

CURRENTS

second quarter 2020

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

braf.org



After the **PANDEMIC**

*The future of parks, cities, justice,
schools, learning, telemedicine, flex-time,
outdoors, restaurants ... and more*



Jenn Ocken, pictured, and photographer Aimee Supp created Front Porch Project, taking free photos of hundreds of families and encouraging them to purchase gift cards from local businesses.

PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



20

PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



CONTENTS

SECOND QUARTER 2020 | VOLUME FOURTEEN | NUMBER TWO

06
LETTER
William E. Balhoff,
Chair

08
ABOUT US

- 09**
LEAD IN
- » **Water Campus**
 - » **Marcia Kaplan Kantrow Baton Rouge Visionary Award**
 - » **Water Institute**
 - » **Prison population**
 - » **Health District**

- » **New scholarships**
- » **Saving pets**

16
1 Q GRANTS

20
COVER STORY
Pandemic prophecies
The virus is changing how Baton Rouge lives. How will our parish change?

44
LEGACY
Business with a higher purpose
Lonnie Bickford makes money to do good around the world

48
NONPROFITS
Feed the children
Three O'Clock minds the gap, serving tens of thousands daily

52
NONPROFITS
Looking above
St. Agnes Catholic Church in Beauregard Town is in need to meet the needy

56
NONPROFITS
2020 John W. Barton Sr. Excellence in Nonprofit Management Awards

60
SPARK
More (New) schools for BR
Four more to open with aid from organization

64
SPARK BRIEFS

66
CODA



“Unlike hurricanes, this disaster is biological. The response we deliver must be different too.”

after a few days. The response we deliver must be different too.

So we are learning and adapting. For now, we’ve found that we can accomplish the greatest good by focusing on areas where we’re needed most:

Supporting the health care system.

In 2014-15, the Foundation led and underwrote the Baton Rouge Health District master plan for the part of town where health care providers are clustered. The nonprofit Baton Rouge Health District was formed to implement the plan; now, that organization has found its role expanding during the pandemic. For example, the Health District has established a central location for collecting personal protective equipment from businesses, and, in partnership with the City-Parish, they’re distributing it to health care providers, based on need and results. The Health District is also coordinating and promoting blood drives to sustain supplies, which are needed consistently until the end of the pandemic. Additionally, the Health District has collected funds from its supporters—the

health care providers themselves—to make grants for filling gaps, like a faster testing system created by scientists at LSU’s School of Veterinary Medicine.

Assisting nonprofits that are on the shifting front lines.

As unprecedented as it is, this disaster has one thing in common with others: Nonprofits are struggling to meet increased demand with shrinking resources. Our donor services staff is working to gather information from area nonprofits to understand their needs. We’re using what we learn to make targeted grants that will deliver the greatest return for the community. This disaster is like no other in one important way; it’s international in scope, forcing foundations to count on local contributions only. With funds limited, we have to forego many needs in the community.

Meeting people’s most basic needs for longer periods of time.

Many people find themselves facing hunger for the first time. A central focus of our work has become feeding the unemployed, the elderly and the poor. The

Foundation’s civic leadership initiatives team is partnering with corporations like Entergy, nonprofits, government agencies, local schools and restaurants to feed tens of thousands of children through the end of summer, and health care workers as well. Supporting this work in parishes outside the Capital Region is the governor’s COVID-19 Relief Fund, which was established by the Foundation and seeded with \$400,000 from us and matching contributions from the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation and the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation.

Making grants to workers through Employees 1st.

Many companies establish relief funds with us to help their employees facing hard times. Employees 1st has been gearing up, making grants to workers from companies that already have a fund with the Foundation. Now, businesses across the country are opening Employees 1st funds with us, underscoring the scope of the pandemic. It’s a powerful indicator of the hardships faced by workers and the businesses that hope to retain them.

Organizing the effort. We convened meetings after other disasters. We’ve done the same during the pandemic, establishing regular forum for funders, state and local officials, university and

nonprofit leaders to hear how each is responding and to clear bottlenecks for more efficient allocation of resources.

Throughout Louisiana and, indeed, around the world, people are learning to adapt to a disaster that has upended everything. Health care workers are learning to protect themselves in ways they haven’t had to before. Educators are learning to teach to a computer screen instead of a classroom. Neighbors are learning how to help neighbors and keep their communities alive, all at a distance.

At the Foundation, we’re learning fast too. And, as unfamiliar as a pandemic may be, we’ve got a big advantage: experience.

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.

Currents is published four times a year by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact us at 225.387.6126 or email the Foundation at mverma@braf.org.

mission

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

To achieve our mission, we:

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

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation accomplishes its mission in three ways:

1 We connect fund donors—philanthropists—to worthwhile projects and nonprofits. Over 55 years, our donors have granted more than \$500 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 \$200 to \$25,000.

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 and a bike sharing system that launched last year.

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—is implementing the plan.

PHASE 1 OF WATER CAMPUS ALMOST COMPLETE

PEOPLE WILL BE LIVING in Water Campus apartments by September, marking the completion of Phase One. The apartments, named 200 Water Street, are on the main square of the campus, across from 1200 Brickyard Lane, a research and office building with Stantec and Lemoine Cos. as the first two tenants and a state cybersecurity control center opening next.

Construction on the main park at the campus will begin in June and be completed when the apartments are ready in fall.

Commercial Properties Realty Trust and Baton Rouge Area Foundation are developing the Water Campus, a 1.6 million-square-foot science community where researchers are creating adaptations for living with higher seas and disappearing wetlands. The campus is on 35 acres with an entrance on Nicholson Drive near downtown. It has five buildings, including a levee-top showplace

that is home to The Water Institute of the Gulf. The Campus also includes The Estuary, a venue for conference and social events on the river side of the levee.

The project follows principles of New Urbanism, in which housing, retail and workplaces are near each other.





PHOTO BY DON KADAIK

LANDRY WINS VISIONARY AWARD

Charles A. Landry is winner of the Foundation’s 2020 Marcia Kaplan Kantrow Baton Rouge Visionary Award. The award is named in honor of the first director of programs for the Foundation.

The Kantrow Award is presented at the Foundation’s annual meeting, but the event was canceled this year because of the coronavirus. The Kantrow family selects the winners. Previous honorees include Jennifer Eplett Reilly, Mark Drennen and Milford “Mike” Wampold III.

Downtown Baton Rouge was revived

because Landry was among the handful who possessed the specific skills and determination to implement the master plan, Plan Baton Rouge. He arranged complex financing and legal agreements that were necessary to execute signature projects.

For one, he helped the state consolidate rented spaces into owned Art Deco-inspired buildings on North Street. He was central to the reclamation of the abandoned Capitol House Hotel, which proved so successful that five more hotels opened in downtown. Landry

was the legal mind behind much of the Arts Block, including the Shaw Center for the Arts and new apartments and restaurants.

A bit of history about the award. Kantrow’s family and friends opened an endowed fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in 1997. That fund underwrote a speaker series that introduced new ideas to the Capital Region, among them that downtown needed a master plan based on New Urbanist principles. The fund now supports the Baton Rouge Visionary Award.

BETTER WORLD

Opened DAF

2021

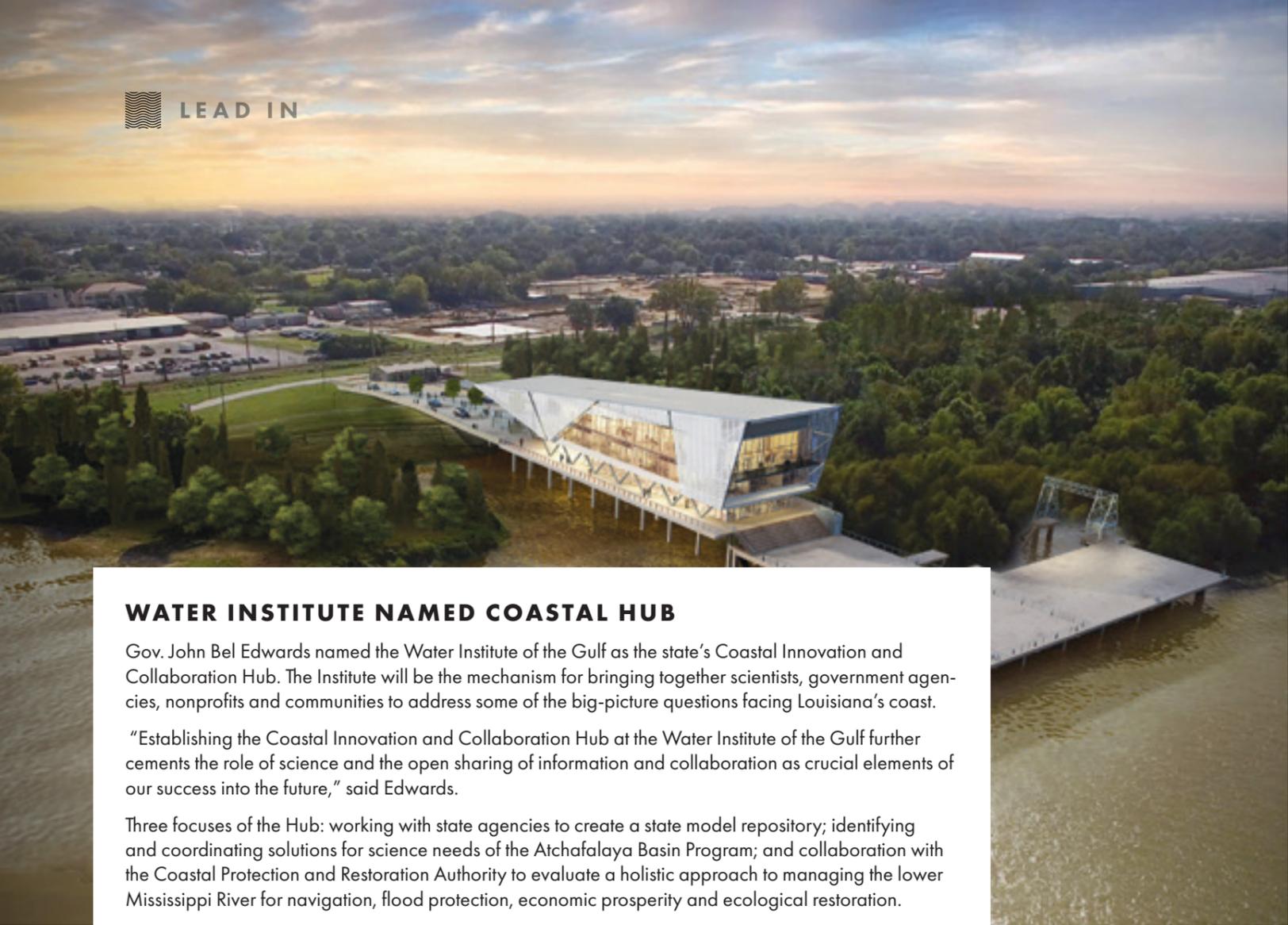
J F M A M J J A S

Self-isolation? Not for donors of the Foundation.

During the outbreak, they embraced causes they care about. They issued grants from charitable accounts to nonprofits that faithfully cared for people of South Louisiana.

Open a donor advised fund. To learn more, please contact Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 or ehutchison@braf.org.

Baton Rouge Area Foundation



WATER INSTITUTE NAMED COASTAL HUB

Gov. John Bel Edwards named the Water Institute of the Gulf as the state’s Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub. The Institute will be the mechanism for bringing together scientists, government agencies, nonprofits and communities to address some of the big-picture questions facing Louisiana’s coast.

“Establishing the Coastal Innovation and Collaboration Hub at the Water Institute of the Gulf further cements the role of science and the open sharing of information and collaboration as crucial elements of our success into the future,” said Edwards.

Three focuses of the Hub: working with state agencies to create a state model repository; identifying and coordinating solutions for science needs of the Atchafalaya Basin Program; and collaboration with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to evaluate a holistic approach to managing the lower Mississippi River for navigation, flood protection, economic prosperity and ecological restoration.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation formed The Institute as an independent science organization to aid imperiled coastal communities.



PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

HEALTH DISTRICT ADDS CAPACITY

The Baton Rouge Health District has become central to the coronavirus response. Created by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and health care leadership, the Health District coordinated the search for and distribution of crucial supplies and is promoting a blood drive. At the same time, the organization added two new employees, making it three at the young organization.

The Health District set up a collection and distribution center for personal protective equipment in March. Experts

in logistics became allies in the management of supplies and fair distribution to health care providers, based on need.

Meanwhile the Health District has hired Phillip Brantley and Yanet Raesu as new staff members. Brantley is chief of program development and Raesu is an administrative fellow. The executive director is Steven Ceulemans.

Brantley will build partnerships in health education, research, workforce and infrastructure development. He

was a senior scientist at Pennington Biomedical Research Center and holds adjunct faculty appointments in LSU’s departments of psychology and food science.

Raesu will work with Health District committees and task forces and manage ongoing initiatives, such as the Health District’s participation in Drug Take Back Day. She recently earned a master’s degree in health care administration from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

PRISON POPULATION SHRINKS

EBR’s prison population has shrunk by more than 40%, with the decline accelerated to protect jailers and inmates from getting infected by the coronavirus. The drop really began before COVID-19, when the Foundation and EBR justice officials started reforms that were, in many cases, funded by a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation grant.

Two changes from the project that have mattered. 1) A program diverted people with mental illness and addictions from jail and brought together local officials, who began testing their own reforms. 2) Justice officials implemented more efficient case processing, compressing the time between arrests and case resolution, thereby cutting the parish prison population by more than 15% before the pandemic.

Overall, the EBR prison population dropped about 40% in eight months, from 2,207 in September 2019 to 1,398 in mid-April.

The Foundation and local officials have created a nonprofit comprised of EBR justice officials that is improving all areas of the justice system.

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS AT THE FOUNDATION

Donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation have started three college scholarships in 2020.

Larry Madere established the **Madere-Jones Scholarship** in memory of family members who passed away in a car accident in 2016. The award is a maximum of \$12,000 over eight semesters.

Fundraising by Phi Gamma Chapter of Chi Omega established **The Jolie Berry Memorial Scholarship**, an award of \$1,500. Active chapter members at LSU are eligible to apply.

In honor of her late husband, Stacy Poor created the **Brent P. Poor Memorial Scholarship** to award up to \$8,000 over eight semesters. The Poor Scholarship is open to high school seniors and college students in Louisiana or Texas who are children of an unmarried widow or widower. The student must also be attending college in either of those states.

The Foundation manages scholarships on behalf of people who open and fund them. All our scholarships are at BRAFScholarships.org.



PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

CAA HITS RECORD FOR SAVING PETS

Companion Animal Alliance saved more pets than ever in East Baton Rouge. The animal shelter operator found homes for a record 77% of homeless pets in 2019, up 5 points from the year before. The save rate was only 20% when CAA took over the parish shelter in 2011.

CAA added a fourth dog adoption room in 2019 to house 40 more canines. Paid for by a generous donor, the room is easy to clean, quiet and is painted in colors to soothe dogs, who are also fed frozen peanut butter to make them friendlier and more adoptable.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation, with advocates for animals, created CAA and helped the charity raise \$13 million for a new shelter. Our staff continues to support CAA in its mission to better care for homeless pets who are waiting to be adopted.

CAA was closed in late April because of the pandemic. It always needs people willing to foster pets until they can be adopted.

THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION ISSUED

807 grants totaling \$13.8 million in the first quarter of 2020. The average grant was \$17,144 during the period. Grants by organizations are listed below.

The Foundation makes grants on behalf of people and organizations that open charitable funds with us. Our board also approves grants from unrestricted assets of the Foundation. If you are interested in learning more about Donor Advised Funds and other charitable accounts, please call Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126.

GRANTS / 1ST QUARTER 2020

Academic Distinction Fund \$47,164	Baton Rouge Crime Stoppers Inc. \$1,500
Acts of Love Inc. \$2,300	Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center Inc. \$14,284
Agenda for Children Inc. - New Orleans \$16,666	Baton Rouge Epicurean Society LLC \$2,500
Alcorn State University \$2,500	Baton Rouge First Church of the Nazarene \$350
Alpha Kappa Psi Foundation \$700	Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. \$15,000
Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$750	Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$16,750
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention \$1,250	Baton Rouge Little Theater Inc. / Theatre Baton Rouge \$2,099
American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$202	Baton Rouge Opera Guild \$3,131
AmeriCares Foundation Inc. \$250	Baton Rouge Progressive Network \$1,000
Arizona State University Foundation For A New American University \$50,000	Baton Rouge Youth Coalition Inc. \$166,000
Art Association of Jackson Hole \$5,000	BENOLA / Black Education for New Orleans \$75,000
Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$303,000	Beth Shalom Synagogue \$600
Ascension Episcopal School \$5,000	Big Buddy Program \$6,000
Auckland Foundation \$60,000	Black Teacher Collaborative Incorporated \$62,500
Autism Speaks Inc. \$100	Board of the University of Alabama \$1,000
Baton Rouge Child Advocacy Center \$40,700	Boy Scouts of America - Istrouma Area Council \$2,000
Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation Inc. - The Dunham School \$3,006	Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$100,000

BREADA - Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance \$1,250
BREC Foundation \$1,000
Bridge Center for Hope \$25,341
Calcasieu Parish School Board - J. J. Johnson Elementary \$1,000
Calvary Baptist Church \$50,000
Camelback Ventures Inc. \$12,500
Cancer Services Inc. \$10,500
Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$452
Capital Area CASA Association \$6,000
Capital Area United Way \$33,500
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Inc. \$52,000
Catholic High School Foundation \$3,225
Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$2,700
Center of Wonder \$5,000
Centre for the Arts \$1,000
Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./McMains Children's Development Center \$51,250
Change Lives Now \$500
Children's Cup \$1,200
Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles \$1,500
Chippin' in for St. Jude \$4,000
Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$12,438
City of Hammond \$500
City Year Inc. - Baton Rouge \$218,000
City Year Inc. \$5,000
Community Center of Pointe Coupee \$500
Companion Animal Alliance \$103,900
Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$59,572
Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Inc./ CARE \$250
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council \$362,196
Cristo Rey Baton Rouge \$2,400
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation - Baton Rouge \$2,000
Dance to Unite Inc. \$15,000
Dancing Grounds \$7,500
Doctors Without Borders USA Inc. \$2,750

Donaldson Chapel Baptist Church \$1,000
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$24,917
Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$6,000
Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$622
Earthjustice \$250
East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office \$50,000
EBRPSS - Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet School \$500
EBRPSS - Baton Rouge Magnet High School \$350
EBRPSS - Capitol Middle School \$2,000
Eden House \$1,000
EdNavigator Inc. \$175,000
Education Trust Inc. \$25,000
Emerge Center Inc. \$13,688
Empower 225 \$500
Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$84,010
FBI National Citizens Academy Alumni Association Inc. \$1,000
First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge Foundation \$10,000
First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$1,000
First United Methodist Church \$9,100
Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina \$10,000
Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$17,500
Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. / Preserve Louisiana \$22,055
Foundation for Woman's \$2,309
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University \$5,500
Friends of Cantera Inc. \$7,500
Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$1,000
Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$10,920
Friends of Magnolia Mound Plantation Inc. \$2,850
Friends of the Animals BR Inc. \$1,250
Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo \$250
GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship \$33,000

General Health System Foundation \$10,000
Georgia Institute of Technology \$1,500
Georgia Southern University \$1,500
GIVE Foundation \$350
Global Hunger Project \$150
Govern For America \$50,000
Grace Baptist Church \$700
Grambling State University \$500
Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$15,000
Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$21,000
Greater Baton Rouge Hope Academy Inc. \$1,000
Greater New Orleans Educational Television Foundation \$1,200
Gulf Coast State College \$500
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$1,250
Hannah's Klozet \$1,000
Heritage Ranch \$4,850
Holy Family Catholic Church \$14,137
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral \$200
Hope Landing Inc. \$1,500
HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$2,000
Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$3,000
House of Refuge Ministries \$700
Houston Grand Opera Association \$3,000
Humanities Amped \$20,000
Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$5,894
Inner-City Arts \$2,500
Insight LA Inc. \$5,000
International Community Foundation \$250
International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$1,341
International Rescue Committee Inc. \$150
ISKCON of Mississippi Inc. \$6,000
Jackson Hole Land Trust \$5,000
Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research Education and Conservation \$250
Jefferson Parish Public School System - Lincoln Elementary School for the Arts \$1,500

Jones County Junior College \$500
Jubilee Pioneers \$3,000
Juniper Table \$500
King of Kings Ministries Inc. / King of Kings Community Jerusalem \$750
Knock Knock Children's Museum Inc. \$6,000
Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$1,500
La Fondation Rose Et Verte De Louisiane \$2,000
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Inc. - Texas Gulf Coast Chapter \$5,000
Life Action Ministries \$300
Living Word Church of Muskegon \$600
Livingston Parish School Board - Denham Springs High School \$350
Louisiana Americana and Folk Society \$2,000
Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$8,344
Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries \$200
Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities \$3,850
Louisiana Industries for the Disabled Inc. \$6,228
Louisiana Key Academy \$1,000
Louisiana Leadership Institute \$50,000
Louisiana Resource Center for Educators \$2,000
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College \$10,000
Louisiana Superintendents Academy \$25,000
Louisiana Tech University \$1,500
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation \$7,500
LSU Foundation - College of the Coast and Environment \$2,000
LSU Foundation - E.J. Ourso College of Business \$1,000
LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$14,000
LSU Foundation - LSU Press \$15,000
LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication Excellence Fund \$2,500
LSU Foundation - Manship School of Mass Communication \$1,000
LSU Foundation - Paul M. Hebert Law Center \$1,000

LSU Foundation - University Lab School Foundation \$350
 LSU Foundation \$26,835
 Manners of the Heart \$5,500
 Manresa House of Retreats \$2,500
 Map 1040 \$1,500
 Marigny Opera House Foundation \$20,000
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$22,073
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$37,896
 MAZON Inc. a Jewish Response to Hunger \$250
 Memory Project Productions Inc. \$20,000
 Mercy Corps \$2,500
 MetroMorphosis \$345,000
 Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research \$500
 Mikie Mahtook Foundation Inc. \$1,000
 Millsaps College \$1,600
 Missionaries of Charity Inc. \$2,500
 Mississippi College \$250
 Mississippi State University \$2,000
 National Audubon Society Inc. - Audubon Louisiana \$10,000
 Nature Conservancy - Louisiana \$34,080
 New Beginnings School Foundation \$1,000
 New Orleans Career Center \$50,000
 New Orleans Museum of Art \$5,000
 New Pathways NOLA \$50,000
 New Schools for Baton Rouge \$215,000
 New Schools for New Orleans Inc. \$350,000
 New Subiaco Abbey and Academy \$1,000
 New York Institute of Technology \$1,500
 Northern Nevada Youth Golf Foundation \$5,000
 Northwestern State University Foundation \$500
 NUNU Arts and Culture Collective Inc. \$50,000
 NWEA \$125,000
 O'Brien House Inc. \$500
 Of Moving Colors Productions \$4,000
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$363

Opera Louisiane Inc. \$10,000
 Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$500
 Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church \$300,500
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$39,044
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$12,000
 Our Voice Nuestra Voz \$25,000
 Ozanam Inn \$1,000
 Pahara Institute \$62,500
 Parkview Baptist School Inc. \$700
 Particular Council of St. Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge Louisiana \$4,750
 Partners for Progress Inc./Partners Southeast \$15,000
 Pastoral Center \$28,532
 Pearl River Community College \$500
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$29,500
 Performing Arts Serving Acadiana Inc. \$5,000
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast Inc. \$10,000
 Pointe Coupee Parish School Board - Rosenwald Elementary School \$1,000
 PolitiCraft Inc. \$6,000
 Propel America \$100,000
 Rapides Parish School Board - Mabel Brasher Montessori School \$1,500
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge Inc. \$32,500
 Red Shoes Inc. \$8,500
 Reliant Mission Inc. \$1,500
 Ripples of Hope Inc. \$12,000
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$120,192
 Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Inc. Foundation \$300
 Rotary Foundation of Rotary International \$100
 Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. / Blue Flames Ministries \$750
 Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church \$10,000
 Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic Church \$500
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana \$5,000
 Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response

Center \$50,300
 Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church Charitable Foundation Inc. \$2,000
 SJA Foundation \$250
 South Louisiana Community College \$500
 Southeastern Louisiana University \$3,000
 Southern Poverty Law Center Inc. \$250
 Southern University and A&M College \$3,000
 SouthWings Inc. \$1,000
 Spay Baton Rouge \$250
 Special Olympics Louisiana Inc. \$250
 St. Aloysius Catholic Church \$57,500
 St. Aloysius Catholic School \$2,000
 St. Augustine Church \$973
 St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church \$5,000
 St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church \$12,000
 St. Francisville Area Foundation Inc. \$4,000
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church \$30,000
 St. George Catholic School \$1,000
 St. Gerard Majella Church \$10,500
 St. James Episcopal Day School \$1,250
 St. James Place of Baton Rouge Foundation Inc. \$3,000
 St. Jean Vianney Catholic School \$4,213
 St. John Interparochial School \$1,041
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$6,311
 St. Joseph's Academy \$20,100
 St. Jude Catholic Church \$18,000
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. \$2,250
 St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School \$3,023
 St. Lillian Academy \$500
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$45,960
 St. Margaret Queen of Scotland Church/ St. Thomas Chapel \$2,000
 St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church \$1,500
 St. Michael the Archangel High School \$500
 St. Philip Parish \$3,897
 St. Theresa of Avila Middle School \$6,579
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$14,994

STREB Inc. \$5,000
 Strength for Today \$2,500
 Summits Education \$12,500
 Teach for America Inc. - South Louisiana \$28,000
 Terrebonne Parish School Board - Honduras Elementary School \$1,000
 Texas A&M University \$1,500
 Texas Southern University \$1,500
 The Administrators of the Tulane Educational Fund - Tulane University Law School \$2,100
 The Ascension Fund Inc. \$14,118
 The Awty International School \$15,000
 The Foundation for Outdoor Advertising Research and Education \$5,000
 The Friends of the Rural Life Museum Inc. \$1,250
 The Greater New Orleans Foundation \$50,000
 The JL Foundation \$5,000
 The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge \$11,000
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$687
 The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge \$1,250
 The Troy Andrews Foundation \$206
 The University of Mississippi \$3,000
 The University of Tennessee, Knoxville \$1,500
 The University of Texas at Austin \$71,500
 Tiger Athletic Foundation \$1,000
 Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York \$3,750
 Union Congregational Church Crested Butte \$5,000
 United Southern Express Track Club \$700
 United Way of Greater Houston \$5,000
 University of Central Arkansas Foundation Inc. \$5,000
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette Foundation \$2,000
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$1,000
 University of Louisiana at Monroe \$1,000
 University of Southern Mississippi \$6,500
 University of Texas Foundation \$1,250
 University of West Georgia \$1,500

University Presbyterian Church \$2,000
 Valero Energy Foundation \$50,000
 Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$1,000
 Washington & Lee University \$100
 West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,518
 West Baton Rouge Historical Association \$2,000
 Woman's Club Foundation Inc. \$5,000
 Women Donors Network \$18,000
 Woodlawn Foundation \$1,000
 World Connect Inc. \$31,300
 WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$6,300
 Xavier University of Louisiana \$1,250
 Yale University \$1,000
 YMCA of the Capital Area \$1,000,694
 Yosemite Foundation \$250
 Young Mens Christian Association Of Pierce And Kitsap Counties \$400
 Youth for Christ USA Inc. - Mississippi Gulf Coast \$2,100
 YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge \$30,000



PANDEMIC PROPHECIES

The virus is changing how Baton Rouge lives. How will our parish change?

BY MUKUL VERMA

The pandemic has upended everything. There's no baseball season chatter. Sheltering-in-place and flextime have solved Baton Rouge's traffic problem. More pedestrians and cyclists than ever are venturing into the spring sunlight. Kids are going to school at home and, now doubling as teachers, parents have a new regard for educators. Workers are scheduling their own hours, often discovering they are more productive working from home, adding exercise and healthy cooking into schedules once too crammed for their own good.

The coronavirus has pushed us to be more creative. Doctors are seeing their patients via video, most for the first time. Teachers have become students, learning new ways to deliver their lessons online. Grocers and restaurants are creating new ways to get food to their customers through delivery services, many with seamless online ordering systems. Even "virtual happy hours" now connect the socially distant.

We don't know what changes will take root and remain after COVID-19. But forecasting the future provides a first step toward where we will be in a year, or two, or 10. *Currents* asked smart people to look ahead and talk about how the pandemic might fundamentally change Baton Rouge and the world beyond. Here we go. »

PARKS



Kinder Baumgardner

SWA GROUP-HOUSTON

THE VIEW FROM MY FRONT porch is a Pandemic Parade of anxious work-from-homers, bored homeschoolers and shocked hospitality workers. They walk, bike, stroll, run, and amble down my now carless street—waving at porch sitters as they gauge the proper distance to stop and say hello to a friend.

It's not just streets—parks are busy too, but not all of them. For the past 20 years, American park design has largely been about hyper-programmed public space. These parks are well-organized affairs with a rich variety of spaces designed to accommodate an assortment of very specific uses and users. A market here, a concert there, ice skat-

ing on the toy boat pond, and bespoke Instagram moments brought in on weekends for a fee. These parks require a frenzy of activity for users to feel at home—right now they feel empty and disorienting.

But there is a different kind of park that is calling to the concerned, but socially distanced masses. The “old school” strolling, viewing, picnicking, touch-of-nature park. These parks take their cues from the human need to be surrounded by sweeping drifts of shade trees, rolling lawns, streams and wetlands. While this style of park design was established in the 1860s as a response to cholera and plague, modern

manifestations of these parks have seen a design renaissance. With the application of metrics that guide the cleansing of water, sequestration of carbon, reduction in heat island effect, habitat corridors and health and wellness offerings, these parks have become an integral part of the infrastructure of our cities and are

needed now more than ever.

As Americans quickly adapt to accommodate the coronavirus reality, I am seeing a huge desire to use public space in new ways. Families are going outside to exercise and feel comforted by nature; desk-bound office workers are taking strolling meetings through visually

inspiring landscapes; and our streets have taken on a new life. These longings have been growing for some time now; maybe the pandemic will be the catalyst for a new type of public space and a newfound interest in the health and wellness that a well-designed park can bring.

Mr. Baumgardner is the lead designer of the Baton Rouge Lakes master plan, which was led and paid for by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. The plan is in the implementation phase, though delayed a bit because of the pandemic. More at BRLakes.org.



PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

RESTAURANTS

Gene Todaro

MARCELLO'S WINE MARKET & CAFE

AS A RESTAURANT OWNER, I can say coronavirus is easily the greatest challenge we have ever faced. Restaurants and bars are the antithesis of “social distance.” More than anyplace else in a community, restaurants and bars are where people from every walk of life, socioeconomic background, race, religion, sexual orientation and political persuasion spend quality time together in tight quarters. Dining elbow-to-elbow with strangers is the greatest example of a diverse and civil society; all communities converge at the rail of a bar.

For the bar or restaurant worker, the barrier of entry is relatively low, creating opportunity for gainful employment and a meaningful position in the workplace.

Our industry is a safe space for creative individuals to thrive while earning a living outside of a standard 9-to-5 work environment. Service employees are among the hardest-working, most-dedicated members of the workforce, and their livelihoods are in serious jeopardy right now.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of this disaster, there will be major fallout in our industry and many restaurants will not make it. The most established restaurants have the best chance of recovering. They have loyal customers, low or no debt and family members who can open them up again.

Our future depends on how quickly we get reopened and how much assistance

we get from the government, lending institutions, landlords and vendors to re-establish our businesses.

In various forms, restaurants and bars have been a part of society from the beginning of civilization and have survived plagues, wars, natural disasters and other challenges time and time again. We will survive this. The most critical question right now is how long it will take for customers to return to our establishments without the necessity of social distancing.

Mr. Todaro operates family restaurants in New Orleans and Lafayette and owned restaurants and wine shops in Baton Rouge.



PHOTO BY COLLIN RICHIE

RECREATION

Jennifer Peters

VARSITY SPORTS

26

WHILE I WAS WARMING UP my curbside-pickup meal from a local Perkins Road restaurant, I thought to myself that this might be as good a time to pray as any.

My prayer time meant putting some spiritual(ish) music on my iPhone. And as “Jesus Was Taking the Wheel” I looked out of my kitchen window. I saw my nextdoor neighbors teaching their twin 4-year-olds how to ride bikes. Pulled by that sight, I walked out to my front steps with a glass of wine. My neighbors across the street were chalking all of our sidewalks with “Smile” and “Think Happy.”

People were running, walking, biking, visiting everywhere I looked.

“Did you know this many people ran?” asked a friend who joined me on my front steps.

“I don’t think this many people knew they ran,” I replied.

Baton Rouge has always been a really active city. You can see that by looking at the Baton Rouge Lakes on any given weekend. Now, many more walkers and runners are out there.

Will this continue in the months when the virus’ shelter-in-place ends? There certainly is hope that it will.

Hope that people have begun to realize that 20 minutes of fresh air and exercise can make real changes in attitude and outlook. Hope that they have enjoyed the walks and the opportunity to talk to their family or friends. Hope that their kids have loved the family bike rides more than any of them had imagined.

We all loved having everyone in our neighborhoods during the pandemic, but why should we stop there? When the recovery begins, let’s not forget the walking trails, bike paths and recreational opportunities; new outdoor enthusiasts should embrace them forever.

Because, now they understand it.

Ms. Peters owns Varsity Sports shops in Louisiana that cater to the running market. She has been instrumental in building the running community in Baton Rouge.

TWO-WHEELED TRAFFIC

Government Street is among the most dangerous in the parish. But it wasn’t in Pandemic April, when cyclists were pedaling down that road acting as if construction of the bike lanes on the street was already completed.

“There are people biking everywhere because there are no cars on the roads,” said Dustin LaFont, founder of Front Yard Bikes, a nonprofit that teaches children how to repair bikes and lets them earn one of their own by doing repairs.

He watched the Twilight Zone moment from his nonprofit bike shop on Government, near Baton Rouge High School.

FYB was in a business boom as unlikely as a viral pandemic descending on our

planet. In early April, LaFont’s shop had sold dozens of bikes and repaired many more for people who wanted to ride once again.

“Some people couldn’t pay us; some people couldn’t pay us enough,” he said, describing the needs of some balanced by the generosity of others.

East Baton Rouge Parish has a bike and pedestrian master plan that is to be released soon. LaFont believes implementing that plan—in a hurry—can help the parish hold on to the new cyclists. For Baton Rouge, more people on bikes means less people in vehicles.

“It’s interesting to see this shift in mobility. There will be a lot of people who have a newfound love for biking after the pandemic,” said LaFont.

—MV



LIBRARIES

Spencer Watts

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY

LIBRARIES ARE DESIGNED AS social, civic spaces for learning, engagement and discovery. However, the library has also focused on finding or developing digital tools that supplement our physical resources, services and programs.

During this time of quarantine and isolation, people are turning to the Digital Library, which provides more than 100 platforms for online learning, workforce and skills development, leisure and recreation, and, of course, e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and streaming media for all ages and interests.

COVID-19 has caused us to accelerate and intensify existing trends, looking for new ways to provide remote programming and other services.

To build on our current digital programming of live-streaming Career Center workshops and Bedtime Stories on Facebook, we are re-examining digital programming opportunities and investigating Zoom, Google Classrooms, Facebook Live, podcasts, meetings online and virtual book clubs, examining their potential to integrate with our existing platforms and services.

Just as with the parallel use of print to e-books, we think that these new

virtual programs will complement, but not replace, traditional services and programs in the Library. The Library is a vital community gateway to information, learning experiences and a platform for creativity. We anticipate a dynamic of continually evolving methods of access and engagement.

The digital library is at <https://www.ebrpl.com/digital.html>.

Mr. Watts is director of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library, which is regarded as among the best in the United States.



EMBRACING E-BOOKS

February 2020 0

March 2020 **52,763**

Visits to Tumblebooks, a curated database of children's e-books, at EBR Library

FLEXTIME

Courtland Chaney

INDUSTRIAL-ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

WORK FLEXIBILITY, WHILE taking many forms, has been a topic of discussion for years. It began when employees could select their start and ending times, as long as the employer could cover business needs and serve customers. Back then, flextime was considered a benefit. The coronavirus has compelled us to look at flexible working hours as a requirement for survival.

Most businesses are hunkering down as they cope with the health crisis and attempt to weather the economic storm. Businesses that were already using telecommuting a little have expanded its use and adapted to the pandemic. Companies and employees who were reticent to embrace remote working arrangements have had no choice but to try.

Workers who overcome current challenges by using workplace options will likely discover their own untapped potential. Employers and employees who were reluctant to embrace some technologies will become increasingly adept and comfortable using them.

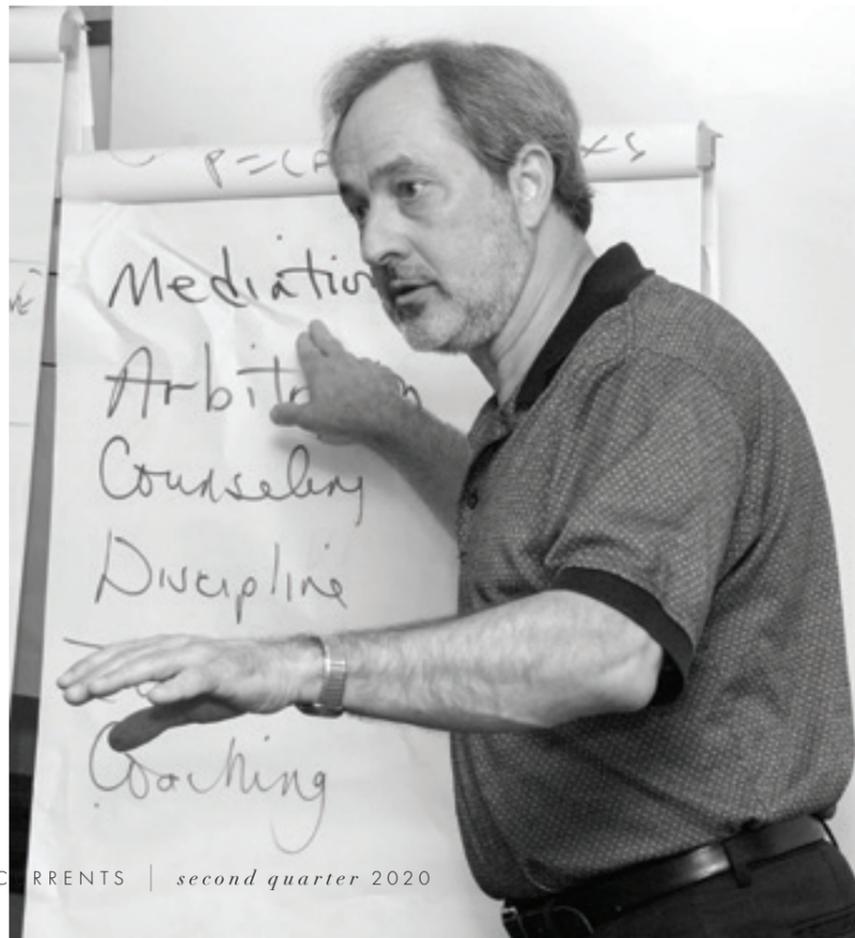
The future may track the dynamics of World War II, when women who did not work outside of their homes went into the workforce. After the war was over, they were reluctant to cease their employment. The world of work changed forever. After we experience

the dynamics of telecommuting, telehealth, Zoom and Skype meetings, online classes and more, we may never want to return to business as usual.

Many in Louisiana talk about life in terms of before Katrina and after

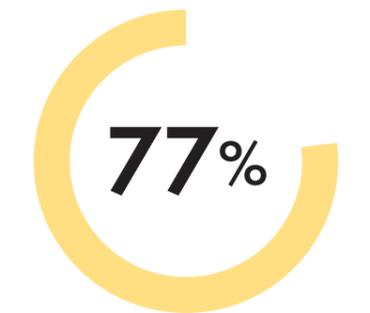
Katrina. Maybe we will talk about life before and after COVID-19.

Mr. Chaney is owner of Human Resource Management Associates Inc. He also taught at Louisiana State University.



WHAT FLEXTIME MIGHT DO

Reduce office work spaces, add more life to neighborhoods during the work day as people work from home, increase demand for coffeehouses and restaurants as meeting and work places away from the office.



Millennials who say that flexible work hours would make the workplace more productive for people their age.

Source: Bentley University

ZOOM VIDEO CHATS

December 2019

2 million

March 2020

200 million

CITIES



Camille Manning-Broome CENTER FOR PLANNING EXCELLENCE

PUBLIC HEALTH, CLIMATE CHANGE and equity are the driving challenges of our era. They're all connected, and community planning is an essential tool for addressing all three.

We have to shift away from business-as-usual when it comes to developing cities and neighborhoods. Smarter land use and smaller footprints help mitigate climate change, promote equitable access to housing and jobs and—as we are learning now—help preserve the natural environment and habitats that are needed to limit the spread of new infections from animals to humans.

Land use as a tool for building resilience isn't just about curbing sprawl—we also need to think differently about community design within the footprint.

Our globalized economy creates many efficiencies, but it also creates huge liabilities, such as facilitating rapid spread of infectious disease.



PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

If our cities were made up of a conglomeration of 20-minute neighborhoods—places where residents can get everything they need daily via a walk or bike ride that takes 20 minutes or less—containment during a pandemic would be much easier and economic losses far less devastating. Sheltering in place neighborhood-by-neighborhood would be possible because residents wouldn't have to travel long distances to get what they need. Places that weren't affected could be protected and their economies could continue to function, reducing losses overall and enabling those places that do have to shut down to bounce back more quickly.

It's all connected: walkable, bikeable 20-minute neighborhoods reduce emissions and mitigate climate change; they promote healthier lifestyles and healthier, localized economies; and they cultivate social cohesion and equitable access to social capital and opportunity.

By designing our cities and towns around interstates and big box stores, and separating neighborhoods from jobs, commerce and cultural centers, we've lost sight of what's important to the human experience: health, safety and community.

I hope that we are able to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic how the status quo is failing us and will continue to fail us until we choose to create places for people differently.

Ms. Manning-Broome is president and CEO of Baton Rouge-based Center for Planning Excellence, which provides community planning to cities, parishes, organizations and the state of Louisiana. More at cpex.org.

BR 20-MINUTE NEIGHBORHOODS

- Mid City
- Downtown
- Perkins Rowe

All three of Baton Rouge's 20-minute neighborhoods have retailers and services within 20 minutes of homes, but infrastructure for bikes and pedestrians is scant or not safe, or both.

TELEMEDICINE



THE DOCTOR IS IN

Telemedicine is surging after the pandemic, possibly an entry point for more innovation in health care. Ochsner is an example. Enrollment in its telemedicine platform jumped 852% in Baton Rouge after the pandemic began. Video visits soared 933% to about 3,000 daily. "As society evolves into this new normal, many patients will realize that the convenience of video visits trumps fighting traffic and sitting in a waiting room," said Dr. Ralph Dauterive, vice president of medical affairs for Ochsner Baton Rouge. "Video visits were on a trajectory to become more commonplace, but now, COVID-19 is responsible for speeding up that timeline. We expect all our platforms to see further increases in the short term and sustain some of those gains in the long term."

Ochsner is among members of the Baton Rouge Health District. Other members, including Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Baton Rouge General and Baton Rouge Clinic, also report big jumps in online visits.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation created the Health District to implement a master plan for better mobility and economic development and for creating a sense of place in the Bluebonnet-Essen-Perkins corridor.

—MV



PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

EDUCATION

Chris Meyer NEW SCHOOLS FOR BATON ROUGE

IN CONSIDERING THE FUTURE of K-12 education, I predict the coronavirus will permanently force a shift in thinking from viewing school as a place, to seeing education as a service. It will force us to confront access barriers previously contributing to achievement gaps that, during this crisis, will undoubtedly challenge the learning experiences of our most vulnerable students.

This moment provides us with an

opportunity to evaluate our structures and systems and lean into change to ensure educators are addressing the needs of all students and families. We will have the opportunity to shift K-12 education from a system of allegiance, compliance and inputs to one of learning as the constant and time as the variable.

I am optimistic the pandemic will drive innovation in delivery of education and give those who embrace opportu-

nity a chance to offer more successful outcomes, both for students and educators.

Mr. Meyer is president and CEO of New Schools for Baton Rouge. It has recruited top nonprofit schools to Baton Rouge and held them accountable for student performance. Read more about NSBR in the Spark section of this issue.



Alexandra “Sasha” Thackaberry, PhD.

VICE PRESIDENT OF LSU ONLINE & CONTINUING EDUCATION

We asked for her take on potential lasting impacts of the emergency switch to online learning at LSU and universities across the country amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Currents: Do you expect the virus outbreak will speed a shift to online learning at LSU?

Sasha Thackaberry: It’s a little early to tell. This transition to remote teaching and learning is a temporary and unexpected change to ensure progress for traditional LSU students. Yet we have seen significant growth of online enrollment in the past 12 to 18 months, and we expect that to continue as we launch new programs.

What is the extent of online education at LSU?

We have online offerings from single courses to MicroCreds in technology fields, project management and leadership.

We offer more than 65 credentials fully online, including undergraduate degrees through LSU A&M in Baton Rouge as well as through LSU Alexandria and LSU Eunice. We also have new online graduate degrees offered by LSU A&M and LSU Shreveport.

Our team is also working closely with faculty across the LSU campuses to ensure our programs best prepare

students for high-demand job fields, including health care, technology and analytics.

Was there a plan to expand online learning prior to the coronavirus pandemic—and can you tell us about it?

Expanding online options for all students, particularly non-traditional students, has been a strategic initiative of the university for two years.

Our goal is to have as many online students as face-to-face students here in Baton Rouge. We are building flexible, stackable learning opportunities for students. They can come for a short course or a single training and continue that journey toward their degree. We also offer innovative options for individuals looking to change careers or advance in their current career by enabling them to gain credit for prior industry certifications or military training.

How might the online expansion plan change in light of the current situation?

Certain shifts will persist in our new normal. Many folks in service industries will want to consider new fields and may for the first time have the opportunity to do so. We anticipate additional interest in our short-form training online, like our MicroCreds in cloud computing and other technology and project management skill sets.

If anything, we may see an acceleration in the execution of this strategy, as having a taste of online learning may prompt more interest from faculty and students. But it’s important to remember that our temporary transition to remote teaching and learning is different from having an intentional online learning experience that is designed and planned in advance and selected by students and faculty.

How likely is it—if at all—that online learning could become the preferred option for college?

Physical campuses and in-person classes aren’t going anywhere. For students ages 18 to 22, college will always have a coming-of-age component.

For students who are older and have jobs and families, however, in-person college or training often just doesn’t fit into their lives. Universities and colleges around the nation have embraced online programs as a way to serve these students.

Are you seeing people from other parts of the U.S. become LSU online students?

We see folks from across the nation who want to take advantage of a high-quality LSU education from afar. Many of our students also started here in Louisiana and their lives have since taken them across the country.

What about access and fairness? Remote learning seems to open up access to education in one sense, yet there is also the reality that many students do not have internet access and a laptop. How do you balance these concerns?

These are legitimate concerns. There is also a critical difference between what is happening now with a quick pivot to remote learning and a designed online-learning experience. Students and faculty didn’t self-select into online education. It became a necessity halfway through the semester to ensure the continuity of learning.

We have done several things to ameliorate barriers, like providing guidance to faculty on using the lowest-tech online options possible.

Our learning platform, Moodle, is also designed responsively. Students

can access it and download materials onto their phones for offline viewing. They can interact via online discussion forums. We also have Zoom for the entire institution, which is web-conferencing technology. It has a fantastic smartphone app, so students can interact in real-time with their professors and classmates from their phones.

Would a shift of resources into online education expand access to higher education generally? In other words, would more people globally get a shot at a college education?

While again, it’s hard to say, here I would lean towards “no.” There will likely be more interest because many folks have lost their jobs and need new skills to get new jobs. Certain credentials and degrees are a great way to do that. LSU has held a strong advantage during this transition because we have been investing in infrastructure for online degrees and courses for two years. Many institutions either have a mish-mash of resources or very few resources at all.

While there will be more exposure to the concept of online education, for most institutions this shift of resources is temporary, and once in-person education is back to normal, it is likely those resources will again be redirected to on-campus students.

Can the online experience be as good as the face-to-face experience?

It can indeed be preferable to some types of people and personalities, but it can also be a poor experience if it is not done well. Face-to-face learning experiences range from the excellent to the not-so-great. The same is true for online.

What’s lacking?

One of the most often cited challenges is

the creation of community in online environments. But this is rapidly changing for several reasons.

First, as the use of instructional design becomes more common in higher education, there’s an effort to design into the learning experience student-to-student engagement that is meaningful and authentic.

Second, the technology for learning and teaching online is improving.

Third, people are used to interacting online now. As a society, we’re getting better at it. A full 20% of marriages start online, so online experiences can indeed be “engaging.”

What areas of academic study are best suited to online?

The best suited programs are business, IT, the humanities and social sciences. We have had great success with everything from engineering degrees like our award-winning construction management program to our social work program that includes clinical experiences.

What areas pose the biggest challenges?

Two areas that are hard to do online are science labs and performing arts.

There are some great options for virtual science labs, but we were not in a position to test and implement these in short order for the recent transition to remote teaching. That is a possibility in the future, however.

I have a bachelor’s degree in fine arts in dance performance. There are intangibles that you cannot get online in dance. While you could teach online dance history or maybe choreography, there are things like spatial awareness and partnering that you simply cannot do from a distance.

—Sara Bongiorno

PANDEMIC IN PHOTOS

PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER



Jenn Ocken and Aimee Supp photographed about 65 families in front of their homes in early April. Nearly 15 Baton Rouge photographers participated in Ocken's Front Porch Project, which provided free photos and asked the photographed to buy gift cards in support of small local businesses.



At Baton Rouge General in Mid City, lines formed for drive-thru coronavirus testing. The Baton Rouge Area Foundation granted money from our Emergency Relief Fund to help BRG purchase a coronavirus testing machine. Other grantees included Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center for iPads to let health care workers communicate with patients from a distance and BREADA to deliver produce to SNAP customers. The Fund has raised about \$200,000 for relief.

Grocery stores were among the quickest to adapt social distancing, wiping down carts after each use, installing directional signs for one-way aisles, pasting stickers on floors to keep customers 6 feet apart at the cash register. At Trader Joe's on Perkins Road, seen here, the store limited the number of customers allowed inside.



Gotcha hustled to shift its bikes from other locations, such as on LSU's campus, to recreation areas, including the lakes. The bikeshare system offered instructions to wipe down bikes before riding. Bikeshare started as a project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.



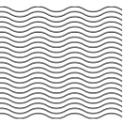
Entergy established the Fueling the Fight Fund at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, with contributions from the company, Humana, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Louisiana Foundation, Exxon Mobil Baton Rouge and LMOGA Foundation. Jones Walker, Rampart Resources, Baton Rouge Coca-Cola United and the NFL contributed to the fund. Donations topped \$350,000 in late April. The fund paid a group of 60 restaurants, including Solera, pictured here, to cook and deliver 500 meals per day to health care workers, including Baton Rouge General in Mid City (shown), Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, Ochsner and Woman's Hospital. Big benefit: restaurants kept workers employed. In late April, the fund had enough money to serve meals through the end of June.



Melissa Arnold, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge CFO, collected hospital gowns sewn by Baton Rouge area volunteers and artists. Arnold, Arts Council Director of Community Engagement Chancelier Skidmore and Director of Grants Management and Special Projects Monica Pearce collected and delivered more than 500 gowns to hospitals and clinics in April. The organization also set up a relief fund to award \$300 grants to artists, arts administrators and art-related technical workers whose creative practices and incomes were being adversely impacted by the pandemic.



Signs of encouragement were planted around City Park and University/City Park lakes, posted by someone who apparently didn't want credit. One sign said, "Alexa. Skip to May;" another "When Nothing Goes right, Go left." Thank you, Mystery Sign Person.



Business with a *HIGHER PURPOSE*

Lonnie Bickford makes money to do good around the world

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

Lonnie Bickford drills wells, builds orphanages and repairs schools in some of the poorest places on Earth.

He built a basketball court and emergency shelter at a school in The Philippines and set up a sewing center that provides job training at a desert settlement in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Baker native's hands-on humanitarian efforts are shaped by his Christian faith. Yearly visits to countries like Mozambique and Peru have given him an understanding of what the world's worst poverty looks like. Bickford has watched mothers with babies on their hips fill 5-gallon buckets with water and balance them on their heads to begin miles-long treks across the desert of Mozambique.

Purchasing wheelchairs for disabled people in impoverished nations is a focus for Bickford because he has seen their few, desperate options for getting around. Someone can carry them, push them in a wheelbarrow or they can affix wheels to a board and propel themselves along the ground with their knuckles, he explained.

"For \$50, you can buy someone a wheelchair and change their life," said Bickford, who studied business at LSU.

His charitable endeavors touch close to home, too. He is working with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to set up a donor-advised fund—his second Foundation fund—to help Louisiana children with autism, women battling breast cancer and disabled veterans.

Some projects are part local, part international.

A decade ago, a Baton Rouge friend set up a nonprofit called Business Without Borders to connect the resources of local business people with water projects and other needs in Africa and elsewhere. The friend, Kevin Sharp, has since moved to Texas, but he and Bickford continue to tackle humanitarian projects through Business Without Borders, mostly through their own donations of time and money.

An early project was the makeover and expansion of a house near Webb Park that was sold to raise money for relief efforts in post-quake Haiti. Bickford traveled to Haiti to ensure the money was used to optimal effect.

He's been working on humanitarian projects around the world ever since.

Bickford is in the self-storage business. He owns multiple Appletree



Lonnie and Jacci Bickford

Storage locations in Baton Rouge. He also founded StorageAuctions.com, an online self-storage auction site that operates out of the Louisiana Tech Park on Florida Boulevard.

Both enterprises provide essential funding to Bickford's two funds at the Foundation.

ary who worked in 10 countries over 15 years. The couple came upon each other in Eswatini, then called Swaziland, where Jacci had lived and worked for several years.

They quickly discovered a shared tie to South Louisiana. Bickford knew the wife of a missionary running a relief

diesel at a time to keep the generator running.

Bickford asked how they kept patients on life-support alive when the power failed. In such cases, he learned, a nurse remained by the patient's bed and squeezed an oxygen pump by hand.

Bickford acquired a powerful Indian-made pump for Lady Willingdon. "That was very special," he said.

The toughest experience was what Bickford witnessed in the desert near Matola, Mozambique. Poor families had been pushed out of the city into a makeshift camp to make way for a new soccer stadium, Bickford said.

Houses were mostly cane sticks and string. Some had tin roofs. Cars routinely bogged down in the sand. "Mozambique hit me hard," Bickford said. "It was just so sad."

Bickford worked with a Brazilian missionary at the camp to purchase sewing machines for a camp program to teach women to sew shirts and other garments to earn money for their families. The sewing program continues today. Bickford is working on a micro-loan-style mechanism to allow the women to buy their own sewing machines over time.

Years of work around the world has not diminished Jacci Bickford's love of travel. In recent weeks, she was preparing for a pleasure-and-study trip to Israel, a place she has visited many times.

Lonnie Bickford mostly travels out of necessity rather than pleasure, although he is an avid hunter who has worked safaris into his trips to Africa and elsewhere.

The couple's faith and humor are undiminished despite the hard things they have seen.

"We both love mountains and lakes," Jacci Bickford noted.

"Which is why we live in a swamp," her husband added. ■

THE REASON WE STARTED STORAGEAUCTIONS.COM WAS TO CREATE ANOTHER INCOME STREAM THAT WE COULD PUT TOWARD ANOTHER CHARITABLE FUND."

—Lonnie Bickford

A real estate donation was used to create his original fund, Storehouse28, which focuses on medical and water projects in Asia, Africa and South America.

The online auction business is fundamental to the new, second fund that will support cancer treatment, autism services, homes for injured veterans and other efforts. "The reason we started StorageAuctions.com was to create another income stream that we could put toward another charitable fund," Bickford said.

StorageAuctions.com has grown into the nation's No. 2 provider of online auctions and made Bickford a popular speaker in the U.S. self-storage industry.

He will use that clout to encourage storage industry colleagues to join him in supporting charitable endeavors by dedicating a portion of their auction profits to the new fund.

Fortuitous and surprising connections supply additional meaning to Bickford's personal, professional and humanitarian endeavors. Consider how he met his wife, Jacci, a career mission-

operation in an African country from his days at Baker High School—a woman who was already a close friend of Jacci's.

Bickford's original fund at the Foundation, Storehouse 28, likewise has an unexpected tie to both his Baker youth and remote parts of Asia. About a year ago, the fund sponsored a seven-day surgical camp in the disputed territory of India's Leh Valley.

After crossing harrowing terrain in a military-style convoy, the surgical team set up tents and worked from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. for a week to complete about 950 surgeries.

The Louisiana connection? A childhood friend of Bickford's who grew up in Ethel is a missionary doctor at Lady Willingdon Hospital in Lahore, Pakistan, where the camp's surgical team was based.

The remote hospital has special meaning for Bickford. During a visit years ago, he was taken aback to learn that its sole power source was a small diesel generator along the lines of what is available at Lowe's.

The hospital bought a few gallons of

Your finances and philanthropy, SIMPLIFIED.

Under the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's new program, you can open a charitable account with us **while keeping your own financial advisor**. Your advisor manages all your funds, and you can make grants to nonprofits through the Foundation.

Find out how the Foundation has simplified giving to the causes you care about. Please contact Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 or ehutchison@braf.org for more information.

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

Three O'Clock Project employee David Ventress stacks meals for families in need at Woodlawn Elementary School.

Feed the children well

Three O'Clock minds the gap, serving tens of thousands daily

BY OLIVIA MCCLURE | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

For the past three years, Emily Chatelain and her nonprofit have made sure at-risk kids in South Louisiana get the food they need whenever they're not in school.

During the academic year, the Three O'Clock Project provides snacks and suppers to the youngsters who participate in any of about 50 enrichment programs after the final bell of the day rings—hence the organization's name. In summers, the Baton Rouge-based project serves breakfasts and lunches, taking on a role fulfilled by school cafeterias most months of the year.

When concerns about the novel coronavirus forced schools to close their doors in March, summer, in many ways, came early. So did the food security troubles it brings for countless Louisiana residents.

"I would freak out as a parent if normally my kid eats lunch every

day and I don't have it in my budget," Chatelain said. That's a struggle many families face each summer anyway. The coronavirus pandemic has extended the time that they will have to get by without free and reduced-cost school meal programs. Worsening the financial strain is the fact that many people have lost their jobs due to coronavirus-related business closures.

Chatelain knew she had to shift the Three O'Clock Project into summer gear early. She enlisted the help of local restaurants and quickly came up with a plan to cook and distribute food on a massive scale — one that continues to grow as more school district leaders and others look for ways to get food into the hands of kids under 18 who may not otherwise have it while coronavirus precautions keep them at home.

In Jefferson Parish, the nonprofit is working with the food providers that usually prepare school meals to distrib-

ute breakfasts and lunches at schools via a drive-up, grab-and-go system. Jefferson Parish and Baton Rouge-area families can pick up meals at stops along distribution routes that snake through several neighborhoods. And the organization is operating feeding sites in several parishes. Locations and times are announced on the Three O'Clock

FOUNDATION FACT:

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is providing resources—grants and staff support—to help Three O'Clock Project continue serving meals to children across Louisiana. The organization was serving more than 50,000 meals daily in parishes across South Louisiana, including East Baton Rouge with BREC as a partner.



“I DECIDED WE CAN DO BETTER. I GOOGLED ‘HOW TO START A NONPROFIT’—SERIOUSLY—AND JUST DID IT.”

—Emily Chatelain, Three O’Clock Project



Project’s website and social media channels.

While the project is still making its usual meals that are meant to be eaten right away, it’s also ramping up production of frozen meals that can easily be packaged up and keep school-age kids fed for a while. That’s especially important in rural parishes, an increasing number of which have been reaching out to Chatelain for help. By late April, Three O’Clock was serving more than 50,000 meals daily across South Louisiana.

“We can make five days of frozen meals, put it in a pack and hand it to someone once a week,” Chatelain said. It makes things more convenient for parents and other caregivers who have limited transportation and time.

She is leasing a kitchen at Celtic Media Centre in Baton Rouge, where about 350 restaurant employees are being paid by the Three O’Clock Project — which receives federal funding as an afterschool and summer meal provider — to make a large portion of the meals.

“We were kind of handed this workforce of laid-off service workers who were looking for jobs,” she said.

The Baton Rouge food industry is helping in other ways, too. Food truck owners are using the vehicles to shuttle meals to recipients, for example. Several restaurants are using their own kitchens and workers to assemble meals that Three O’Clock Project staffers can then pick up and distribute on meal routes.

Leading the consortium of restaurants providing these meals is Stephen Hightower, managing partner with City Group Hospitality, which includes the City Pork, Rouj Creole and City Slice eateries.

The restaurants prepared 5,100 meals in their first week working with the Three O’Clock Project, Hightower said, and he expected that number to continue to increase. Through a separate initiative supported by Entergy, some of the same restaurants also are

making meals to be delivered to health care professionals at local hospitals.

It’s important for restaurants to be part of the community’s response to the pandemic, Hightower said. Providing quality meals to those who need them is a meaningful contribution in a time of many unknowns.

He said it also has proved a “lifeline” for the local restaurant industry, which is struggling amid coronavirus-related restrictions that have resulted in decreased sales.

“It’s allowed us to keep people employed,” he said. In some cases, restaurants participating in the initiatives have even brought additional employees on board to keep up with demand.

There are intangible benefits, too. “We all get the joy of being able to provide these meals,” Hightower said.

For Chatelain, stepping in to serve meals during coronavirus closures has brought a welcome boost in awareness for her organization.

Before the virus took hold in Louisiana, her attention had been devoted to expansion plans for the Three O’Clock Project. She launched the nonprofit after seeing the need for better child nutrition in her work as a consultant for about 300 school food programs across the U.S.

Students enrolled in afterschool programs often come from low-income households, she said.

“A lot of these kids either don’t have a meal to go home to, or it’s something that’s not healthy or nutritious,” she said. “They don’t eat until they come to school again the next day.”

Some nonprofits running afterschool tutoring and mentoring programs provide snacks — but because they tend to operate on tight budgets, Chatelain said, they have to choose inexpensive, unhealthy items.

“I decided we can do better,” Chatelain said. “I Googled ‘how to start a nonprofit’ — seriously — and just did it.”



Three O’Clock Project employee Reva Weeks hands out meals to families in need at Woodlawn Elementary School.

In 2019, the Three O’Clock Project served 300,000 meals through partnerships with about 50 nonprofits in South Louisiana. Not only do kids get nutritious food, she said — the project’s involvement enables afterschool programs to put the money they previously spent on snacks toward other endeavors.

She hopes to expand the project into more communities in Louisiana and, eventually, California and other states. Feeding those in need during the coronavirus crisis is helping her forge

connections that could translate to new meal distribution agreements for future school years and summer programs.

She’s also taking advantage of the opportunity to spread some cheer during a trying time. Staffers make sure they and their clients adhere to social distancing guidelines — but being out on the meal routes “gives everybody a reason to come out in the middle of the day and see some smiling faces and wave,” Chatelain said.

She said it’s a privilege to be able to offer some relief to families that are

copied with a multitude of other worries right now.

“Food is one thing,” she said, “but these families are trying to figure out school and home learning and ‘I got laid off’ or ‘I have to go to work but I’ve got kids at home.’ It’s been incredible to use our nonprofit for such a greater good. I’m so happy that I started this three years ago and we had systems and processes in place so that when this crisis happened, we could quickly move.” ■



Looking ABOVE

St. Agnes Catholic Church in Beauregard Town is in need to save the needy

BY JEFFREY ROEDEL | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

It's a blinding but chilly February morning at St. Agnes Catholic Church, the yellow-bricked home of staunchly traditional worship saddling the eastern edge of Beauregard Town for more than a century. It'll be a lot colder tonight, which means a full house inside the second-floor shelter where a devout Mother Teresa-established order of nuns cares for women and children in need.

Their small soup kitchen is a hive of activity already, with a clutch of people in frayed coats and well-worn shoes leaning over hot meals and communing with the soft-spoken sisters serving plates and scrubbing large steel pots. Sometimes they feed almost 100 people a day.

Established at St. Agnes by Mother Teresa on a visit to Baton Rouge in 1985,

the Missionaries of Charity nuns each have two saris—one to wear and another to hang dry. They sleep on the floor. Their dedication is unwavering—the kitchen is open five days a week—and as their guests are quietly fed, the smile lines on their faces trace nothing of sacrifice, but instead a joyful geography.

Parishioners Jeff Dunbar and Allen Kliebert greet the sisters as they move through the kitchen and then past walls of orange lockers inside the former schoolhouse to another cafeteria, this one vacant for now, and above the fleur-de-lis patterned wall separating the large dining hall from the kitchen, adorned with a modestly framed copy of *The Last Supper*.

Kliebert is an engineer, an Exxon retiree and former Air Force operative who trained during the Cold War

to launch missiles in counter attacks against the Soviets. He now captains 13 volunteers in the running of the St. Agnes food pantry, a monthly giveaway of canned, boxed and packaged foods, some 7,000 pounds of it, that sustains about 40 neighborhood families.

Some walk up alone, pushing shopping carts, he says. Others come with small children in their arms and their hands humbly out. “It’s amazing how in need the people in this area are,” Kliebert says. “You’d be so surprised when you see the numbers of people who show up. They’re coming from a vulnerable place.”

Kliebert and his wife appreciate the classic, reverent masses held at St. Agnes. It’s what has kept them involved in the church for decades, but when he retired, he felt motivated to spend his time giving back.

That giving is now in jeopardy, Kliebert explains with an engineer’s precision. Walking past the small piano used for the sisters’ annual community live nativity performance and through the old cafeteria, he points out not only where the stacks and stacks of food are placed in a large horseshoe, but also some troubling splotches of warped paint and tell-tale watermarks high on the ceiling above.

To honor its centennial celebration in the fall of 2018, St. Agnes launched a capital campaign called “Trust in the Lord” to raise funds for the renovation of the campus’ ancient gymnasium into offices and a modern recreational center, plus general maintenance on its other aging buildings and parking lots. Within a year, pledges totaling \$200,000 from a vast array of parishioners and community stakeholders were secured. But soon after, the church’s need turned into an emergency. Routine inspections revealed severe water damage to the flat roof of the cafeteria at St. Agnes, and suddenly the campaign shifted from remaking the gym to saving the cafete-

ria and all of the outreach efforts hosted there.

The cafeteria is home to the St. Agnes Food Pantry, and the focal point of the entire church campus. “We call it a ‘cafeteria’ because that’s what it was when this was a school, but it’s much more than that,” says Dunbar, the campaign chair and a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch. “It’s really the church’s activity center.”

Latest estimates to replace the roof over the cafeteria and the adjoining kitchen are \$195,000. Repairing and renovating the interior could cost an additional \$350,000.

Longtime parishioner Margaret Lovecraft describes the cafeteria space as the welcoming family room of the church. Mary Ginn, another donor to the campaign, calls it the “very heartbeat of the parish.”

“If we don’t have this space, I have no other place to do the pantry, and these people aren’t getting fed,” Kliebert says as he scans the room. “We need to repair this and keep it going.”

When the campaign for the gym renovations turned into a fund to save the cafeteria from complete condemnation, the parishioners had to be alerted, and the messenger was lead pastor Father Charbel Jamhoury. Already wary of spearheading such a big ask for his community after only a few years leading the church, the Lebanese pastor stepped in front of mass and delivered the dire news.

To his surprise, the questions were less “How could you?” and more “How can we help?” By the next day, the redirected campaign had another \$2,000 in donations—all from its largely middle- and working-class parishioners.

“That’s St. Agnes,” Jamhoury says. “People who have very little to give were still willing to give what they could.”

Jamhoury has only been a Baton Rouge resident for about five years. He grew up in Beirut as a devout Catholic monk in the Lebanese Maronite Order,

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“IF WE DON’T HAVE THIS SPACE, I HAVE NO OTHER PLACE TO DO THE PANTRY, AND THESE PEOPLE AREN’T GETTING FED. WE NEED TO REPAIR THIS AND KEEP IT GOING.”

—Allen Kliebert, St. Agnes parishioner



St. Agnes Catholic Church Capital Campaign leaders are, from left, Jeff Dunbar, Eric LeDuff, Fr. Charbell Jamhoury, Mary Ginn and James Rolfs.

while also becoming an accomplished artist. He spent the 1990s and 2000s painting iconography—religious artwork for worship—in France and Switzerland. In his native country, he played cello and sang in the opera and served as a professor at St. Joseph University.

“I stopped everything when I came here,” the studious Jamhoury says. “The focus is on the parish now. To be with parishioners and serve this parish is what I’m happy to be doing.”

Leaving his life of academia and the arts for a role filled with engagement, public speaking and prayer was an adjustment, but one made easier by the people he has met in St. Agnes Parish and how he was welcomed by Baton Rouge.

“This parish is rich on presence and purpose,” Jamhoury says. “There’s a beauty of unity and traditional liturgy in English and Latin, and now the focus on the poor—it all keeps us busy day and night.”

While working with Mother Teresa’s nuns of Missionaries of Charity to meet the poor’s temporal needs, Jamhoury is seeing more people move into the newly revitalized area around downtown, many of whom then seek out St. Agnes to meet their spiritual needs as well.

Jamhoury takes confessions starting at 5:30 a.m. When he peeks out of his door at 5, there’s often a line waiting.

“Teresa said ‘St. Agnes is here to do something beautiful for God,’” Dunbar says. “And we have a lot of people now

who have organized around that goal. It’s a beautiful thing.”

For Jamhoury, this capital campaign remains a monumental task—he’s hesitant to ask for funds by nature and calls the process of planning this campaign “dreaming with the Lord”—but it’s a task fully in line with his mission at the church and the character of the parish that has adopted him.

As a Lebanese monk who has been warmly welcomed in Baton Rouge, Jamhoury works daily from a place of acceptance. He no longer sees gaps, only connections.

“We are one at St. Agnes,” Jamhoury says. “And I’d say to others: Please be one with us, save us, as we work in unity to help those around us, our community.” ■

2020

JOHN W. BARTON SR.

Excellence in Nonprofit Management Awards

For more than two decades, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation has honored the best and most devoted nonprofit leaders with the John W. Barton Sr. Excellence in Nonprofit Management Awards. Three years ago, the Foundation added an award for a younger nonprofit leader—a rising star.

How do we choose the winners? People who have charitable funds at the Foundation nominate candidates. From that list, our past chairs choose winners. Winners of the nonprofit management awards receive \$10,000 apiece, while the Rising Star gets \$5,000.

Meet them in our Q&A.

Karen Stagg

CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE Barton Nonprofit Management Award

When women get out of prison, Karen Stagg meets them at the gate. She is their comfort and their way back to good lives and work. The nonprofit she manages provides a one-year program of life and job skills for the transition from prison to the world. Connections has served more than 500 women, including several hundred since Stagg became the executive director.



What is your favorite memory from childhood?
Spending the weekends at my grandparents with my cousins. We stayed with them often and loved our time playing outside and running around their farm.

girl who has a big imagination, always sees the possibilities and is forever in search of “kindred spirits.”

What is your favorite meal?
Gino’s angel hair pasta with marinara sauce and, of course, Lawrence Bread!

What does the Baton Rouge region lack that you wish it had?
Continue the development and improvement of our public transportation system such that it meets the needs of our ever-growing community and is a reliable source of transportation for all geographic areas of Baton Rouge.

Excluding Baton Rouge, what is your favorite city or place and why?
Eureka Springs, Arkansas. It is a quaint little town nestled in nature. We always enjoy a peace-filled, relaxing time and return home re-energized!

Which living person do you admire and why?
My sister. She’s just the best person I know. She loves her family, her community, has a real gift for enjoying life no matter the situation and genuinely cares about and does much to help her neighbors.

Solving which problem would provide the greatest return for our region?
More safe, affordable housing that is available to all members of our community, including those who perhaps have made some past mistakes.

What is your most treasured possession?
While I love things, I don’t have a possession that I just couldn’t do without. My treasure is my marriage and the gift of wonderful friends.

Who is your greatest hero from fiction and why?
Anne Shirley from *Anne of Green Gables*. She’s an adventurous “can-do”

If you had \$1 billion to give away, what would you spend it on to improve the region?
Support nonprofits that are already engaged in prison re-entry work but that struggle financially and also create new collaborative partners who bring innovative ideas. We would work to address the multitude of issues faced by formerly incarcerated persons re-entering our community, including systemic challenges, housing, transportation, employment, education and health care. And of course, Connections For Life would be hugely expanded and adequately funded for many years!

How will you spend the \$10,000 Barton Award?
We recently moved to the country, so I plan to install raised vegetable gardens, plant fruit trees and quite possibly invest in an ATV or golf cart!



Raymond Jetson

METROMORPHOSIS | Barton Nonprofit Management Award

Raymond Jetson's brainchild is MetroMorphosis. From idea to launch in 2012, the nonprofit he leads has been transforming communities from within. MetroMorphosis supports small businesses, develops leaders and fosters a movement to enrich the lives of African American boys and men.

What is your favorite memory from childhood?

Fishing with my father, Louis Jetson. It was our time together, and I will forever be grateful for the precious memories that remain with me today.

What is your favorite meal?

Chilean Sea Bass with creamed spinach. This is an infrequent treat at this point as my current diet is about 90% plant-based.

Excluding Baton Rouge, what is your favorite city or place and why?

New York, New York! There is an energy and rhythm to the city that invigorates and inspires me.

Solving which problem would provide the greatest return for our region?

Without question, education is the single most transformative issue facing our region. We must grasp the criticality of a quality educational system on the overall well-being of our community.

Who is your greatest hero from fiction and why?

It is almost impossible to limit this to a single response. But since it is required, my choice would be Virgil Tibbs from John Wall's novel *In the Heat of the Night*. He was perceptive, knowledgeable and motivated by a sense of justice. He was able to draw upon these and other characteristics to navigate

issues of race and culture. Finally, he was a perfectionist who had to face his own imperfections. Othello, Celie from *The Color Purple* and Cora from *The Underground Railroad* all competed for this spot.

What does the Baton Rouge region lack that you wish it had?

The capacity to have a reasoned conversation about the impact of race on our community. The issue has a historical, cultural and present affect in who we are as a region.

Which living person do you admire and why?

I admire my mom, Mary Jetson. She is the most resilient, principled and loving person I have ever known. For most of my early life I was "Daddy's Boy." One of the outcomes of my father's early and untimely death was that it has allowed me to truly see the awesome human being that is my mom.

What is your most treasured possession?

A collection of pipes my dad smoked. I can still close my eyes and smell them and be taken back to some special moments.

If you had \$1 billion to give away, what would you spend it on to improve the region?

I would spend one half of the money launching an evidenced-based, sustainable series of education interventions. I would use the other half to increase the competitive capacity of disadvantaged businesses.

How will you spend the \$10,000 Barton Award?

A new set of golf clubs, a golf vacation and needed repairs to my 1980 MGB.

Sage Roberts Foley

BATON ROUGE GREEN | Barton Rising Star Award

About four years ago, Sage Roberts Foley transitioned from board member to executive director of Baton Rouge Green. Since then, the organization has become synonymous with bringing trees, edible food and flowers to public spaces.

For instance, Baton Rouge Green has teamed up with The Walls Project to build a large-scale community garden at BREC's Howell Park. Baton Rouge Green is combining with Healthy Baton Rouge to add 4 acres of farmland to that community garden in North Baton Rouge, with a citrus orchard as the main draw. Foley has also built support for Baton Rouge Green by expanding membership and increasing participation in the Living Roadways program.

What is your favorite memory from childhood?

The night that my family, all five of us, piled into the Suburban, visited seven Christmas tree lots before choosing a tree because my father was sure he could find a "better deal." I remember playing hide and seek with my brothers in the rows of trees. Because of the forced family fun, my brothers were essentially trapped into including me in their games for once!

What is your favorite meal?

Strawberry pancakes.

Excluding Baton Rouge, what is your favorite city or place and why?

Charleston, South Carolina. The residents are incredibly proud of their city, which is consistently voted the "Best City in the U.S." It provides beautiful beaches and marshes, lovely architecture, and great cuisine and culture. I lived there for two years and loved every minute.

Solving which problem would provide the greatest return for our region?

More effective K-12 education, with added soft skills training and a tremendous increase in access to licensed social workers for students.

Who is your greatest hero from fiction and why?

Atticus Finch, for doing the right thing, even when the right thing is extremely difficult and unpopular.

What does the Baton Rouge region lack that you wish it had?

More public green space.

Which living person do you admire and why?

My uncle John Sage. After his sister's violent murder, he used his experience, faith in people and belief in redemption to create a restorative justice program centered on victim impact. Bridges To Life has graduated over 52,000 prisoners in 12 states and six countries, and a study shows that over 84% do not return to prison within three years of release.

What is your most treasured possession?

My engagement ring. The emerald cut diamond was in the ring that my father, Flip, proposed to my mother with 45 years ago, and had been selected by my grandfather, Floyd Roberts Sr. My mom, Nancy, gifted it to me when I got engaged and I designed my own setting with my husband's help.

If you had \$1 billion to give away, what would you spend it on to improve the region?

I'd purchase key, underutilized properties in central, urban locations and convert them into spectacular, ecologically-sound parks, urban forests and green spaces, with the ultimate goals of encouraging people to increase time spent outdoors, improving local economies, and spurring improved mental and physical health of citizens.

How will you spend the \$5,000 Barton Award?

To landscape and plant trees in my own yard! (The Cobbler's Children...). ■





More (New) Schools for BR

Four more to open with aid from organization

BY SARA BONGIORNI

There is no arguing the role of New Schools for Baton Rouge in the lives of local children. It supported 19 schools that enrolled more than 7,000 students in 2019-20. Four more will open in the fall to raise enrollment in NSBR-backed schools to 8,500. We asked NSBR CEO Chris Meyer about the nonprofit school accelerator's recent work and plans for 2020-21.



Currents: An aim of NSBR is expanding capacity to support 20,000 students by 2021. Are you on track to do that?

We will meet that goal. When we started in 2012, our aim was helping more than 30,000 students at failing and underperforming schools by providing them with access to high-quality school alternatives.

By fall, we will have launched more than two dozen schools run by rigorously screened successful school organizations and leaders. These schools are, on average, providing students with the equivalent of more than 100 additional learning days in math and nearly 90 additional learning days in reading compared to the schools our students would have otherwise attended, according to Stanford University's Center for Research on Educational Outcomes.

That is more than half a traditional school year of extra learning in reading and math. That should be both a cause for celebration and a call to action for schools that fail to deliver on their promises to families.

What are factors in NSBR's continuing growth?

We are expanding high-quality schools and taking action to transform or close schools that are underperforming and not in demand by families. With community and government leaders, we have created a strong ecosystem for educational progress that is attracting some of the best talent and school operators in the country.

What is important for the community to understand about NSBR in 2020?

We are one of the few cities in America experiencing educational progress

on this scale. We are partnering with some of the most in-demand school organizations nationally. We have been successful because of the tireless efforts of our team and unique partnerships and assets in our community.

Our civic and business leadership, deeply committed donor base and supportive political environment are allowing Baton Rouge to transform an inequitable and historically underperforming school system into one where families and educators have the power to attend or work at the schools they choose.

This allows schools to educate children to realize their full potential regardless of the where they grow up in Baton Rouge.

What tells you that you are succeeding?

Several factors show unequivocally that we are achieving the impact we seek.

First, families are voting with their feet to attend the open-enrollment schools we are launching. Each of our schools has a wait list, many for multiple grades and some numbering in the thousands of students. This tells us we should open more schools.

Second, our initial mission was eliminating failing schools and giving students and families access to high-performing ones. We are doing that. Today, 2,600 fewer students attend an underperforming school. That matters tremendously for families working to fulfill dreams for their children and improve our communities and economic opportunities.

Finally, and most importantly, students in our schools are achieving real, measurable learning gains that enable them to compete with students nationally and across the world.



WE ARE ONE OF THE FEW CITIES IN AMERICA EXPERIENCING EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS ON THIS SCALE."

—Chris Meyer, New Schools for Baton Rouge



NEW NONPROFIT SCHOOLS

2020 OPENING

KIPP at Capitol High School (9-12): 580 students. Also adding two K-8 schools later. In total, enrollment for all schools at 2,400 students.

CSAL Primary School (K-5): Opening K-2 with 180 students in fall, expanding to 420 students.

2021 AND BEYOND

Future schools scheduled to open include **BASIS #2** (800 students), **Helix Aviation Academy** (700 students), **Helix Legal Academy, Mentorship High** (300 students in sixth grade for a middle school), **IDEA #3** (K-12, 1,400 students), **Collegiate Academies #2** (high school with 500 students); **Great Hearts Academy** (K-12, 1,400 students) and **IDEA #4:** K-12 (1,400 students)

Note: Some schools add a grade each year and grow over time.

FOUNDATION FACT:

The Foundation started New Schools for Baton Rouge, with operating funding from some of our donors. The organization recruits and supports top nonprofit schools and holds them accountable. It's an independent organization.

What work remains to be done?

We still have more than three dozen schools in Baton Rouge that are not delivering results for students. We need to change that. There are thousands of families on wait lists for the chance to attend a new school. About 15,000 students are still enrolled in D- or F-rated schools.

You are a couple of years into use of the Portfolio model with its focus on autonomy and accountability paired with investment in successful schools and closure or overhaul of failing ones. How does the Portfolio approach shape your operations?

We practice what we preach. While the vast majority of the schools we have opened are producing great results for students, a few did not live up to our standards or community expectations.

We worked with the nonprofit boards and leaders of these schools to transition these families to better school options.

We have also realized stronger partnerships with the local school district, which has adopted transparent policies to govern nonprofit public charter schools. These are wins that align with our approach to push resources and decision-making closer to educators and the students they serve.

Are there aspects of the Portfolio model that are distinct to Baton Rouge?

We are unique in the caliber of public charter schools we have attracted to Baton Rouge. Pound-for-pound, national experts deem our city as

having one of the strongest charter sectors in the country.

Are you seeing interest in the Portfolio model among traditional public schools in Baton Rouge?

We see an emphasis in pushing decision-making and resources to the school level, particularly in the district's innovation network. This enhanced autonomy needs to be coupled with accountability for results. Autonomy should be given to schools that demonstrate effectiveness, and then we should help those schools grow to serve more families. We know there are high-performing schools in the district that are in high demand. We should start by granting these schools greater autonomy and allowing them to expand to serve more students and/or oversee additional schools.

Looking toward the next five years or so, what do you think the Baton Rouge schools landscape will look like? What do you expect your role in that landscape to be?

I am optimistic about the future of K-12 education in Baton Rouge. We are turning a corner where students will have enormous choice in what school to attend. Educators will have more agency, and wages will rise as teachers are compensated for skills and effectiveness instead of time. There will be challenges, to be sure, and our organization will continue to look for system-level solutions to ensure all students in Baton Rouge have the chance to attend a great school. ■



The nation is watching Baton Rouge, where New Schools is recruiting and supporting the best charter schools. Philanthropists nationwide are investing in New Schools. They believe successes here could offer lessons for transforming schools across the nation.

Donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation were with New Schools from the beginning. They provided startup funding to give schoolchildren the opportunities they deserve.

If you want to pursue a cause or two you care about, you can do so by opening a donor advised fund at the Foundation. Our Elizabeth Hutchison at (225) 387-6126 and ehutchison@brf.org is available to guide you.

Baton Rouge
Area Foundation



LSU

LSU BREAKTHROUGHS

Alyssa Johnson and Adam Bohnert, of the LSU Department of Biological Sciences, are the first to identify tubular lysosomes that preserve cells from damage. “From a very basic level, we’re now redefining the landscape of what it means to be a cell,” Bohnert said in an LSU release. “Tubular lysosomes could hint at ways to slow down the aging process, or even reverse it. This sounds like science fiction, but it could be possible.”

LSU Chemistry Professor Emeritus George Stanley was on an LSU team that discovered a catalyst that could lower the cost of manufacturing. Catalysts are used to transform one chemical substance into another. “Coming up with a catalyst that is very energy efficient, very green, that can actually be used on the large-scale, industrial side of things is the dream of every chemist,” said Stanley.

LSU Chemical Engineering Assistant Professor Chris Arges has received a \$500,000, two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to optimize materials manufacturing for fuel cells—environmentally friendly power sources, as they only emit water.

▶ CRISPR MIRACLE?

Scientists have used a biological tool to edit a gene inside a human body, a first. Doctors dripped a few drops of a CRISPR-edited mixture beneath the retina of a man who suffers from an inherited disease that leads to progressive vision loss. They will know whether cells have taken up the mixture and affected eyesight loss soon. CRISPR is an easy-to-use and inexpensive tool for cutting and replacing genes.



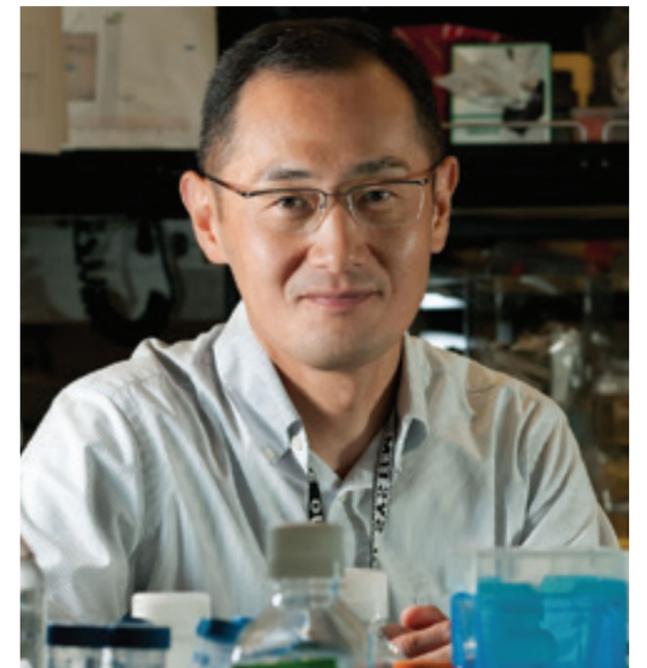
COURTESY WAGGONER & BALL ARCHITECTURE

WATER PARK

Sisters of St. Joseph donated 25 prized acres to the City of New Orleans. The city will transform the land into Mirabeau Water Garden to store 10 million gallons of water, preventing rainwater from hitting the city’s drainage system all at once and overwhelming it during storms. Such projects follow the Dutch model for living with water. The sisters had operated a convent on the land in Gentilly since 1951.

YOU CAN TURN BACK TIME

Stanford scientists have rewound the cellular clock, potentially offering breakthrough medical therapies and, perhaps one day, the reversal of aging. Other scientists have made old cells young again, but to catastrophic ends, including cancer. Stanford biologists used small and appropriate doses of chemicals to target Yamanaka Factors, which are proteins that can rejuvenate adult cells. Cells became young but didn’t lose their functions, unlike in previous experiments by other scientists. The factors were first discovered by Shinya Yamanaka (pictured), who won the Nobel prize for identifying them.



COURTESY GLADSTONE INSTITUTES

NUMBER >

80%



Percentage of Americans who said they have a **“better appreciation” of technology in their personal life** in April, up from 60% in a March survey.

SOURCE: NATIONAL RESEARCH GROUP

WORLD NEEDS A HUG

Childhood games are reassuring. Adults are playing games with stir-crazy kids to comfort them, and themselves. Some Baton Rouge neighborhoods are playing, at a safe distance, a mash-up of Where's Waldo and hide-and-seek using teddy bears. Neighbors pose bears in windows, and tots toddle up and down sidewalks to find them. Capital Heights Avenue is where we spotted this pair.

PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



It came while the world was busy and brought it all to a sudden standstill.

But not the people working for nonprofits; they got even busier. Amid the uncertainties of the pandemic, they adapted fast. Just like they did after Katrina and Rita. After Andrew, Gustav and the Great Floods of 2016. When the world stumbled and slowed, they stepped up.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation salutes and thanks our nonprofits for a job well done, last week and next week and for years to come.

We are proud to be your partners.

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TOMORROW IS BUILT BY WHAT WE DO TODAY

Lemoine is proud to partner with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation in a shared vision to improve the community where we live and work. Together, we are all constructors of our community, builders of our future.



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