmers Market during the summer, children tasted farm fresh foods & purchased fruits & veggies to take home to their families. Everyone benefits when kids get excited about their food!



Find recipes and market updates at [www.breada.org](http://www.breada.org).  
Facebook.com/breada - Instagram: @redstickfarmersmarket - market@breada.org - 225-267-5060



## WATER CAMPUS GROWS

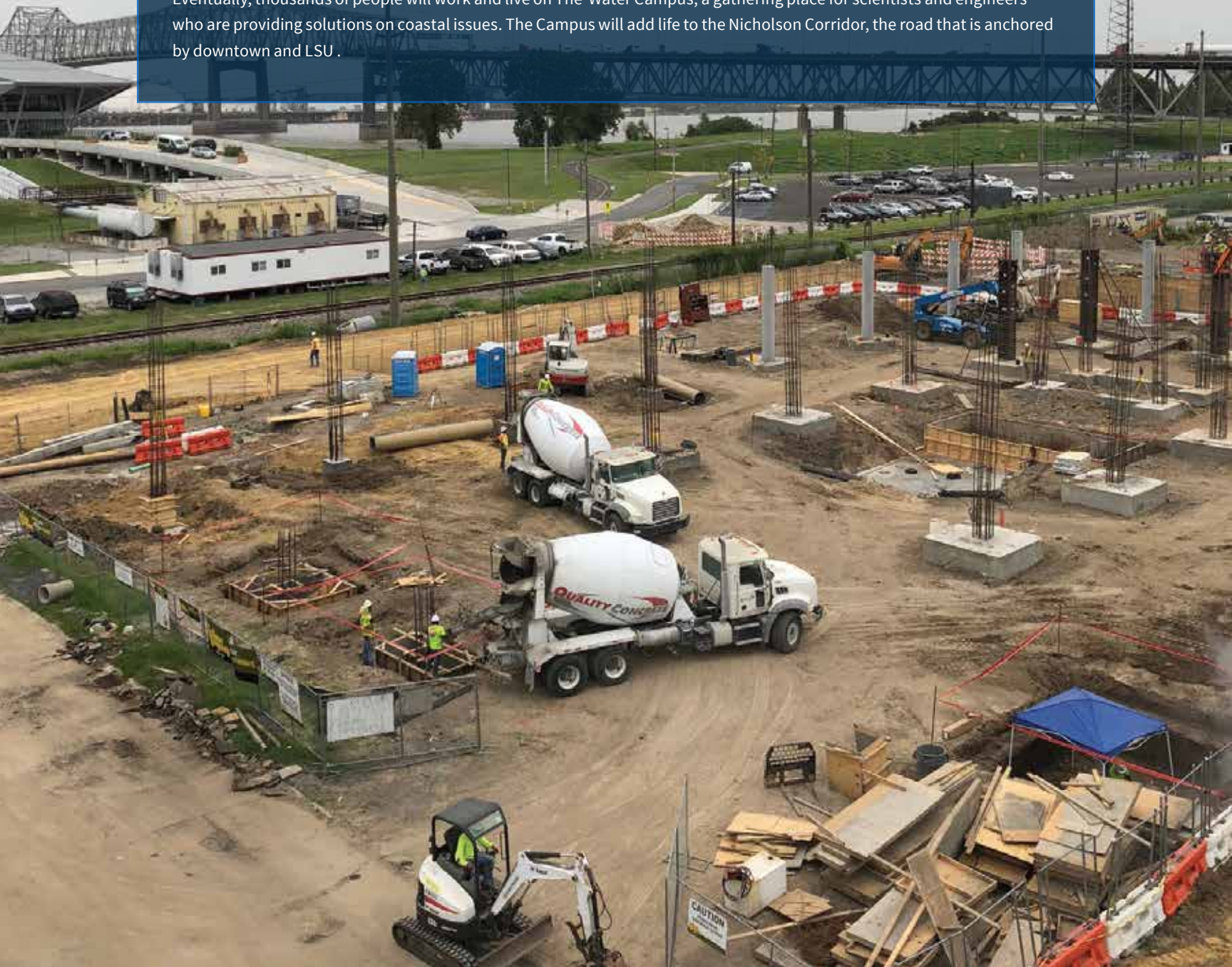
A street grid offers many routes to the same place. The Water Campus is getting one, complete with sidewalks and landscaping. The new Water Street, which will connect Nicholson Drive to River Road, will be completed in late summer. Contractors are converting the surrounding roads—Oklahoma, Terrace and Arches streets—to cement, with integrated sidewalks and landscaping. East Baton Rouge Parish government, with a state grant, is paying for the improvements.

The Water Campus is a project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust, which manages the Foundation's real estate. The fourth building on the campus is under construction.

Located on Water Street, the 100,000-square-foot office building (below) has two tenants with more space available for lease. The building will be on a park with a stream, and next to a 20-unit apartment complex that will come out of the ground later this year.

The first three buildings on the campus are taken by the LSU Center for River Studies, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and The Water Institute of the Gulf, which is housed in an iconic levee-top building named the Center for Coastal and Deltaic Solutions. CCDS includes workshare spaces and the Estuary event space.

Eventually, thousands of people will work and live on The Water Campus, a gathering place for scientists and engineers who are providing solutions on coastal issues. The Campus will add life to the Nicholson Corridor, the road that is anchored by downtown and LSU.



# BATON ROUGE CITYSTATS

*a glimpse of the full report*

EACH YEAR, THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION PRODUCES CITYSTATS, a report that tracks the quality of life in East Baton Rouge Parish. The entire report will be released soon. Here, we offer a glimpse at some of the results of the survey, which has an error margin of plus or minus 4.3%. The results are representative of the parish population. Survey was done in June 2018.

## GUNS Source: CityStats survey

# 46%

Have guns in their home

**Percentage of Baton Rouge residents who have guns in their homes**, compared to 42% nationwide. Fifty percent of EBR households are not armed with a gun, and the rest won't tell us either way.

### HOUSEHOLDS THAT ARE MOST HEAVILY ARMED:

- North/Northeast City (60%)
- White (61%)
- At least college degree (53%)
- Earn more than \$100,000 (70%)
- Republicans (65%)

### HOUSEHOLDS THAT ARE LEAST ARMED:

- City (39%)
- African American (32%)
- Less than high school degree (25%)
- Earn less than \$25,000 (25%)
- Democrats (40%)

UP

# 2%

## CRIME Source: CityStats survey

**25%** were victims of crime last year, up from 23% in the previous year.

*(Where crime is defined as money and property stolen, property vandalized, home broken into, car stolen or personal assault or attack.)*

## INCOME INEQUALITY (2016) Source: U.S. Census Bureau

For every dollar earned by a white household in East Baton Rouge Parish...



Asians earned **86¢**



Hispanics earned **76¢**



African Americans earned **53¢**



## BATON ROUGE ZOO ATTENDANCE Source: BREC

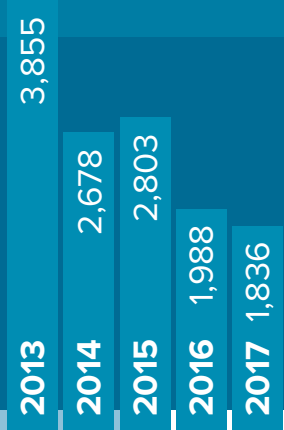
Zoo attendance sunk to the smallest number in at least 13 years, and dropped 8% from 2016 to 2017. BREC Superintendent Carolyn McKnight offered a bold plan for a new zoo in Southeast Baton Rouge, but BREC commissioners said no. BREC spent \$3.3 million to keep the zoo open last year, which equals a subsidy of \$16 per visitor. Next step for BREC is a redevelopment of the zoo at its North Baton Rouge location.



## ANIMAL EUTHANASIA Source: Companion Animal Alliance

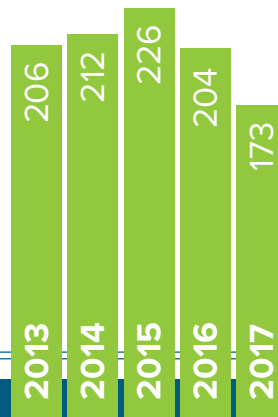


Companion Animal Alliance has dramatically cut the pet euthanasia rate since the nonprofit began operating the EBR animal shelter. The number of animals euthanized was five times higher when CAA took over from the city-parish in 2011. CAA is opening a \$12 million shelter in fall that should help to lower the rate even more. *(Disclosure: The Baton Rouge Area Foundation started and supports CAA.)*



## NEW CASES OF HIV Source: LA Dept. of Health and Hospitals

Baton Rouge can cheer a little. The number of new cases of HIV fell 15% in 2017. What's more, the rate improved by 30% in the last decade, when cases were stubbornly stuck around 250 each year and Baton Rouge had the second-highest rate in the nation. Ad campaigns and better testing and pills to prevent HIV are why new HIV cases are falling.



FELL  
**15%**

*Look for the full CityStats report in August 2018.*

# GRANTS

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation granted \$6.96 million in the second quarter of this year. Donors make most of the grants from their donor advised funds, which are like an investment account for doing good. This is how donor advised funds work. 1) Donors open charitable funds and deposit money, stocks or other assets into the accounts. They immediately receive a charitable deduction. 2. The Foundation manages the assets in the charitable funds, provides knowledge about local nonprofits and handles the paperwork. 3. Donors recommend grants to nonprofits and the Foundation writes the check and follows up to make sure the grants are producing results. If you want to know more about donor advised funds, call Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126.

100 Black Men of Metro New Orleans Inc. Total \$150,000  
100 Black Men of Metropolitan Baton Rouge Total \$2,800  
A Future for All / The Next Step Academy Total \$500  
Academic Distinction Fund Total \$46,673  
Academy of the Sacred Heart New Orleans Foundation Inc. Total \$10,000  
Acts of Love Inc. Total \$2,500  
AFS-USA Inc. Total \$250  
Agenda for Children Inc. - New Orleans Total \$122,500  
AIDS Foundation Houston Inc. Total \$3,800  
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area Total \$14,750  
America Achieves Inc. Total \$287,500  
American Cancer Society Inc. - Mid-South Division Total \$500  
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area Total \$1,561  
American Sail Training Association Total \$2,500  
AmeriCares Foundation Inc. Total \$250  
AMIkids - Baton Rouge Total \$5,000  
AMIkids Foundation Inc. Total \$15,267  
Annunciation Orthodox School Total \$1,000  
Arkabutla Rescue Rehabilitation and Foster Total \$31,232  
Ars Lyrica Houston Total \$3,000  
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. Total \$40,035  
Arts Council of New Orleans Total \$10,000  
Arts Council of Pointe Coupee Total \$500

Auckland Foundation Total \$30,000  
Bach Society Houston Total \$1,000  
Baker Charitable Foundation Total \$1,000  
Baton Rouge Amateur Athletic Association Total \$5,033  
Baton Rouge Area Foundation Total \$42,414  
Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Inc. Total \$500  
Baton Rouge Bar Foundation Total \$300  
Baton Rouge Blues Foundation Total \$500  
Baton Rouge Child Advocacy Center Total \$300  
Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation - The Dunham School Total \$2,820  
Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center Inc. Total \$3,639  
Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. Total \$19,350  
Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. Total \$15,624  
Baton Rouge Health District Total \$2,750  
Baton Rouge High School Foundation Total \$500  
Baton Rouge Opera Guild Total \$1,874  
Baton Rouge Progressive Network Total \$1,000  
Baton Rouge Sponsoring Committee Total \$1,000  
Baton Rouge Youth Coalition Inc. Total \$86,000  
Beth Shalom Synagogue Total \$6,500  
Big Buddy Program Total \$1,300  
Blindness-Learning in New Dimensions Inc. Total \$10,000  
Boy Scouts of America - Istrouma Area Council Total \$1,500  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. Total \$10,000  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeast Louisiana Total \$500  
BREADA (Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance) Total \$750  
BREC Foundation Total \$250  
Bridge Center for Hope Total \$10,000  
Bridge House Corporation Total \$1,500  
Brothers of the Sacred Heart Foundation of the New Orleans Province Total \$500  
Bureau of Governmental Research Inc. Total \$5,000  
Calcasieu Parish School Board - J. J. Johnson Elementary Total \$500  
Camp High Hopes Total \$5,000  
Cancer Research and Life Foundation Total \$13,000  
Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. Total \$13,000  
Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless Total \$1,000  
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society Total \$561  
Capital Area CASA Association Total \$300  
Capital Area Family Violence Battered Women's Program Total \$300  
Capital Area Law Enforcement Foundation Total \$6,000



Capital Area United Way Total \$33,035  
 Capitol City Family Health Center Inc. Total \$16,200  
 CASA of St. Landry Inc. Total \$2,500  
 Catholic High School Foundation Total \$1,207  
 Catholic Relief Services Inc. Total \$500  
 Center for Orangutan and Chimpanzee Conservation Inc. Total \$500  
 Center for Planning Excellence Inc. Total \$45,231  
 Center for the New Economy Inc. Total \$250  
 Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./ McMains Children's Devel Total \$6,250  
 Children's Cup Total \$1,200  
 Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge Total \$290  
 Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU Total \$11,860  
 City Year Inc. - Baton Rouge Total \$21,000  
 Coastal Conservation Association - Louisiana Total \$400  
 Companion Animal Alliance Total \$5,400  
 Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge Total \$12,992  
 Consumer Reports Inc. Total \$100  
 Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Inc./ CARE Total \$250  
 Cornell University - Cornell Lab of Ornithology Total \$250  
 Covenant House New Orleans Total \$2,000  
 Creole Wild West Inc. Total \$20,000  
 Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Total \$500  
 Dance to Unite Inc. Total \$5,000  
 Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. Total \$2,500  
 Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. Total \$15,790  
 Dream Big Elite Total \$500  
 Ducks Unlimited Inc. - Headquarters Total \$2,500  
 Duke University - Sanford School of Public Policy Total \$100,000  
 Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. Total \$612  
 Earthjustice Total \$250  
 East Baton Rouge Parish Library Total \$500  
 EBRPSS - Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet School Total \$500  
 Ednavigator Inc. Total \$350,000  
 Education Resource Strategies Inc. Total \$150,000  
 ELLA Project Total \$25,000  
 Elm Grove Baptist Church Total \$1,500  
 Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge Total \$456,157  
 Evergreen Foundation Total \$500  
 Fellowship of Catholic University Students / FOCUS Total \$1,000  
 Fellowship of Christian Athletes Total \$1,000  
 FINCA International Inc. Total \$300

## ETERNAL MERCY

In fall, Mercy Ships will stop at a port in Doula, Cameroon. The 400 volunteers—doctors, nurses, medical technicians—will provide free health care services, removing cataracts, repairing teeth, saving lives through surgeries, thanks to donors from around the world, including an anonymous philanthropist from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. The donor's fund - Magnolia Development—has granted \$243,000 to Mercy Ships, among more than \$730,000 in all gifts since the fund was started. Grants will continue, as the donor wishes, through an endowment to support Mercy Ships for as long as the nonprofit exists.

Fire District 5 Foundation Inc. Total \$360  
 First Grace Community Alliance Total \$153,000  
 First United Methodist Church Total \$276,000  
 Forward Arts Inc. Total \$15,500  
 Foundation for a Better Louisiana Total \$500  
 Foundation for East Baton Rouge School System Total \$500  
 Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc./ Preserve Louisiana Total \$2,324  
 Foundation for National Progress Total \$500  
 Foundation for the Carolinas Total \$500  
 Foundation for Woman's Total \$18,000  
 Foundation of Saint Peter Total \$1,000  
 Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. Total \$1,200  
 Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. Total \$1,500  
 Friends of Magnolia Mound Total \$250  
 Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo Total \$450  
 Friends of the Old State Capitol Total \$100  
 Front Yard Bikes Total \$6,899  
 GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship Total \$21,000  
 General Health System Foundation Total \$11,000  
 Global Hunger Project Total \$150  
 Good Work Network Total \$32,500  
 Gould Academy Total \$200,000  
 Governors Mansion Preservation Foundation Inc. Total \$478,304  
 Grace Episcopal Church Total \$300  
 Grantee Name Total \$0  
 Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. Total \$6,500

Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. Total \$2,600  
 Groton School Total \$100,000  
 Habitat for Humanity International Inc. Total \$500  
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge Total \$2,250  
 Hampden-Sydney College Total \$1,500  
 Harmony Church of Bartlett Total \$17,000  
 Hartman, Kiara Total \$1,500  
 Harvard Business School Interactive Inc. Total \$100,000  
 Healing Place Church Total \$2,000  
 Healing Place Serve Total \$6,500  
 Heaven Opens Peoples Eyes Inc. Total \$2,644  
 HIV/AIDS Alliance for Region Two (HAART) Total \$16,200  
 Holy Family Catholic Church Total \$11,981  
 Hope Landing Inc. Total \$1,500  
 HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge Total \$5,500  
 HOPE Ministry of Pointe Coupee Inc. Total \$2,500  
 Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge Total \$750  
 Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence Total \$5,798  
 Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. Total \$1,500  
 International Community Foundation Total \$250  
 International Hospitality Foundation LSU Total \$1,577  
 International Rescue Committee Inc. Total \$1,150  
 International Society for Krishna Consciousness of New Orleans  
 Total \$3,753  
 Jewish Children's Regional Service Total \$1,000  
 John F. Kennedy Library Foundation Inc. Total \$22,600  
 Joni and Friends Total \$2,600  
 Joyce Theater Foundation Inc. Total \$20,000  
 Jubilee Pioneers Total \$2,000  
 Junior Achievement of Greater Baton Rouge and Acadiana Total  
 \$1,978  
 Kids' Orchestra Inc. Total \$4,834  
 Kind Inc. Total \$250  
 King of Kings Ministries Inc. Total \$750  
 Knock Knock Children's Museum Inc. Total \$1,000  
 Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. Total \$1,500  
 LCTCS Foundation Total \$6,451  
 Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Church Total \$1,900  
 Living Word Church of Muskegon Total \$600  
 Louisiana Americana and Folk Society Total \$200  
 Louisiana Architectural Foundation Total \$8,270  
 Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. Total \$9,631  
 Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations Inc. Total \$5,000  
 Louisiana Bar Foundation Total \$250  
 Louisiana CASA Association Total \$5,000  
 Louisiana Department of Education Total \$2,902

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Total \$4,250  
 Louisiana First Foundation Inc. Total \$30,000  
 Louisiana Forestry Foundation Total \$5,000  
 Louisiana International Film Festival Total \$10,000  
 Louisiana Key Academy Total \$50,000  
 Louisiana Leadership Institute Total \$5,000  
 Louisiana Resource Center for Educators Total \$2,000  
 Louisiana State University and A&M College Total \$29,761  
 Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College  
 Total \$390,000  
 Louisiana Superintendents Academy Total \$50,000  
 Louisiana Wildlife Federation Inc. Total \$100  
 LSU Alumni Association Total \$10,350  
 LSU CxC Outstanding Faculty Award Total \$1,500  
 LSU Foundation Total \$32,600  
 LSU Foundation - College of Engineering Total \$1,050  
 LSU Foundation - E.J. Ourso College of Business Total \$100,000  
 LSU Foundation - Friends of French Studies Total \$100  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Ag Center Botanic Gardens at Burden Total  
 \$1,500  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art Total \$36,000  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Press Total \$10,000  
 LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication Total  
 \$500  
 LSU Foundation - Paul M. Hebert Law Center Total \$2,000  
 LSU Foundation - University Lab School Foundation Total \$10,000  
 LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans Total \$4,962  
 LSU Health Sciences Foundation in Shreveport Total \$1,000  
 Lutheran Church of Our Saviour Total \$1,494  
 Maison des Ami of Louisiana Inc. Total \$6,250  
 Manners of the Heart Total \$1,000  
 Map 10 40 Total \$1,500  
 Marigny Opera House Foundation Total \$20,000  
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Total \$26,500  
 MAZON Inc. a Jewish Response to Hunger Total \$250  
 Metanoia Inc. Total \$2,000  
 MetroMorphosis Total \$71,000  
 Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. Total \$250  
 Mission Renew Inc. Total \$500  
 National Audubon Society Inc. - Audubon Louisiana Total \$300  
 National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana Inc. Total \$10,000  
 National Museum of Women in the Arts Total \$100  
 National Park Foundation Total \$250  
 National Wildlife Federation Total \$100  
 National World War II Museum Inc. Total \$25,100  
 New Orleans Airlift Total \$10,000



New Orleans Museum of Art Total \$5,000  
 New Orleans Opera Association Total \$5,000  
 New Schools for Baton Rouge Total \$10,000  
 New Schools for New Orleans Inc. Total \$97,500  
 Neyland, Jared Total \$25,000  
 Nicholls State University Foundation Total \$5,000  
 Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership, Inc. Total \$5,000  
 Of Moving Colors Productions Total \$5,500  
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. Total \$356  
 Omicron Beta Foundation Inc. Total \$500  
 One Drop Foundation Inc. Total \$25,000  
 Opera Louisiane Inc. Total \$500  
 Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church Total \$5,052  
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church Total \$37,550  
 Our Lady of Peace Church Total \$23,444  
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation Total \$76,667  
 Our Voice Nuestra Voz Total \$50,000  
 Oxfam-America Inc. Total \$1,600  
 Pahara Institute Total \$125,000  
 Parkview Baptist School Inc. Total \$5,233  
 Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana Total \$64,446  
 Partners in Health Total \$1,000  
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation Total \$67,750  
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast Inc. Total \$40,000  
 Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana Inc. Total \$1,000  
 Pulaski Academy Total \$3,000  
 Ray of Hope Cancer Foundation Total \$500  
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge Inc. Total \$119,000  
 Red Shift Choir Total \$5,000  
 Red Shoes Inc. Total \$3,250  
 Red Stick Project Total \$9,873  
 Rice University Total \$15,000  
 Ripples of Hope Inc. Total \$15,000  
 Robert A. Bogan Baton Rouge Fire Museum Total \$1,000  
 Robinson, Carolyn "Carrie" Total \$1,327  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge Total \$122,227  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge - Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust Total \$216  
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation Total \$1,700  
 Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. Total \$750  
 Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center Total \$50,500  
 Sierra Club Foundation Total \$250  
 Smile Train Inc. Total \$250  
 Southern Garden Symposium Total \$500

Southern Poverty Law Center Inc. Total \$600  
 Spay Baton Rouge Total \$250  
 Special Olympics Louisiana Inc. Total \$250  
 St. Aloysius Catholic Church Total \$2,600  
 St. Anna's Episcopal Church Total \$1,500  
 St. Augustine Church Total \$936  
 St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School Total \$1,000  
 St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church Total \$2,000  
 St. Francisville Area Foundation Inc. Total \$5,000  
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church Total \$1,000  
 St. Gerard Majella Church Total \$40,500  
 St. James Episcopal Church Total \$75,000  
 St. James Episcopal Day School Total \$250  
 St. Jean Vianney Catholic Church Total \$2,609  
 St. Joseph Cathedral Total \$62,483  
 St. Joseph Spirituality Center Total \$750  
 St. Joseph the Worker Church Total \$6,048  
 St. Joseph's Academy Total \$500  
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. Total \$1,750  
 St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission Total \$15,000  
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School Total \$14,420  
 Stand for Children Leadership Center Total \$500  
 Strength for Today Total \$3,200  
 Stroud Water Research Center Inc. Total \$1,000  
 Summit Public Schools Total \$62,500  
 Sunny Meadows Foundation Total \$7,808  
 Swollfest Inc. Total \$1,000  
 TankProof Total \$30,000  
 Teach For America Inc. - South Louisiana Total \$192,100  
 Terrebonne Parish Library Total \$1,000  
 The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund Total \$10,022  
 The Ascension Fund Inc. Total \$13,345  
 The Chapel Total \$1,500  
 The Emerge Center Inc. Total \$13,668  
 The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. Total \$2,200  
 The Greater New Orleans Foundation Total \$10,000  
 The International Dark-Sky Association Inc. Total \$100  
 The Lens Total \$300  
 The Life of a Single Mom Total \$5,000  
 The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge Total \$100  
 The Miami Foundation Inc. Total \$12,266  
 The Nature Conservancy - Headquarters Total \$350  
 The Nature Conservancy - Louisiana Total \$13,500  
 The Norwegian Seamen's Church of New Orleans Inc. Total \$5,000  
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. Total \$813  
 The Regents of the University of California Los Angeles Total \$9,926

The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge Total \$11,750  
The Salvation Army - Lake Charles Total \$10,000  
The Walls Project Total \$300  
The Water Institute of the Gulfs Delta Total \$500  
Thrive Foundation Total \$66,500  
Tostan Inc. Total \$5,000  
Trinity Episcopal Church Total \$5,000  
UCSJ Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union Inc.  
Total \$250  
University at Albany Foundation Total \$100  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette Foundation Total \$2,000  
University of Texas Foundation Total \$2,000  
University Presbyterian Church Total \$23,750  
University United Methodist Church Total \$8,035  
Urban League of Greater New Orleans Inc. Total \$38,334  
US Biennial Inc. Total \$10,000  
Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. Total \$2,000  
Volunteers of America Inc. Total \$12,000  
Wake County Public School System - East Garner Magnet Middle  
School Total \$425  
We Share Foundation / Quota International of Baton Rouge  
Charitable Trust Total \$100  
West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence Total  
\$6,169  
West Feliciana Parish School Board - West Feliciana Middle School  
Total \$1,000  
West Texas Boys Ranch Total \$5,000  
Wilderness Society Total \$250  
World Wildlife Fund Inc. Total \$250  
WRKF Public Radio Inc. Total \$9,960  
Yelp! BR Total \$250  
YMCA of the Capital Area Total \$3,443  
Young Life - New Orleans Total \$5,000  
Youth Oasis Total \$200



# YOU MAY SAY I'M A DREAMER BUT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE

We're all in a hurry to make the world better. Some ideas, however, require much time and commitment; they span generations.

The Foundation's ongoing mental health initiative is a young project by our standards. On the other hand, The Water Institute spans more than a decade, and downtown's rebirth has required no less than 20 years of unwavering determination.

All our projects have one thing in common—they owe their success to our members, who believe in big dreams that others would dismiss as impossible. Our members are ever-faithful to the idea that the world can—and will—be better tomorrow.

Join them at [BRAAF.org/membership](http://BRAAF.org/membership) or call (225) 387-6126.

Memberships start at \$200.

JOIN US TODAY. FOR TOMORROW.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

# *Amédé passed this way*

Acadiana builds a statue  
to a Creole musician  
known as “a living song.”

By C.E. Richard | Photos by Tim Mueller

**L**ate one night in 1942, a motorist swerved on a lonely road outside Pineville to keep from hitting a ragged black man, staggering southward along the shoulder. The driver stopped to offer help. Small and slight, the 40-year-old man was confused, frightened, lost. He spoke no English. In French, he could only repeat, “I want to go home. Help me get home.”

Misunderstanding, the driver gave him a lift and brought the incoherent black man back to the place he’d just fled: The Louisiana Hospital for the Insane in Pineville. By the end of that year, he would be dead and buried on the asylum grounds where he rests today, along with 2,400 other inmates, in an unmarked grave set aside for indigent “negroes.”

Amédé Ardoin was a Creole man born in 1898 in rural St. Landry Parish, just two generations removed from slavery. He couldn’t read or write and spoke only French. He worked the dirt alongside other sharecroppers, both Acadians and Creoles—one

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation had a small part in standing up a statue in memory of Amédé Ardoin. We managed the gifts and grants required to build the statue. Credit for the difficult work is shared by people who organized fundraisers and made gifts.





Louisiana Poet Laureate Darrell Bourque

of the many poor, rural people whose lives passed without much notice in those days, except for this: Amédé Ardoin was among the greatest musical geniuses that Louisiana ever produced.

According to author and music critic Herman Fusilier, “Amédé left his mark on the Franks, Bois Sec Ardoin, Bois Sec’s sons and grandson, Dewey Balfa, Austin Pitre, Michael Doucet, Wayne Toups, Steve Riley, Boozoo Chavis, the Pine Leaf Boys, Geno Delafosse, Cedrick Watson, Jo-El Sonnier, and the list goes on. Several have been nominated and won Grammys with albums that had songs first done by Amédé.” Fusilier adds, “That’s not bad for a musician who recorded only 34 songs, all done between 1929 and 1934.”

If you’ve never heard of Amédé Ardoin, you’re in the majority. For a long time, the only people who knew Amédé’s music and his remarkable story were fellow musicians and artists. Even more haunting than his virtuoso accordion was Amédé’s voice—a soulful wailing with the power “to make women weep and men stop fighting,” Fusilier says, repeating a well-known characterization of Amédé’s music, attributed to New Orleans writer Michael Tisserand.

“After being a student of Amédé’s style for the past 45 years, I have finally concluded that we are definitely not born equal,” said celebrated accordion maker and musician Marc Savoy. “What Amédé did with musical notes and rhythm, Shelly, Byron, Frost did with words and rhymes.”



Amédé’s music is, above all else, poetic.

This is the insight arrived at by Darrell Bourque, Louisiana’s Poet Laureate (2007-2008, 2009-2011) and champion of the “Bring Amédé Home Project.” Bourque’s accompaniment of Amédé in his journey home

began with a poem called “Church Point Breakdown” (*Megan’s Guitar and Other Poems from Acadie*). In it, he found himself grappling with the complexities of racial mixing within Cajun and Creole society.

“I think, in writing that poem, I opened a door and I began to think about the history of Creole people in Louisiana. I became particularly interested in Amédé’s story.”

Amédé’s story is, after all, both inspiring and heartrending. During the 1920s and 30s, he earned a reputation for his musi-

cal talent by playing rural house dances. Beloved by both black French-speaking audiences and whites alike, Amédé challenged not only musical boundaries but social ones too. White Cajun musicians admired his work and wanted to share the stage with dazzling talent like his. Playing alongside other musical greats like legendary Cajun fiddler Dennis McGee, Amédé offered a vision of mixed race musicianship that was unfamiliar during Jim Crow, but nevertheless was warmly welcomed by audiences—much to the surprise of some. When performing, Amédé was able to remind Acadiana audiences of what they had in common—a shared French language and rural culture, along with a passion for good music and dancing. His friend Dennis McGee described Amédé as *une chanson vivant*, “a living song.”

“Here were two human beings who didn’t see race the way their society saw it,” Bourque says of Ardoin and McGee. A retired English professor, Bourque observes, “The best kind of teaching is where students teach other students. What Amédé and Dennis did was exactly that. Teaching by example.”

Of course, their lessons did not sit well with everyone. The story goes that, one night while playing a house dance, Amédé asked for a cloth to wipe the sweat from his face. The daughter of the homeowner, who was white, gave him her handkerchief without a second thought. This caught the attention of some young white men from outside the area. Afterwards, they caught up with Amédé on the road, walking home. They beat him mercilessly, drove their automobile over him, and left him for dead in a ditch. The musician lived, but he’d suffered brain damage. Eventually, Amédé was committed to a mental hospital where he never recovered.

In the 76 years since, Amédé’s family tried to locate his body and bring his remains home to the family graveyard. A handful of researchers and preservationists had set about trying to assist them. The challenges seemed insurmountable. There were no grave markers. Hospital records were gone. Amédé left no letters or documents in his own hand. Indeed, beyond his recordings and a single photograph from his Confirmation, there was precious little evidence to show that Amédé had even existed.

But there were stories.

“I wanted my next book to focus on Amédé,” recalls Bourque. To get the narrative right, his research was extensive. However, no less important than gathering facts, Bourque found, was giving voice to them. “So I tried to tell his story in a chapbook of poems where people who knew him became the personas and voices of the different poems, telling his story.” The book, published by Yellow Flag Press, is *if you abandon me, comment je vas faire: An Amédé Ardoin Songbook*.





fter the book had gone to press, Bourque still wasn't satisfied. He felt passionately that Amédé's story needed to be remembered and shared with wider audiences. "But that wasn't going to happen through a book of poems alone. I knew it would have to happen in a different way."

By that point, it had become clear that the Ardoin family's hopes of bringing Amédé's remains home to their cemetery would not come to pass, Bourque says. "I began to think, 'Well, that's not possible, but we can symbolically bring him home.'"

In spring 2014, Bourque started fundraising for the "Bring Amédé Home Project." He teamed up with community leaders like Patricia Cravins of Opelousas, as well as members of the Ardoin family, to establish some kind of a public memorial. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation served as the fiscal manager of the project.

Instead of Kickstarter campaigns and the like, the Project opted for more old-fashioned ideas to raise money. Along with the proceeds from Bourque's book, funding came from hosting *veillées*—an old French custom in rural Acadiana in which neighbors would get together in someone's home for a visit, late into the night, to share stories and, sometimes, music. With community members hosting these gatherings, the Project was able to take Amédé's story straight to people, direct and personal. If a *veillée* raised \$300 or more, the host would receive

a small token, designed by Pat Cravens: a yard sign, marked with footprints, that read "Amédé Passed Here on His Way Home."

Donations ranged from a few dollars to \$3,000.

"It was pretty amazing," Bourque says fondly of the *veillées*, which served as community-building experiences as much as fundraisers. "We were welcomed into lots of homes and community centers."

By 2017, the project had raised roughly half of what Bourque had estimated they'd need. The team lined up Russell Whiting, an acclaimed sculptor, to create a memorial—something that would be "a reassertion of hope and idealism," such as Amédé represents, Bourque says. "We had some thoughts about erecting a public statue at a time when public statues were causing so much ruckus."

When Bourque's team presented the project to the St. Landry Parish Tourism Commission, the parish matched the sum that they had raised, and Whiting was contracted.

On March 8 of this year, hundreds gathered at the St. Landry Visitor's Center, located at Exit 23 on I-49, for the dedication of Amédé's memorial. Weighing in at some 1,500 pounds of steel, the image was carved, not cast, using an acetylene torch. Facing southward, the dark steel depicts Amédé in full-length, standing atop an accordion and offering a shiny gold lemon in his hand.

"Stories about Amédé say he always carried a lemon with him in his pocket," says Bourque, explaining the curious iconography of the piece. "He did that to keep his voice clear and strong. And so his gesture is to remind people who see the statue about the value of keeping every voice clear and strong. He's passing that along." •









# Open table

## *Building community in Baton Rouge's White Star Market*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson | Photos by Jeff Roedel

It's a hot June weekday and friends Jason Wesley and Brandon Kelly are having lunch at White Star Market, the new food hall in Baton Rouge's Mid City neighborhood. Sitting side by side at a sprawling table filled with other diners, the two men are hovered over metal trays that hold an arrangement of gourmet tacos and Mexican street corn from Gov't Taco, the brainchild of food personality Jay Ducote. It's one of 10 food and beverage booths inside the sleek, modern building.

Between bites of soft tacos stuffed with molasses mustard fried catfish and coffee-rubbed beef, Kelly weighs in on the food hall concept.

"I like it," he says. "I've tried food halls in New Orleans and you've got options for days. Everybody gets what they want."

Throughout the 6,000-square-foot marketplace, patrons mill about, sizing up vendors and perusing menus. Orders placed and transactions completed, they head for available seats at two large communal tables, smaller individual tables or counter seats.

They carry steaming bowls of golden ramen studded with soft boiled eggs, trays of bacon-topped chargrilled oysters, wood-fired pizza and crawfish poutine, a dish featuring crawfish gravy ladled over roasted potatoes. Once seated, diners dive into their meals, sometimes exchanging thoughts with their neighbors about what they've ordered and how it tastes.

"We've been here before, and really enjoyed it," says Central resident Jason Bryan, who works downtown. Today, he's met his wife, Virginia, and their two children Jack, 9, and Lily, 6,





“The food is interesting, and you always get into conversations with people about what’s good,” says Central resident Jason Bryan, seen above with Virginia Bryan and their children, Jack and Lily.

Veggie tacos at Government St. Taco, right.





for lunch. “The food is so interesting, and you always get into conversations with people about what’s good.”

Gov’t Taco is joined by Asian street food booth Chow Yum Phat, the wood-fired pizzeria Dat’z Italian, Lafayette-based coffee house Rêve Coffee Roasters, and the craft bar Mouton. The market is also home to Fete au Fete, which also has locations in two New Orleans food halls, St. Roch Market and Pythian Market. Two other booths, the Big Squeezy and Jolie at the Market, are additional locations for existing Baton Rouge businesses. Rounding out the group are Counterspace, a new artisan bakery, and the vegetarian eatery, MJ’s Café.

White Star Market is the brainchild of Clark and Whitney Gaines, native Louisianans who wanted to bring a modern food hall concept to Baton Rouge. Among their goals was to create a space that offered imaginative food and drink in an atmosphere that felt disarming. The couple and their children live in the Capital Heights neighborhood nearby, and they see the facility as capable of stitching new relationships among Baton Rouge residents.

“We wanted something that was comfortable, and wasn’t intimidating,” says Whitney Gaines. “We wanted a place where you weren’t forced to spend a certain amount of money, and where you could come in your yoga pants after a workout, or come with friends, grab something to go, or stay a while any time of the day.”

Whitney grew up in Lafayette, and met Clark, a New Orleanian, in Baton Rouge. After they married, they relocated to Columbus, Ohio, for Clark’s job. There, they fell in love with the city’s North Market, a former public market-turned-food hall with about 30 merchants and eateries selling everything from fresh produce to Nepalese dumplings. Columbus has embraced modern food halls. A second, Short North Food Hall, opened in March, and a third, the Budd Dairy Food Hall, will open by the end of the year.

While Columbus has about three times the population of Baton Rouge, the two cities have a lot in common, says Whitney. “It’s a capital city, home to a big university with a great football team and is a river town,” she says. “We saw things there, like the growth of food halls, and thought, that could be the direction that we’re heading in.”

Baton Rouge saw an earlier generation food hall 17 years ago with the opening of BREADA’s Main Street Market, which is located in Galvez Parking Garage on Fifth and Main streets and is a significant component of the downtown revitalization plan.

Home to eight eateries and retailers, the market is a popular weekday lunch destination. On Saturdays, it works in tandem

with the Red Stick Farmers Market. Patrons buy from farmers and producers outside, then head indoors to eat breakfast, watch cooking demonstrations and purchase additional items from permanent vendors as well as Saturday-only booths.

“The original concept of the Main Street Market was to look at public markets around the country and see how they were impacting the local food scene,” says Copper Alvarez, executive director of BREADA, which manages the market. “Markets, in general, are a gathering spot. They’re so important for the

*“You know, sometimes we’re not as communal as we need to be in Baton Rouge. But I think a place like this is one way to build the city.”*

—Brandon Kelly

public and for the economic development of the small businesses inside.”

Modern food halls with edgy food, culinary retail and a bar scene are on the rise nationwide. According to research conducted by global real estate firm Cushman and Wakefield, the number of food halls in the United States is on pace to triple between 2015 and 2020. By then, the country should see about 300 such facilities of varying size and scope. They range from larger spots like well-established Chelsea Market in New York City to smaller facilities of less than 10,000 square feet, which the report refers to as mini food halls.

Done right, the facilities offer a palpable upside. They’re sensory playgrounds, replete with modern design, intoxicating smells and enough vendors to encourage return visits. They provide opportunities for chefs and restaurateurs to reach new patrons and experiment with offbeat concepts for less overhead than full-scale locations. And they appeal to a new generation of diners who crave inventive food and a sense of community.

White Star Market, under development for the last three years, is part of a mixed-use development fronting Government Street called Square 46. The 25,000-square-foot space will soon feature apartments, office space and a retail pod on the ground floor across the breezeway from White Star Market. As the first tenant to open, White Star Market has surpassed expectations, says Gaines. Patrons are pouring in. At peak times, the parking



Beer and wine expert Scott Higgins operates Mouton, the bar inside White Star Market. He can tell you which beer pairs best with oysters from Jolie Pearl.

lot can be at capacity, encouraging patrons who live nearby to walk or bike to the facility.

The idea of food vendors amassed in one location isn't new. It springs from the ancient tradition of open air central markets where farmers, fishers and artisan producers gathered to sell their goods to local shoppers. Even food courts in American malls carry some of this DNA.

But the modern food hall aims to be different. It eschews chain eateries and defines itself as a playground for farm to fork cooking and current culinary trends. Moreover, modern food halls are seen as that "third place" where residents can gather and connect, due in part to design features that chip away at boundaries.

One is the communal table.

"As soon as we walked in, I thought, 'wow, this is kind of like a church fellowship hall,'" says Wesley. "The long tables down the middle are actually my favorite thing about it. You can sit down, meet your neighbors and strike up a conversation with someone new. You can't do that in a regular restaurant."

Gaines says she wasn't sure how Baton Rouge would receive White Star Market's seating plan, which demands consumers tolerate a bit of uncertainty about seating.

"We knew communal tables were risky, but we felt it was

worth it," says Gaines. "Maybe you're naturally sitting closer to a stranger than you normally would have, but it's working. I think people are connecting and enjoying themselves."

Across from Wesley and Kelly sits Matthew Taylor, a pharmacy worker who has made a habit of coming into the market every few days to read and dine alone while his wife finishes her shift at Dat'z Italian.

"Sometimes I'll talk to the people around me," Taylor says. "It's a comfortable place."

Several spots down the table, friends Kris Gregoire and Olivia Knapps are noshing on a "fig and pig" pizza and a bowl of ramen.

"I travel a lot for work, and eat out everywhere, all over the state," says Gregoire. "I think the food here is great, but I also like how you get to know different people."

The lunch crowd eventually subsides. Throughout the afternoon, patrons will stop in for a midday snack. Some will tap away on laptops. Others will grab a magazine from the rack or sip coffee or a cold-pressed juice. By evening, a bustling dinner shift will bring a hum of chatter as expectant food enthusiasts decide on what to eat.

"You know, sometimes we're not as communal as we need to be in Baton Rouge," Kelly says. "But I think a place like this is one way to build the city." •





Whitney Gaines, with husband Clark Gaines, opened the White Star Market on Government Street.

# MANSHIP THEATRE



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SEPT	11	PUNCH BROTHERS	DEC	20	MARC BROUSSARD HOLIDAY SHOW
SEPT	23	LUCIA MICARELLI	DEC	27	HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
OCT	14	20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA	JAN	11	PETER ASHER
OCT	21	VIRGINIA REP THEATRE'S SLEEPY HOLLOW	JAN	27	MERMAID THEATRE'S HUNGRY CATERPILLAR
OCT	28	THEATREWORKS USA'S MAGIC SCHOOL BUS	JAN	30	JESSE COOK
NOV	4	VIRGINIA REP THEATRE'S SLEEPING BEAUTY	JAN	31	UNRAVELING THE WILBURYS
NOV	8	RICHARD MARX	FEB	17	HAVANA CUBAN ALLSTARS
NOV	18	KRIS KRISTOFFERSON	FEB	20	AQUILA THEATRE'S MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (SCHOOL SHOW)
DEC	11	COOL WINTER NIGHTS, HOT JAZZ	FEB	21	AQUILA THEATRE'S FRANKENSTEIN
DEC	12	COOL WINTER NIGHTS, HOT JAZZ	MAR	25	RON K BROWN DANCE
DEC	16	CASA MANANA PRESENTS: JUNIE B JONES: JINGLE BELLS, BATMAN SMELLS	APR	7	LEE ANN WOMACK
			APR	11	RED CARPET GALA WITH THE FOUR TOPS

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# COVER





# Boosting our grades

*Joanna Wurtele backs a nonprofit that has proven to improve education.*

By C.E. Richard | Photos by Tim Mueller

**C**indy Bennett is magic. Just ask any of the kids she cares for at Riverside Educational Development Center in New Roads, Louisiana. What kind of magic can Cindy do? Well, for one thing, she can make a bulb light up without electricity. On this particular Tuesday morning, she's surrounded by a crowd of delighted toddlers. They watch, wide-eyed, as she sticks the bulb in her mouth and it flickers to life. She takes it out again and calls over one of her little ones, inviting the child to "tighten" the bulb she now holds in her closed hand. After a couple of turns, the darkened bulb blazes back to brightness. The child's face lights up no less brilliantly. *I did that, she seems to say. I made that happen.*

"I had to get a new light bulb eventually," Cindy laughs afterwards. Over the years, a great many children have come to the front of the class to tighten the bulb in her hand. "So many that the glass part got twisted out of the metal base. So this is my new bulb."

Cindy is the owner and director of this cheerfully decorated childcare center, along with her daughters and co-owners, Melissa Bennett Loucks and Amanda Bennet Segura. On average, they and the other teachers provide care and learning for 45 children at Riverside, most of them under the age of 4.

"I didn't want to be just a babysitter," Cindy explains. "And there's so much more to life, to learning, than just academics."

Cindy is referring to the kind of learning that has to happen before schooling can begin in kindergarten, like learning self-control, or how to articulate their ideas and feelings using words; how to wait patiently, share, and take turns; how to follow directions and resolve conflicts peacefully—all the fundamentals that set the stage for success in school later. Child development experts call this "social and emotional learning," or SEL. Cindy

explains her teachers' work using simpler terms: "You gotta have a heart for kids."

It's clear to any observer that each of the teachers at Riverside has such a heart, and a big one at that. Even so, they know there's always more to learn—new skills, new curricula, new pedagogical approaches. The field of early childhood education, or ECE, has been growing and changing rapidly, especially in Louisiana, where the Legislature has enacted tough new standards

for ECE teachers and childcare centers over the last few years.

The new requirements can be a lot for Riverside's teachers to keep up with, Melissa Bennett Loucks admits. Among other things, the state now requires the teachers to earn a Childhood Development Associate certification (CDA), the most widely

Joanna Wurtele has long supported early childhood education in Pointe Coupee. A mountain of evidence shows that Pre-K education produces extraordinary benefits, including higher graduation rates and better schools for all. Only about half the students in Louisiana get a pre-K education because of a lack of funding. Joanna is a fund donor of the Foundation.

recognized credential in the field and a key to career advancement. But long days and low pay among ECE teachers (often, it's only minimum wage) doesn't exactly encourage continuing education or professional development. It can be especially burdensome for teachers who work in rural parishes, like Pointe Coupee, where resources are typically scarce.

But now they have help, and it's coming directly from the community that these educators serve. Riverside is visited two to three times per week by "coaches" from Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition (PCECC), a nonprofit serving as the parish's Child Care Resource & Referral Agency. These are early childhood education specialists who assist the teachers in improving their work, whether it's using a state-approved curriculum, developing new lesson plans, or identifying children with learning disabilities or special needs. The coaches who come to Riverside all have a master's degree in education or better, and decades of experience. The training the teachers receive is designed to enhance the services that Riverside provides—all at no cost to the business owners.

"It can be really hard to find a qualified teacher with the CDA certificate, especially with wages being what they are," Cindy says. "The coaching helps teachers earn their certification, and it helps them do a better job here. It lets them focus on what's most important, and that's the kids."

**E**stablished in 2005, the Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition was the bright idea of founder Joanna Wurtele. Born and raised across the road from False River, she was frustrated with the failing Head Start program in her parish and with the general lack of progress that Louisiana was making in education. After 20 years of advocating for the public school system, Wurtele says, "I realized my efforts were in vain. The same problems continued. There had to be a better way to enable children to be their best selves."

As early education research became more widely available via the Internet, Wurtele studied everything she could. Eventually, a light came on for her and Wurtele was finally able to see what the problem was in Pointe Coupee: All of the educational support and interventions she'd promoted weren't working because they came too late in the children's development.

"We had to start at the beginning," Wurtele says. "We had to help families get stronger and more informed about the science behind this. Brain studies tell us that so much of a child's future is determined by age 3." If we want our kids to succeed in school

*"Business, nonprofits, anybody who's got a state tax liability—they can donate to their local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, like ours, or directly to a child care center and get a tax credit."*

—Joanna Wurtele

and, later, in life, Wurtele says, the time to intervene is *before* they start school.

Even with this new insight, Wurtele's PCECC made little headway until 2012 when the state legislature mandated a complete overhaul of Louisiana's approach to ECE, aiming "to ensure that every child enters kindergarten healthy and ready to learn."

Known as "Act 3," this legislation was a game-changer, says Wurtele. Along with requiring every daycare to employ CDA-certified teachers, the state also obligates them to follow an approved curriculum designed to stimulate healthy early childhood development and foster school readiness. And each licensed center is routinely evaluated onsite according to a rigorous rating system. At last, there was a roadmap for helping more Louisiana students to succeed in school and become lifelong learners, Wurtele says.

What's more, in a rare show of bipartisan wisdom, the Legislature also provided a funding mechanism to support these improvements—without costing taxpayers more. The state's School Readiness Tax Credits became law in 2007, but, according to Wurtele, even the lawmakers themselves didn't fully understand the legislation's value or how best to apply it. It took a few years to get the program up and running right, but today the tax credits constitute a \$16 million investment in improved ECE, helping the state to leverage an additional \$80 million in federal funding.

"It's dollar-for-dollar, up to \$5,000," Wurtele explains. "Business, nonprofits, anybody who's got a state tax liability—they can donate to their local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, like ours, or directly to a child care center and get a tax credit. So, for a lot of our businesses in Pointe Coupee, it's a way to keep \$5,000 of their tax dollars right here, helping our





## REAL COSTS

In May 2017, an attention-getting study was published by the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children and LSU's Public Policy Research Lab. It's called *Losing Ground: How Child Care Impacts Louisiana's Workforce Productivity and the State Economy*. The first of its kind for Louisiana, the study sought to measure the economic impact of childcare needs on working parents and their employers. Researchers surveyed households with children under 4 throughout the state, and then they calculated the economic impact of the survey's findings.

- Childcare is expensive. Far costlier, however, is the price we pay when good early childhood education is unavailable or unreliable.
- Childcare issues cost Louisiana's economy \$1.1 billion. Every year.
- Over 40% of respondents reported missing work in the last three months due to childcare problems.
- One in six respondents quit a job for the same reason.
- One in 13 were fired due to recurring childcare problems.
- Those absences and employee turn-over cost Louisiana employers \$816 million per year.
- Louisiana loses almost \$84 million in annual tax revenues every year as a result.



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community's children, instead of watching it go to Baton Rouge.”

The PCECC began with seed money managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. But the tax-credit donations have become a cornerstone of Pointe Coupee's success, with all funds going to cover the costs of the new curriculum and, most importantly, to pay the coaches who have been responsible for helping ECE centers to improve their ratings and the quality of care and education they deliver to children. Sure, more funding would help them to achieve more, says Wurtele. But the tax credits have worked well, reminding local businesses that they have a stake in their employees' children, and in the parish's future workforce.

The new higher standards can be very challenging for childcare centers, acknowledges Julie Lee, the chairwoman of the board for the Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition. With her husband, Felix, Julie has been a driving force behind the upswing in quality ECE in Pointe Coupee. However, she says, with help coming from the PCECC, these improvements can also be very rewarding for childcare centers that embrace them.

“The state has thrown a required curriculum at them, they're throwing accountability issues at them, they're throwing robust licensing at them,” she says, “but they're also providing them with an opportunity, a funding stream, to increase the wages of their employees. We're focusing a lot on the Director/ Owner training because it's geared toward helping childcare center administrators see the value of all that's available to them now, along with giving other business training to help their centers succeed.”

Wurtele points out that good childcare has become a necessary part of life, given the world we live in today. In the past, people in Pointe Coupee had larger families. Children were raised with at least one parent in the home, with lots of brothers and sisters to look after them. Now, with fewer siblings and both parents working, many kids never have the chance to acquire the kind of basic socialization, emotional stability, and language development they need to become successful students later.

Having lost her father before age 3, Wurtele has a special sympathy for kids who struggle with school because of troubles at home. And, she says, this is a problem that cuts across all social and income strata—simply because, rich or poor, young children all have these same needs.

Like the little boy who's been dropped off at Riverside every morning since shortly after he was born. He's being raised by his single dad, a hardworking man whose job at the local sugar mill doesn't allow him to spend as much time with his son as he'd like to, or as much as the boy needs. In other centers, there are kids whose parents are struggling with a drug-addicted spouse.

Sometimes, there are kids who come from wealthy homes but whose parents don't give their babies the care and attention that they need, or children who have suffered some kind of trauma. Without intervention, these are the children most likely to end up in the so-called “school-to-prison pipeline” later.

Lee agrees. She says that one of the PCECC board members, Sheriff Beauregard Torres III, is fond of saying that he wants to see good early childhood education in Pointe Coupee put him out of business.

“It's all about giving children what they need to become productive citizens later on,”

Wurtele says. “Creating a community of productive citizens enables each of us to focus on moving forward.”

Good childcare also makes parents more productive citizens, she says. By way of example, she points to American military bases. “The U.S. military has the very best daycare,” Joanna observes, “because they know that a parent needs to know their children are in good hands.”

The Pointe Coupee Early Childhood Coalition has only been providing coaching and its other support services for less than three years. Already, though, it's delivering impressive results. Joanna and the Lees have seen all the daycares they serve advance by at least one rating level.

“As these centers get better “grades” and start to achieve excellence, we're able to measure their success,” Julie Lee says. “Riverside has been a perfect example of that. The state evaluates them, and we give them the coaching and all the tools they need to rise to those higher standards.”

Riverside was among the first daycare centers in Pointe Coupee to take advantage of the resources provided by the PCECC. Now, six of their teachers have earned their CDA certification, and Riverside enjoys a state rating of “Proficient,” which is the second highest. With help from their coaches, though, the teachers are striving to do even better.

Bennett prepares another magic trick for her kids. “We want a rating of ‘Excellent,’” she declares over her shoulder, her magic wand in hand. The confidence in her voice leaves little room for doubt that, by this time next year, Riverside will have made the grade. •

# Help after harm

*Group builds fund for scholarships to cancer survivors.*

By Sara Bongiorno

**M**ost of Alexandra Dedinsky's childhood was consumed by treatment for a brain tumor. The family of the Madisonville girl began traveling to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis for treatment after physicians found a mass pressing on her optic nerve when Alexandra was 7.

Dedinsky is now 21, and pursuing a bachelor's degree in fine arts at Savannah College of Art and Design.

Her dream job is designing themed exhibits like those at Disney World, where she escaped with her family during years of grueling treatment that included radiation and chemotherapy.

The St. Tammany Cancer Fund college-scholarship program helps her cover tuition at the renowned SCAD campus. "I want to change my life and live my dreams now," said Dedinsky. "The scholarship is helping me do that."

A powerhouse group of Northshore volunteers built the scholarship program and ran it themselves until recently. The group raised more than \$1 million for scholarships and other cancer-related programs and initiatives of benefit to local young people affected by cancer.

Eligible students like Dedinsky can get up to \$16,000 for tuition and related costs over four years of undergraduate stud-

ies at an accredited two- or four-year school. The fund has provided scholarships to 45 St. Tammany-area college students since 2002.

Recognition of the financial cost of cancer shaped the focus on scholarships from the beginning. "There's a long-term financial impact of cancer regardless of your financial situation," said David Roussel, a Northshore banker and president of the fund's board since 2007. "The focus is on helping individual young people prepare for successful adult lives."

Mimi Dossett, former board member, said members also saw an unmet need. "There is often help for other aspects of cancer, but we didn't see that for the cost of college," Dossett said.

The founding group set up a nonprofit and got to work. Their main fundraiser was a golf tournament at the Money Hill course in Abita Springs.

The tournament was named in memory of Andy Goodyear, Money Hill's co-developer, Dossett's uncle and an avid golfer who died of bone cancer in 2001.

Golf tournaments are both labor-intensive and time consuming, but the volunteer group was not put off by such challenges. They were also highly effective at running the event. After the first few years, the tournament typically raised \$100,000 to \$150,000, said Don McMath, a Northshore builder who was central to the fund's founding and operation.



Alexandra Dedinsky



He noted that there were no administrative costs, allowing the volunteer-run organization to direct every cent it raised to charitable giving. The group in time added more fundraisers, including wine auctions and dinners at La Provence restaurant in LaCombe with the help of then chef/owner John Besh.

The group divvied up other aspects of the program's operations, including reading essays from applicants that numbered as many as 20 in some years. "We never turned anybody away," said McMath.

The group's fundraising prowess resulted in an unintended consequence: an expanding reserve of money, despite the board's goal of giving away all funds raised each year. To put the funds to use, the organization expanded giving related to cancer with gifts to the pediatric oncology program at Children's Hospital in New Orleans and St. Jude in Memphis, where several families sought treatment.

It purchased infusion equipment for local hospitals on the Northshore, covered lodging and transportation costs for families with children in treatment in Houston and elsewhere. It even provided general humanitarian assistance to some Northshore families, including some who lost homes to flooding.

"It was truly a lot of fun to be able to help people in the community," said McMath.

Over the years, the scholarships have helped to cover tuition at universities across Louisiana and the country. Recipients include teens who were receiving treatment for cancer while also full-time college students.

Several students decided to pursue studies and work in health care as a result of their own experiences with cancer, said Gina Broussard, another founding member. "They are an inspiring group of young people," she said.

Many volunteered at the golf tournament at Money Hill or got involved with cancer-related charities elsewhere after they went off to school.

Mandeville native Connor Mahony, for instance, helped to raise \$260,000 for cancer services when he worked as volun-

teer director of the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life at the University of Georgia during his senior year on the Athens campus.

*"It was truly a lot of fun to be able to help people in the community."*

—Don McMath

The Northshore Community Foundation manages the St. Tammany Cancer Fund, which started by issuing college scholarships to children who survived cancer but has expanded its reach to health care and fulfilling community needs. NCF is an affiliate of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

"I felt the need to pay it forward," said Mahony, now 23 and working for British Telecom in New York City.

The fund's focus and operations have evolved over time. Board members over the years came to view the scholarships as the most impactful element of their efforts and refocused giving in that area.

At the same time, the scholarship program expanded eligibility to include college-age applicants who had lost a parent to cancer or who had an immediate family member with a cancer diagnosis.

The broader guidelines permit participation by students like

Mahony, who was a senior in high school and already accepted at Georgia when his father—one of the scholarship program's founders—died of a rare cancer. "Our situation changed suddenly," Mahony said. "There was real uncertainty over how to pay for college."

The fund has reached a juncture of sorts. The board took a break from the tournament after running it for a decade. It hired an executive director, then realized that didn't make sense given the program's size and scope, Roussel said.

The board approached the Northshore Community Foundation a few years ago about administering the scholarship program. "It's been a really good arrangement," Roussel said.

While its most recent tournament at Money Hill was in 2015, the fund continues to award scholarships through an endowment the tournament created. The board will make a decision on a new signature fundraiser to replace it over the next year or so, Roussel said.

He anticipates rising demand for the scholarships in light of a growing regional population, climbing college costs and frequent uncertainty over aid for students through the Taylor Opportunity for Students Program, known as TOPS.

"I see more need ahead," Roussel said. •

# SPARK



The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust have started Purple Martin Farms, which is in our traditional neighborhood development in Raleigh, North Carolina. Portions of the profits from real estate work are invested in Foundation projects.





# Farm to porch

*Foundation community in NC includes working farm*

By Maggie Heyn Richardson

**I**n the world of planning, greenspace is a priority. Neighborhood residents and users of mixed-used developments place a premium on parks where their children can play, tree-lined sidewalks that invite strolling and footpaths that meander through natural settings.

But what if greenspace meant an active farm?

That's what's happening in 5401 North, a 300-acre traditional neighborhood development in Raleigh, North Carolina. Within the neighborhood is a fully functioning boutique farm complete with raised beds, a large hydroponic greenhouse and a burgeoning orchard. 5401 North residents can buy fresh produce from the operation, named Purple Martin Farm, through its just launched Community Supported Agriculture program.

Interest in locally grown foods in the United States has soared in the last 20 years with more consumers paying attention to where their food is produced. But while consumers may buy more locally grown items, most still don't witness the farming side of the food system. Here, neighbors drive by Purple Martin Farm daily, catching a glimpse of its seasonal changes.

"The captive audience component is one of the biggest positives of the project," says Farm Manager Maureen Thiessen. "We've seen a lot of interest from neighbors who ride by and want to know what it's about. Word is really starting to spread about the CSA."

Under development for the last decade, 5401 North is a project of Commercial Properties Realty Trust, the real estate manager for the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. CPRT's projects are intended to serve as models for progressive development and community building.

In Baton Rouge, they include the Water Campus, Acadian Village, the downtown Hilton and many others. CPRT's signature neighborhood development, 5401 North, is situated in northeast Raleigh and is intended to push the enve-



Farm Manager Maureen Thiessen teaches schoolchildren on their field trip to Purple Martin Farm. Their school is next door to 5410 North, the Foundation and CPRT's development.

lope on TNDs. So far about 100 houses of diverse styles and sizes have been completed. Commercial and retail development are forthcoming.

Purple Martin Farm is one of 5401 North's signature amenities, and it could become a model for neighborhood farms around the country, believes CPRT President Carolyn Martin, who conceived the idea.

Unlike a typical community garden model, which is often run by volunteers, neighbors or school groups, Purple Martin Farm is a business run by horticulture professionals. While providing natural beauty to the neighborhood, it is also a tangible retail opportunity with residents interested in buying local produce for their households as the customers.

Gardens of any scale are tricky things, but an operation of this size demanded a certain level of technical expertise. In 2016, the CPRT team looked to experts from LSU to help plan and execute the project. They hired LSU AgCenter Assistant Professor Kathryn Fontenot and Burden Center Director Jeff Kuehny to think through details associated with the farm, including its layout, crops and methods of operation.

Fontenot says she was instantly intrigued by the project.

"We met with CPRT and they told us about their concept of a neighborhood with a farm as a central feature rather than a golf course or park with ornamental plants," says Fontenot. "It's a neat project and it's been through a lot of phases as we've developed it."

The planning process has demanded incredible attention to

detail, says Fontenot. The team had to obtain permitting from the City of Raleigh Planning and Development Department on the size and look of the greenhouses, the orchard plantings, the fencing to keep deer away from the crops and drainage features, Fontenot says.

"It's been a really interesting learning experience for all of us," she says. "We've gotten to jump into this world of architecture and urban planning, and the planners have learned a lot about how things grow."

Last year, the operation was ready to install a full-time farm manager. CPRT hired Thiessen, a horticulture graduate from the LSU College of Agriculture.

Thiessen oversees all growing, which takes place in a large hydroponic greenhouse and in 25 raised beds. This spring, the yield included an initial variety of lettuces and herbs, then incorporated other warm weather crops like cucumbers, eggplant and tomatoes. The produce was distributed through the CSA, which Thiessen also runs.

CSAs have a long history across the United States. The concept is rooted in helping small farmers offset operating expenses at the beginning of the growing season. Community members buy a share of the farm and then receive a specified number of distributions of produce over the course of the season. Thiessen harvests the fresh produce items every two weeks and loads it into boxes for members to pick up. Currently, the CSA provides six distributions during each season.

Inside the expansive Purple Martin Farm temperature-controlled greenhouse, an intricate hydroponic operation is underway. Three 30-by-90-foot bays hold plants in special contraptions that allow them to grow without the use of soil. Thiessen feeds their roots with a nutrient solution. Outside, the raised beds hold seasonal crops, which were started from seeds in the greenhouse. The farm, which sits near the entrance to the neighborhood, includes a small orchard with three rows of apple trees, and will eventually include pocket berry patches as well. The operation is pesticide free.

Meanwhile, Fontenot and Kuehny are on hand to consult with Thiessen about any issues that arise with pests or other challenges.

"For example, if a problem comes up with something like aphids, Maureen can send a picture and we can develop the right strategy," says Fontenot. "We act as consultants for the project,





*“It’s been a really interesting learning experience for all of us. We’ve gotten to jump into this world of architecture and urban planning, and the planners have learned a lot about how things grow.”*

—Kathryn Fontenot, LSU AgCenter

just as we do for any farmer in Louisiana and others we consult with.”

Interest in the farm is growing. Thiessen says she’s been approached by the operator of a mobile craft bar to grow edible flowers for cocktails, and that restaurants have expressed interest in buying produce. More neighbors have joined the CSA’s next round. Fontenot adds there’s a strong possibility that the farm could see future partnerships with educational institutions

located next door to 5401 North, including Wake Technical Community College and Riverbend Elementary School.

“The project has been great,” says Fontenot. “People love the idea of a farm, but they don’t necessarily want to farm themselves. This gives them the best of both worlds.” •



## ORDER IN THE UNIVERSES

Stephen Hawking left a parting gift: order in our universe and tens of millions of others, if they are out there. Earlier in his career, Hawking had theorized there were multiple universes that could operate on physical laws of their own. But the physicist submitted a paper two weeks before dying in March that asserted all potential universes should operate under the same rules. His paper also offered a possible method for detecting universes outside of our own.



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**ELECTRIC FLIGHT** The unthinkable seems possible. Boeing and Airbus are developing electric planes, as are startups like Eviation. The Israeli company says tickets to ride its short-haul flights will be cheaper than driving. Called the Alice Commuter, Eviation's nine-seater is expected in the skies in 2021. "There is a revolution happening in aviation, and it's happening because of lightweight materials, energy density of batteries, the power of electric propulsion and the computer power of managing this together," Omer Bar-Yohay, CEO of Eviation says in a report. Alice will have a range of 650 miles.





## BETTER PARKS

American park designer Meghan Talarowski's transfer to England let her compare park use in the two countries. She found London's parks had 55% more visitors, far more physical activity, and an equal number kids and adults at play. The reason: parks in London are built for all ages, playful elements are spread across the city, and structures are riskier but still safe. Her favorite park is Pools Playground in Victoria. (above)



**ENERGY BREAKTHROUGHS** A team led by John Goodenough, the 95-year-old who invented the lithium ion battery 42 years ago, published tests of a new solid-state battery that stores twice the energy of a lithium-ion battery, uses no potentially flammable electrolytes or expensive cobalt, and cycles 23,000 times before it's useless, compared to 1,000 for batteries on the market. Skeptics say that the invention is not possible, while Goodenough's labs says just wait and you'll see. Meanwhile, Net Power announced it has successfully fired up a natural gas pilot plant in Houston that includes a combustor to capture all carbon dioxide. Within three years, Net Power expects to start up a 300-megawatt plant that produces cheap power without emissions.



## MINIONS FOR GROCERIES

Ocado, an online grocer, has licensed its automated warehouse technology to Kroger, the largest chain in the United States. Ocado has invented robots and related technology to assemble orders for delivery. The robots travel on tracks over a grid of products, reaching into bins to assemble orders. Each can gather up to 50 items in a few minutes. Artificial intelligence and 4G technology ensure the robots avoid each other while also finding the most efficient route to make groceries. Kroger will build 20 U.S. warehouses embedded with Ocado technology.

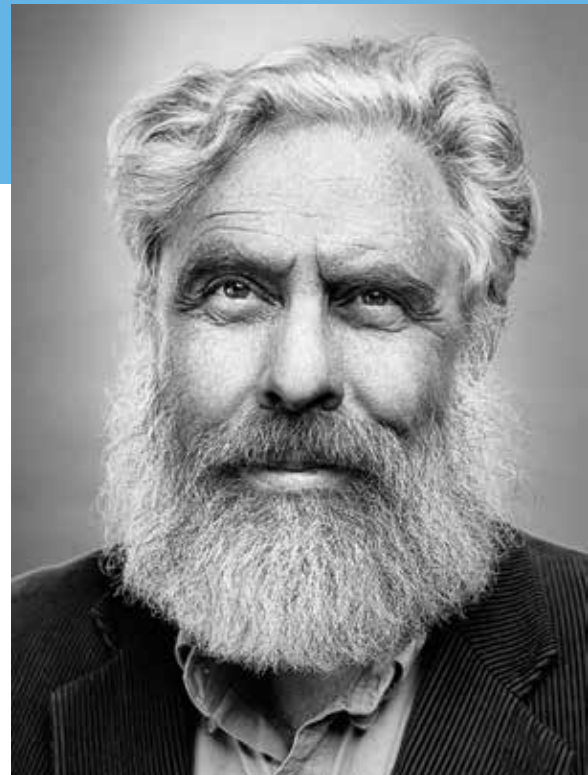




# CURE

# VIOLENCE

**QUITTING THE GANG LIFE** How do you get someone to quit the gang life? One answer may come from Chicago, among the most violent places in the county, where a program that combines cognitive behavior therapy and entry-level jobs is reducing crime. Therapy alone reduced violent crime arrests by 50% for high school students in Cure Violence. The program boosted the likelihood that participants would graduate on time by 19%.



**YOU, YOUNGER** A stealth startup by a Harvard researcher is genetically-engineering dogs to make them younger, with plans to do the same for humans. Scientist George Church won't give interviews, but he said at a conference that making money by reversing aging in dogs is the first step. "We'll do dog trials, and that'll be a product, and that'll pay for scaling up in human trials." The goal of his firm, Rejuvenate Bio, is to let 130-year-old humans live in bodies of 20-somethings.



**OOOH, THAT SMELL** That occasional Baton Rouge smell, now you can tell whether it's associated with air pollutants. Sensors have become cheap enough for you to monitor outdoor air around your home. Purple Air, for instance, has a \$250 monitor that is nearly as precise as EPA sensors. Activists are networking the monitors in neighborhoods to hold governmental agencies accountable.



## **THIS IS NOT YOUR FATHER'S SHOP CLASS**

At the East Baton Rouge Parish Career and Technical Education Center, there are double doors big enough for an ambulance to drop off a dummy patient to a replicated emergency room. Other classrooms are flexible. They can be reconfigured to teach trades that are in demand. For half-days, EBR public school students can take core classes at their high schools, then shift to the career school in Ardendale to train for jobs in health care, manufacturing, computers or construction. The project started nearly a decade ago as a partnership of EBR Schools and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. The school opens in less than a month.



THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREATER BATON ROUGE & THE RIVER CITY JAZZ COALITION ANNOUNCE

R I V E R C I T Y  
**JAZZMASTERS**

2018-2019 SEASON



**OCT 4** **JOHN SCOFIELD'S COMBO 66**  
FEATURING GERALD CLAYTON,  
VINCETE ARCHER, AND BILL STEWART



**NOV 28** **JOEY DEFRANCESCO + THE PEOPLE**



**FEB 27** **ETIENNE CHARLES**  
**CREOLE SOUL**




**MAR 28** **MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL**  
**ON TOUR** FEAT CECILE MCLORIN SALVANT



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