

# CURRENTS

fourth quarter 2021

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

[braf.org](http://braf.org)

## *HOME* is a **LONELY PLACE**

Where do high school seniors of  
vanishing Cameron Parish go from here?







PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER



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**Nonprofits we rely on were able to feed and shelter the people of Louisiana, who showed yet again they know how to rebound after storms, ready to rebuild stronger and smarter.**

power is out, just like in New Orleans, where all the main power lines were toppled by the winds of Category 4 Hurricane Ida.

Ever since Katrina, the first phase of storm recovery has begun at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. We convene leaders of organizations from across the hardest hit regions, along with elected officials' staff, to understand where the need is greatest.

Each storm is different enough to require responders to adapt. Ida whipped up its energy very suddenly in the Gulf of Mexico, bathwater-warm and getting hotter each year due to climate change. She grew into a punishing storm so fast that evacuation was not possible for many people in the bayou parishes, New Orleans, and the Northshore—all areas that went dark for days or weeks.

With power out for more than 1 million people, the Foundation's response was slower than after other storms. Our nonprofit partners that normally shift

quickly into relief mode found themselves without power or the fuel needed to bring food and supplies to those suffering the most. In the meantime, the Foundation raised more than \$2 million for recovery, thanks to gifts from our fund donors, businesses and online contributions from around the country.

To put that money to work as fast as possible, the staff of the Foundation had to adapt. In a first-ever collaboration, BRAF launched a separate regional recovery fund with Gov. John Bel Edwards and the Bayou Community Foundation, Northshore Community Foundation and the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

Within two weeks of the storm, the Foundation began issuing grants. That was slower than anticipated, but it's as fast as conditions on the ground would allow. With the money, nonprofits we rely on were able to feed and shelter the people of Louisiana, who showed yet again they know how to rebound after

storms, ready to rebuild stronger and smarter.

With Ida came the sobering realization that we need to normalize disasters and recovery: They are here to stay and will be considered a regular part of what we do every year. We'll continue our day-to-day work, of course, serving our fund donors and nonprofits as well as running projects for the civic good—all the while ready to respond to the needs of our neighbors when disaster strikes.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Eplett Reilly,  
Chair

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*

100 NORTH STREET, SUITE 900  
BATON ROUGE LOUISIANA 70802

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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*The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation that takes advantage of opportunities to improve the quality of life in South Louisiana. We do so by providing three essential functions. One, the Foundation connects philanthropists with capable nonprofits to make sure the needs of our communities are met. For example, our donors support the Shaw Center for the Arts and education reform. Two, BRAF invests in and manages pivotal projects to improve the region. Three, we provide consulting services to nonprofits. For more information, contact Mukul Verma at [mverma@braf.org](mailto:mverma@braf.org).*

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](mailto: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.

*Baton Rouge Area Foundation*

## 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 \$600 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.

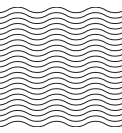
**2** We conduct civic leadership initiatives that change the direction of the Baton Rouge region and South Louisiana. Members support these projects, which solve fundamental problems. Tax-deductible memberships range from \$200 to \$25,000.

**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.



TIM MUELLER

## RESPONDING TO IDA

**ONLY ONE HURRICANE** struck Louisiana, but it was with a punishing force. Landing near Houma, Hurricane Ida hit the most populated parts of Louisiana. Winds gusting to 150 miles per hour toppled main power lines, leaving more than 1 million people in the dark in the middle of a heat wave.

At the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, we began watching for hurricanes in

June, earlier than usual because warmer Gulf of Mexico waters are extending storm season. The foundation took several steps right away.

We raised more than \$1.4 million for our main Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund, and millions more with community foundation partners across Southeast Louisiana for the Ida Response and Relief Fund.

As is customary after hurricanes, the Foundation met with nonprofits and government leaders to assess the need for relief supplies and manpower. Ida's destruction made this more difficult than usual, as communications networks were quieted by power disruption and cell phone tower damage. Our staff review of damaged communities was also slower than usual, hamstrung by

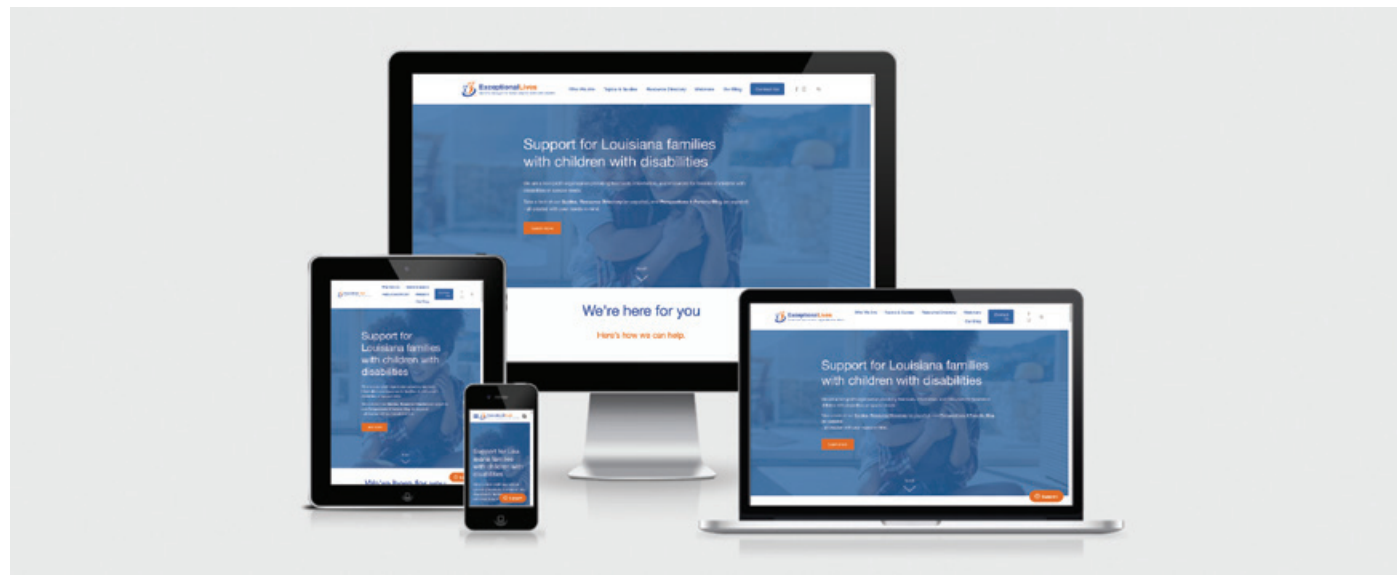
disruptions in gasoline supplies.

About two weeks after Ida, the Foundation started issuing grants to nonprofits that were working regionally, many of them providing food, shelter and other necessities to people who were without homes or power in the Houma-Thibodaux region, and communities on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

We thank people and businesses who donated to Hurricane Ida relief, as well as the many who aided people after the Category 4 storm.

**DISASTER RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUND GRANTS**

Bayou Community Foundation.....	\$15,000
BREADA - Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance.....	\$2,000
BREADA Small Farm Survival Fund .....	\$50,000
Catholic Charities of Acadiana.....	\$25,000
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Inc.....	\$50,000
Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc.....	\$2,500
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation.....	\$100,000
Nicholls State University Foundation .....	\$125,000
Northshore Community Foundation .....	\$175,000
Restore Hope Louisiana Fund.....	\$25,000
The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Houma - Thibodaux .....	\$50,000
The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge .....	\$50,000
Three O'Clock Project.....	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$719,500</b>



**LA. AUTISM RESOURCE REACHES MILESTONE**

**A WEB RESOURCE** for Louisiana parents to find services for their children with disabilities has surpassed 1 million views. “We take pride in our work offering resources and support for Louisiana families caring for children with disabilities,” said Marisa Howard-Karp of Exceptional Lives. “Thank you to the families, caregivers and providers who use our resources and tools.”

**How it works:** Exceptional Lives provides custom, easy-to-understand information to help caregivers find appropriate, nearby services for their children with developmental disabilities. [ExceptionalLives.org](http://ExceptionalLives.org)

**FOUNDATION FACT**

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation contracted with Exceptional Lives to build the website and has an ongoing project to serve children and adults on the autism spectrum.

**RECORD ENTRIES FOR GAINES BOOK AWARD**

**A RECORD NUMBER** of books have been nominated for the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence. An independent panel of judges will select the winner from 36 eligible submissions. The annual \$15,000 book award will be presented to the winner in a ceremony at the Manship Theatre in January.

The award is presented by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to an African American writer of fiction. The Foundation started the award to honor the late Mr. Gaines, a native of Oscar, Louisiana, who was among the greatest writers of his generation.



TIM MUELLER

**TRAIN PROJECT ADVANCES**

**A CANADIAN RAILROAD** has signaled a willingness to cooperate on passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Canadian Pacific has won the hand of Kansas City Southern with a \$27 billion proposed merger. If regulators approve the deal, CP will eventually own the preferred route for passenger service between Louisiana’s two largest cities.

The U.S. government requires railroads to allow passenger service on their lines, but railroads sometimes don’t play nice. That’s not the case for CP. It already has a friendly relationship with Amtrak, which has included Baton Rouge to New Orleans on its list for future service.

**What’s next:** The federal government must approve the merger, and that’s not certain because of competition worries. If approved, the combination will create the first direct railway linking Canada, the United States and Mexico.

### HAPPY DOGS AND CATS

Companion Animal Alliance continues to adopt out more dogs and cats than ever before. The organization has cut the euthanasia rate by 90% since taking over the East Baton Rouge Parish animal shelter in 2012. It's now finding families to take in 90% of homeless pets, compared to just 20% when parish government ran the shelter. CAA started as a civic project of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.



TIM MUELLER



### HEALTH CARE FOR THE FUTURE

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University, known as FranU, started building St. Francis Hall, the \$28 million, 75,000-square-foot centerpiece of its consolidated campus in the Baton Rouge Health District. Classrooms and offices will be located within the building.

Opened in 1923, FranU has grown from a school for nursing to a university that educates professionals in a broad array of high-demand fields. FranU has 1,200 students. It is affiliated with Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

### READING ON PLANK ROAD

A library branch hidden off Plank Road could shift to the main thoroughfare. The East Baton Rouge Public Library system is thinking of moving the Delmont Gardens branch to a new building on Plank at Mohican Street. Residents were enthusiastic about the potential move at a public meeting.

**What's next:** More public meetings before the Library Board of Control considers the option to relocate. The system says a modern new branch on Plank would reduce disruption of service and be less expensive to maintain.

**Bigger picture:** Open land at Plank and Mohican is owned by Build Baton Rouge, the redevelopment agency that is responsible for bringing commerce and housing back to the disinvested area. BBR's master plan has reserved the land for a civic space. Its blueprint shows a food incubator across Plank; toward downtown, BBR will construct a building with housing, its offices and civic spaces. The area will be linked to Mid City and LSU with a Bus Rapid Transit line.

### FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation led a civic project to create Build Baton Rouge and has invested in its success with grants and land donations.

## THE BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

**GRANTED \$6.3 million** in the third quarter of this year. Grants are listed below by organization. We publish all grants in our annual report. The Foundation makes grants on behalf of people who have charitable accounts with us. We also make grants from a pool of unrestricted assets. If you are interested in learning more about opening a charitable fund at the Foundation, please contact Edmund Giering at (225) 387-6126 or [egiering@braf.org](mailto:egiering@braf.org).

### GRANTS / 3RD QUARTER 2021

Academic Distinction Fund \$100  
 Acadia Parish Schools - South Rayne Elementary School \$1,000  
 Acts of Love Inc. \$2,500  
 Adaptive Sports Foundation \$100  
 Agenda for Children Inc. - New Orleans \$25,000  
 Alzheimer's Association - Dallas and Northeast Texas Chapter \$500  
 Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association Inc. \$100  
 Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area \$12,100  
 American Civil Liberties Union Foundation \$100  
 American Express \$5,000  
 American National Red Cross - Louisiana Capital Area \$11,845  
 Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$108,114  
 Barak Ballet \$5,000  
 Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination Inc. / Truce Baton Rouge Inc. \$10,000  
 Baton Rouge Christian Education Foundation Inc. - The Dunham School \$3,260  
 Baton Rouge Community College \$3,000  
 Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center Inc. \$18,478  
 Baton Rouge Gallery Inc. \$5,000  
 Baton Rouge Green Association Inc. \$1,235  
 Baton Rouge High School Foundation \$2,000  
 Baton Rouge Opera Guild \$2,117  
 Baton Rouge Youth Coalition Inc. \$75,000  
 Bayou Community Foundation \$15,000  
 Beth Shalom Synagogue \$600  
 Beyond the Badge \$714  
 Black Teacher Collaborative Incorporated \$166,667  
 Board of the University of Alabama \$1,500  
 Boy Scouts of America - Istrouma Area Council \$1,000  
 BREADA - Big River Economic & Agricultural Development Alliance \$76,500  
 Building Better Families Inc. \$2,200  
 Cambiar Education \$133,334  
 Camelback Ventures Inc. \$25,000  
 Cancer Services Inc. \$250  
 Capital Area Animal Welfare Society \$345

Capital Area CASA Association \$100  
 Capital Area Family Violence Battered Women's Program \$51,000  
 Capital Area United Way \$62,500  
 Capital Area United Way - 225 Gives \$25,000  
 Catholic Charities of Acadiana \$30,000  
 Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Inc. \$53,500  
 Catholic High School Foundation \$26,839  
 Catholic of Pointe Coupee \$1,000  
 Center for Planning Excellence Inc. \$3,750  
 Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc./McMains Children's Development Center \$1,000  
 Children's Cup \$1,200  
 Chinese Christian Church of Baton Rouge \$318  
 Christ the King Parish and Catholic Center at LSU \$13,834  
 City of Baton Rouge, Parish of East Baton Rouge \$53,343  
 City of Natchitoches \$1,000  
 City Year Inc. \$5,000  
 College Foundation of the University of Virginia \$1,500  
 Commonwealth Catholic Charities \$500  
 Companion Animal Alliance \$1,100  
 Congregation B'nai Israel of Baton Rouge \$11,000  
 Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York \$1,000  
 Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere Inc. \$500  
 Crested Butte Film Festival \$5,000  
 Cristo Rey Baton Rouge \$10,000  
 Douglas Manship Sr. Theatre Complex Holding Inc. \$31,602  
 Downstream Project \$250  
 Ducks Unlimited Inc. \$429  
 Dyslexia Association of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$685  
 East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office \$24,150  
 East Baton Rouge Office of the Public Defender \$21,250

East Baton Rouge Truancy Assessment Inc. \$51,000  
 East Feliciana Parish School Board \$290  
 East Feliciana Parish School Board - Jackson Elementary School \$1,000  
 East Mississippi Community College \$500  
 EBRPSS - Glasgow Middle School \$500  
 EBRPSS - Park Elementary School \$2,000  
 EBRPSS - Winbourne Elementary School \$1,000  
 EdNavigator Inc. \$333,334  
 Education Trust Inc. \$88,890  
 Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence \$1,000  
 Edward Douglas White Catholic High School Foundation Inc. \$150  
 Einstein Group \$2,500  
 Elon University \$5,000  
 Emerge Center Inc. \$12,403  
 Empower 225 \$2,100  
 Episcopal High School of Baton Rouge \$44,170  
 Equal Justice Initiative \$2,500  
 Fellowship of Catholic University Students / FOCUS \$3,000  
 Film Forum Inc. \$25,000  
 First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge \$500  
 First United Methodist Church \$21,800  
 Foundation for a Better Louisiana \$200  
 Foundation for Historical Louisiana Inc. / Preserve Louisiana \$35,200  
 Foundation for Woman's \$5,000  
 Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University \$500  
 Friends of Hilltop Arboretum Inc. \$100  
 Friends of KGLT Inc. \$100  
 Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting Inc. \$120  
 Friends of the Animals BR Inc. \$500  
 Gadsden State Community College \$500  
 GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship \$33,000  
 Gardere Initiative \$3,087  
 General Health System Foundation \$3,000  
 Georgia Institute of Technology \$1,500

Global Hunger Project \$150  
 Govern For America \$25,000  
 Grace Episcopal Church \$100  
 Grambling State University \$500  
 Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership Inc. \$55,000  
 Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Inc. \$21,500  
 Groton School \$10,000  
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Baton Rouge \$6,500  
 Harry Tompson Center Inc. \$2,500  
 Healthnetwork Foundation \$1,000  
 Holy Family Catholic Church \$36,404  
 HOPE Ministries of Baton Rouge \$10,000  
 HOPE Ministry of Pointe Coupee \$5,000  
 Hospice Foundation of Greater Baton Rouge \$500  
 Iberville Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,444  
 Iberville Rehabilitation Services Inc. \$500  
 Inside Track Inc. \$75,000  
 Interfaith Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Inc. \$100  
 International Hospitality Foundation LSU \$645  
 International Rescue Committee Inc. \$650  
 IPSB - North Iberville Elementary School \$1,800  
 ISKCON of Mississippi Inc. \$6,000  
 Jazz Foundation of America Inc. \$1,500  
 Jefferson Parish Public School System - Washington Elementary School \$2,500  
 Jewish Children's Regional Service \$100  
 Jewish Federation of Greater Baton Rouge \$250  
 Johnny Robinson's Boys Home \$4,000  
 Joyce Theater Foundation Inc. \$25,000  
 Jubilee Pioneers \$3,000  
 Kappa Alpha Order Educational Foundation \$100  
 King of Kings Ministries Inc. / King of Kings Community Jerusalem \$750  
 Knock Knock Children's Museum Inc. \$25,500  
 Kudvumisa Foundation USA Inc. \$1,500  
 Lafourche Parish Public Schools - C.M.

Washington Elementary School \$1,000  
 Leadville Trail 100 Legacy Inc. \$300  
 Lemont High School Educational Foundation \$10,000  
 Life Action Ministries \$300  
 Life of a Single Mom \$5,000  
 Longue Vue House and Gardens \$2,000  
 Louisiana Art and Science Museum Inc. \$12,028  
 Louisiana Bar Foundation \$200  
 Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities \$100  
 Louisiana Naval War Memorial Commission \$2,500  
 Louisiana Parole Project Inc. \$5,000  
 Louisiana Public Health Institute \$49,900  
 Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College \$30,000  
 Louisiana Symphony Association / Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra \$150  
 Louisiana Tech University Foundation Inc. \$2,500  
 Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services Inc. \$25,000  
 Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation \$100,100  
 Louisiana Wildlife Federation Inc. \$100  
 Loyola University New Orleans \$2,000  
 LPSB - Freshwater Elementary School \$1,000  
 LSU Alumni Association \$100  
 LSU Foundation \$56,100  
 LSU Foundation - College of Art and Design \$1,500  
 LSU Foundation - College of the Coast and Environment \$1,000  
 LSU Foundation - Department of Libraries \$150  
 LSU Foundation - E.J. Ourso College of Business \$50,000  
 LSU Foundation - LSU Museum of Art \$35,500  
 LSU Foundation - Paul M. Hebert Law Center \$6,650  
 LSU Foundation - School of Art Gallery Support Fund \$200  
 LSU Foundation - School of Music \$150  
 LSU Foundation - University Lab School Foundation \$13,000



Maison des Ami of Louisiana Inc. \$35,000  
 Map 1040 \$1,500  
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center \$12,000  
 Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center Foundation \$5,000  
 Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center \$100  
 Men of the Immaculata Inc. \$1,000  
 Mercy Corps \$2,500  
 MetroMorphosis \$175,000  
 Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. \$5,000  
 Millsaps College \$1,000  
 Miracles and Harvest International \$15,000  
 Monroe City Schools - Madison James Foster Elementary School \$1,000  
 Murray State University Foundation \$500  
 Natchitoches Parish School Board - Goldonna Elementary School \$1,000  
 National Audubon Society Inc. - Audubon Louisiana \$150  
 National Center for Teacher Residencies Inc. \$23,000  
 National Kidney Foundation of Louisiana Inc. \$100  
 National Trust for Historic Preservation \$10,000  
 National Underground Railroad Freedom Center Inc. \$100  
 Nature Conservancy \$250  
 Nature Conservancy - Louisiana \$2,500  
 New Beginning Word Fellowship Evangelistic Ministry/Crossway New Beginnings \$500  
 New Orleans Career Center \$133,334  
 New Orleans Museum of Art \$10,000  
 New Schools for Baton Rouge \$15,000  
 New Schools for New Orleans Inc. \$875,000  
 New York University \$500  
 Nicholls State University \$500  
 Nicholls State University Foundation \$125,000  
 Northwestern State University of Louisiana \$1,000  
 Northwestern University \$1,000  
 NWEA \$250,000  
 Of Moving Colors Productions \$100  
 Ollie Steele Burden Manor Inc. \$400  
 Operation Blessing International \$6,500

Opportunity Labs Foundation Inc. \$15,000  
 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church \$43,470  
 Our Lady of Prompt Succor School \$250  
 Our Lady of the Lake Foundation \$3,000  
 Pahara Institute \$111,111  
 Park County Environmental Council \$200  
 Partners in Health \$10,000  
 Pastoral Center \$31,886  
 Patrons of the East Baton Rouge Parish Public Library \$100  
 PCPSB - STEM Magnet Academy of Pointe Coupee \$1,000  
 Pennington Biomedical Research Foundation \$1,500  
 Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast Inc. \$1,750  
 Pointe Coupee Parish Police Jury \$250  
 Pointe Coupee Parish School Board - Rougon Elementary School \$2,500  
 Pointe Coupee Private School System Inc. \$1,000  
 Policy Institute for the Children of Louisiana Inc. \$5,000  
 President and Fellows of Harvard College \$10,000  
 Propel America \$250,000  
 ProPublica Inc. \$2,500  
 Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana Inc. \$1,500  
 Rapides Parish School Board - Alexandria Middle Magnet School \$1,000  
 Rebuilding Together Baton Rouge Inc. \$6,274  
 Red Shoes Inc. \$16,200  
 Reliant Mission Inc. \$1,500  
 Reno Pop Warner Football League Association / Reno-Sparks Pop Warner \$2,500  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge \$133,422  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge - Bishop Ott Works of Mercy Trust \$205  
 Roy Maas Youth Alternatives Inc. \$20,000  
 Russell Domingue Ministries Inc. / Blue Flames Ministries \$750  
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana \$5,000  
 Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response Center \$25,000  
 SJA Foundation \$200

SocialWorx Institute Inc. \$15,000  
 Southeastern Louisiana University \$7,750  
 Southern Garden Symposium \$900  
 Southern University and A&M College \$6,500  
 Southern University System Foundation \$1,000  
 St. Aloysius Catholic Church \$1,500  
 St. Augustine Church \$1,083  
 St. Gabriel Catholic Church \$5,000  
 St. James Episcopal Church \$500  
 St. Jean Vianney Catholic Church \$15,200  
 St. John The Baptist Parish School System - Fifth Ward Elementary School \$1,000  
 St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church \$19,709  
 St. Joseph Cathedral \$2,000  
 St. Joseph the Worker Church \$7,117  
 St. Joseph's Academy \$500  
 St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Inc. \$500  
 St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School \$1,139  
 St. Luke's Episcopal Church \$208,675  
 St. Margaret Queen of Scotland Church/ St. Thomas Chapel \$12,500  
 St. Mary's Catholic School \$100  
 St. Paul's Holy Trinity Episcopal Church \$100  
 St. Philip Parish \$4,292  
 St. Sharbel Makhoul Foundation Inc. \$1,000  
 St. Tammany Parish School Board - E. E. Lyon Elementary School \$1,000  
 St. Theresa of Avila Middle School \$7,429  
 St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School \$16,694  
 Studio By The Tracks Inc. \$1,000  
 Swine Palace Productions Inc. \$200  
 TankProof \$5,000  
 Teach For America Inc. - South Louisiana \$11,000  
 Terrebonne Parish School District - Acadian Elementary School \$1,000  
 Texas A&M University \$1,500  
 The Ascension Fund Inc. \$19,241  
 The Center for Mind-Body Medicine \$250,507  
 The Forman School Inc. \$5,000  
 The Gathering at 840 \$13,998  
 The Greater New Orleans Foundation \$10,000

The Mental Health Association for Greater Baton Rouge \$100  
 The Original Richland Library Restoration Society Inc. \$913  
 The Rectors and Visitors of the University of Virginia \$50,000  
 The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Houma - Thibodaux \$7,000  
 The Salvation Army - Baton Rouge \$55,250  
 The University of Texas at Austin \$1,500  
 The Writing Revolution Inc. \$12,500  
 Three O'Clock Project \$52,500  
 Thrive Foundation \$125,000  
 Trinity Episcopal Church - Baton Rouge \$6,500  
 Trinity Episcopal Church - New Orleans \$31,000  
 Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania \$2,000  
 Union for Reformed Judaism - Henry S. Jacobs Camp \$100  
 United Methodist Committee on Relief \$250  
 United States Holocaust Memorial Council \$100  
 United Way of Southeast Louisiana \$50,000  
 University of Houston \$1,500  
 University of Louisiana at Lafayette \$1,000  
 University of Louisiana at Monroe \$2,000  
 University Presbyterian Church \$30,250  
 Urban League of Louisiana \$50,000  
 US Biennial Inc. \$50,000  
 Vermilion Parish School Board - Dozier Elementary School \$1,000  
 Volunteers In Public Schools Inc. \$50,600  
 Wayde Sims Foundation \$5,000  
 Wellesley College \$10,000  
 West Baton Rouge Foundation for Academic Excellence \$6,952  
 West Baton Rouge Parish School Board - Caneview K-8 School \$1,000  
 West Feliciana Education Foundation \$1,000  
 Winn Parish School Board - Calvin High School \$1,000  
 Women for Women International \$500  
 World Central Kitchen Incorporated \$2,500  
 WRKF Public Radio Inc. \$500  
 Yale University \$1,000

YMCA of the Capital Area \$5,000  
 YMCA of the Capital Area - A.C. Lewis Branch YMCA \$150  
 Young Leaders' Academy of Baton Rouge \$100  
 Youth Oasis \$5,100

# 2021 CITYSTATS

## Tracking the quality of life in East Baton Rouge

BY MUKUL VERMA | INFOGRAPHICS BY CAROLYN BLAKLEY

What do residents of East Baton Rouge want? They want the sheriff and the police department combined into one. They wish the government would do more to combat greenhouse gases. They want marijuana legalized for personal use.

They support more representative government. For instance, they back an independent group drawing legislative districts instead of leaving it up to Louisiana lawmakers.

These are some of the findings of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's annual poll for our CityStats project, which measures the quality of life in the parish.

LSU's Public Policy Research Lab conducted the poll for the Foundation from June 28-Aug. 10. The survey of 549 residents is representative of the parish, and has an error margin of plus or minus 4.2%.

The poll uncovered some alarming opinions. Too many parents want their children to leave the parish, primarily to seek better opportunities elsewhere. A majority believe the parish is going in the wrong direction, and a record percentage believe Baton Rouge has a serious litter problem.

There is hope, too, in the poll. By an overwhelming number, they want pre-kindergarten and childcare for all children funded by the federal

government.

Worried about global warming, half of them say they are interested in buying an electric vehicle in the next decade. In exchange, they want government to curb greenhouse emissions by offering more bike lanes and transit options, and by shifting tax incentives to renewable energy. Residents would also pay a fee to clean and maintain Baton Rouge waterways.

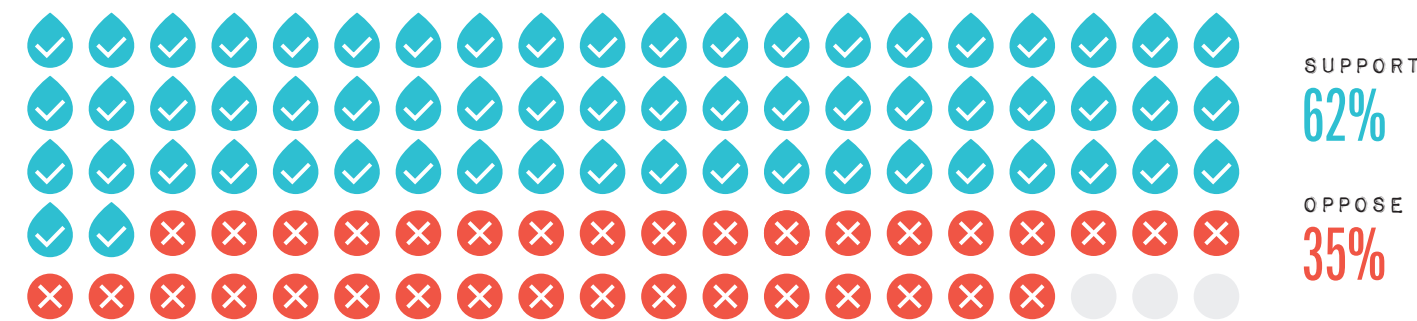
The Foundation will mail a copy of the full CityStats report to fund donors and members. The project is underwritten by the Newton B. Thomas Support Foundation, a supporting organization of the Foundation.



## ENVIRONMENT

### STORMWATER FEE

The Louisiana Stormwater Coalition is advocating for a public fee to clean up and maintain parish waterways. The CityStats poll shows that residents would pay a \$10 monthly fee to clean trash that washes into EBR bayous and creeks from urban drains.



55%  
 Republicans opposed to the fee, the only demographic with a majority opposed.

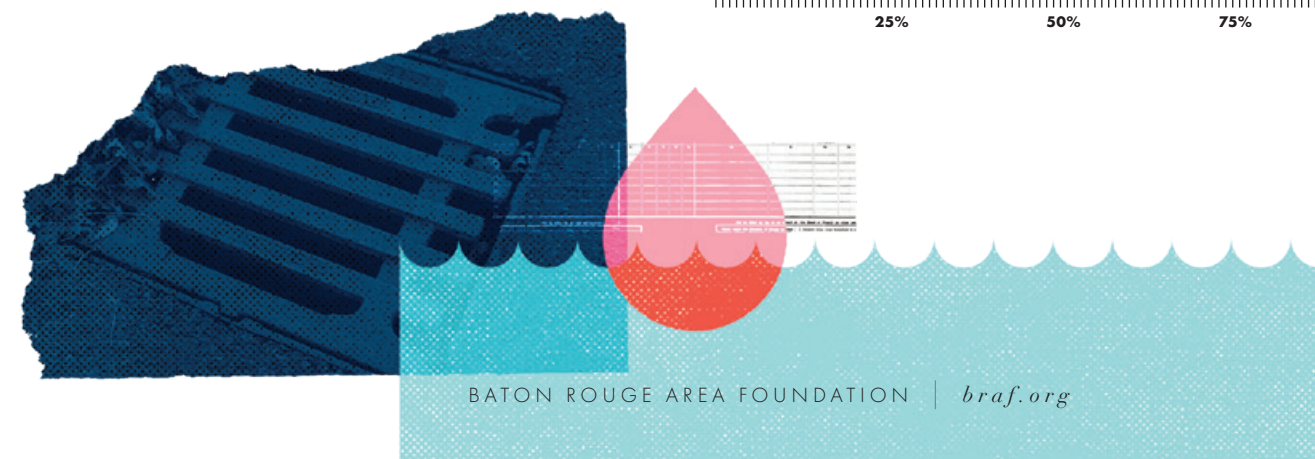
#### SUPPORT BY DEMOGRAPHIC



#### SUPPORT BY LOCATION



#### SUPPORT BY AGE GROUP



### LITTER AS A PROBLEM

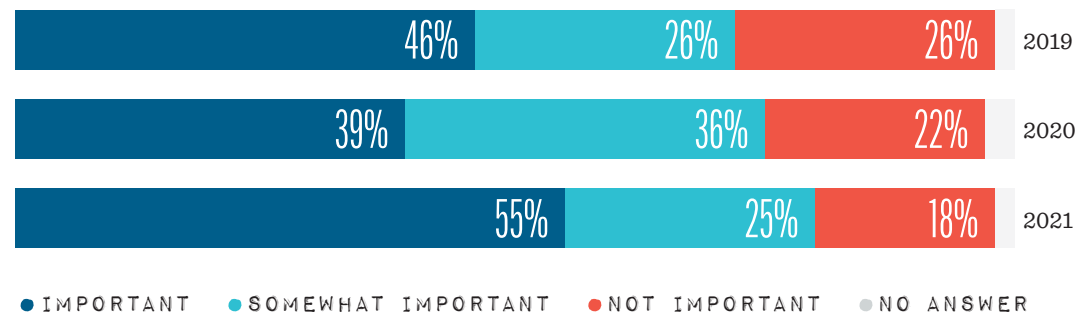
How would you rate litter as a problem in the parish, where 5 is a serious problem and 1 is not a problem at all?



### GLOBAL WARMING

Residents are more worried about global warming. They want government to do more to curb emissions, including offering more mobility options and shifting tax incentives to renewables. To do their part, more than half are considering buying an electric vehicle in the next decade.

HOW IMPORTANT IS GLOBAL WARMING AS AN ISSUE TO YOU?



### HOW GOVERNMENTS SHOULD RESPOND TO GLOBAL WARMING

What should local and state governments do to address global warming, natural disasters and flooding? The level of support for each proposal is below.

MORE BIKING, WALKING AND MASS TRANSIT OPTIONS



CHANGE ZONING TO ENCOURAGE BUILDING DENSER COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE VEHICLE TRIPS



BUILD A NETWORK OF FAST-CHARGING STATIONS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES



END SUBSIDIES FOR FLOOD INSURANCE



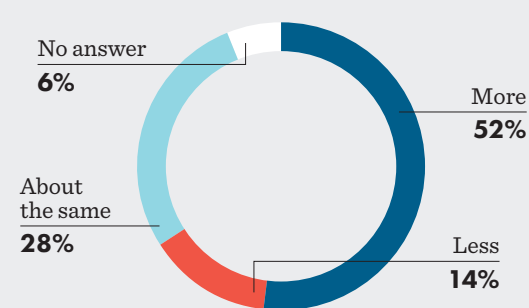
SHIFT TAX INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE JOBS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY



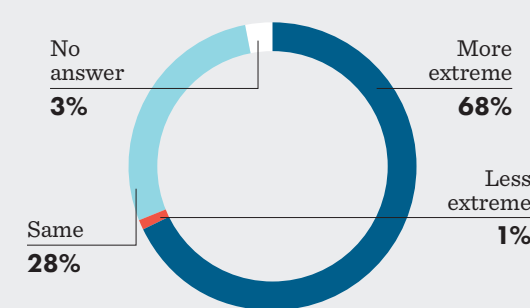
### GREENHOUSE GAS REGULATIONS

Because CityStats focused on the pandemic last year, we didn't include this question. Before then, more than 70% wanted the government to do more to curb greenhouse gases. That number dropped to 52% in this year's poll, perhaps because governments are doing more. As an example, Gov. John Bel Edwards has a climate task force and is encouraging renewables and carbon capture.

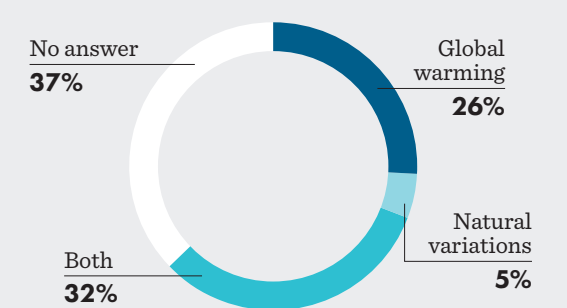
SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DO MORE TO REGULATE EMISSIONS THAT CAUSE GLOBAL WARMING?



IS THE WEATHER BECOMING MORE EXTREME, LESS EXTREME, OR IS IT STAYING ABOUT THE SAME?



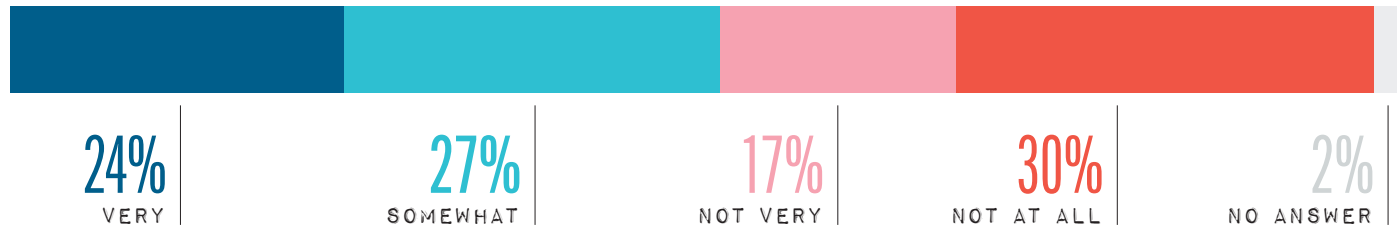
WHAT IS THE MAIN CAUSE FOR EXTREME WEATHER?



## ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Electric vehicles seem to be everywhere, and our survey indicates you'll see tens of thousands on local roads in a decade. In our poll of EBR, **5.5% said they own an electric or hybrid vehicle**, such as a Prius. In a national Pew poll, 7% said they own an EV or hybrid. We wondered what's next.

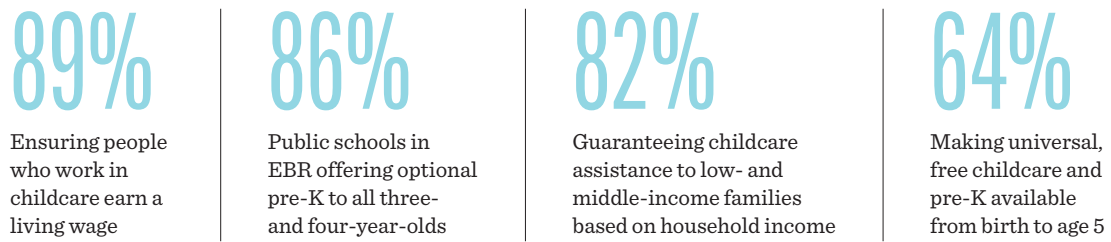
HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO CONSIDER BUYING OR LEASING AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE IN THE NEXT DECADE?



## EDUCATION

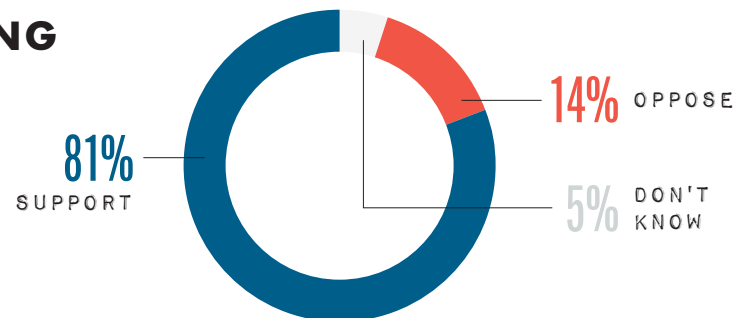
### PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVED ACCESS TO CHILDCARE & PRE-K

PROPOSALS AND SUPPORT:



### FEDERAL FUNDING OF CHILDCARE

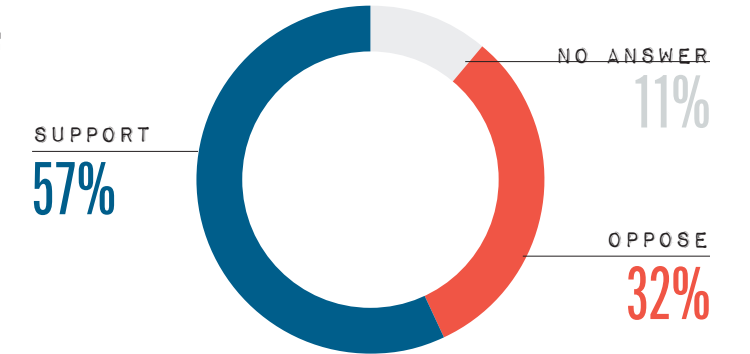
FOR OR AGAINST INCREASING FEDERAL FUNDING OF CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE AND EXPANDING PRE-K



## GOVERNMENT & CIVIC PARTICIPATION

### MERGING BR POLICE & SHERIFF

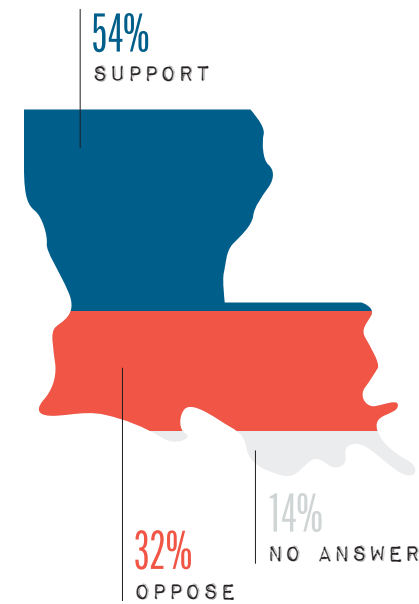
Do you support or oppose combining the Baton Rouge Police Department and the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's office into one organization that serves all parts of the parish?



» A majority of Republicans (55%), Democrats (60%) and independents (54%) are for a merger.

### REDISTRICTING

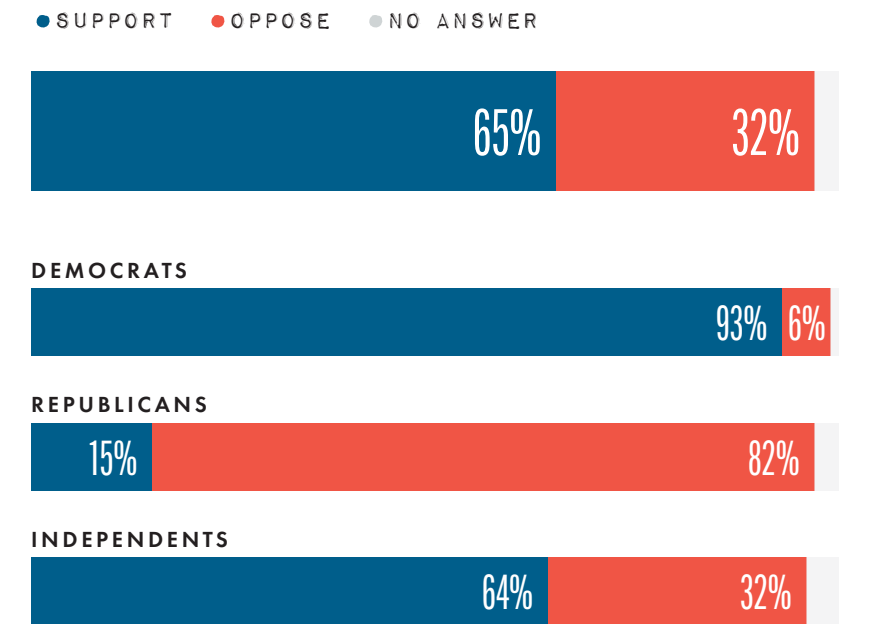
Do you support or oppose the creation of an independent commission in Louisiana for drawing voting districts?



Nine states have independent commissions draw up voting districts after the U.S. Census every 10 years. As in most other states, Louisiana lawmakers draw districts.

### VOTE BY MAIL

Should the state of Louisiana allow any voter to vote by mail if they want to?



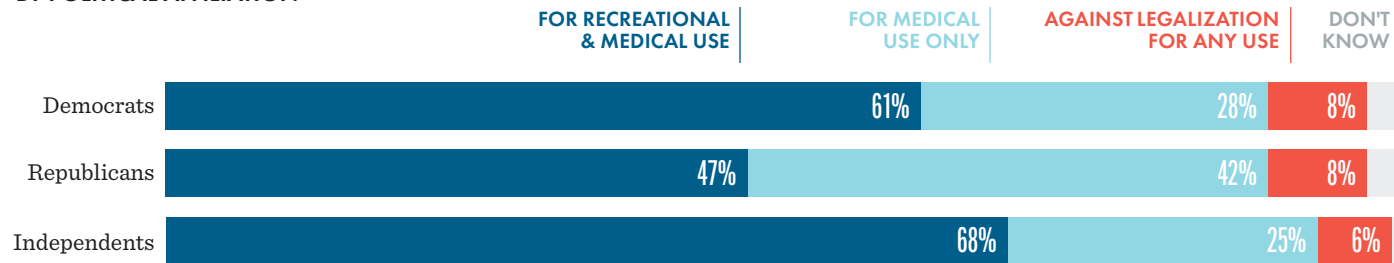
## MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

In 2020, the state of Louisiana decriminalized marijuana possession. No more jail time for possession of small amounts and the fine is only \$100. A bill to legalize marijuana for personal use cleared a House committee but died on the House floor. A Republican sponsored the bill, and the issue is now under study, meaning it's likely to pass in a few years. Meanwhile, our poll found a strong majority support legalization for personal use. Medical use is legal in Louisiana.

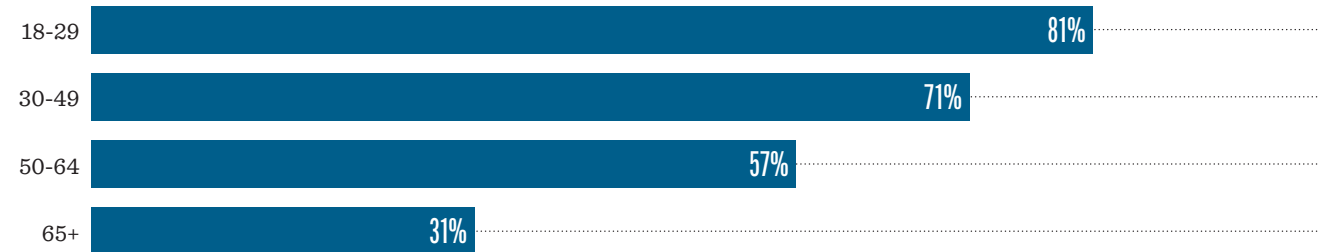
### WHICH COMES CLOSER TO YOUR VIEW ABOUT LEGAL USES OF MARIJUANA BY ADULTS?



### BY POLITICAL AFFILIATION



### SUPPORT FOR LEGALIZATION FOR RECREATIONAL & MEDICAL USE BY AGE GROUP



# 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 Edmund Giering at (225) 387-6126 or [egiering@braf.org](mailto:egiering@braf.org) for more information.

*Baton Rouge Area Foundation*

# Bravo! Bravo!

PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

**D**istrict attorneys once plotted against the accused in the confines of this downtown building.

It's a piece of art now.

Beckoning light peeks from inside the new home of the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge. Under the leadership of Renee Chatelain, the council has turned a dour building into a playful space for making music, dancing and dramas.

The council relocated from a former fire station on Laurel Street into the renovated space on St. Ferdinand during the late summer and early fall. Private donations paid for the \$3 million renovation, including a \$1 million gift from the Saurage family in name of Cary Saurage, among the most devoted supporters of local art. Baton Rouge Area Foundation fund donors contributed to this project as well.

The Cary Saurage Community Arts Center opens fully in January. Inside it are kilns, a music studio, a flexible black box theater, galleries and a room with a view of live oaks framing City Court. The Baton Rouge Symphony, which will perform in the \$12 million, renovated Performing Arts Theater a block away, has relocated to an open space in the building.

The most visible feature is on the roof: a deck for entertaining and celebrating local art. ■



The Cary Saurage Community Arts Center opened at 233 St. Ferdinand St. in downtown. Ritter Maher Architects redesigned the 12,000-square-foot building for the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge. The organization raised \$3 million from philanthropists, including donors who have charitable funds at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.



Above: A glass extension was built for the Shell Art Gallery. Rotating works from local artists will be displayed in the soaring space.

Right: The Jan and Bill Grimes recording studio is connected to the black box theater. The theater can serve as studio space, while the recording studio is the engineering room.



Left: Michaelene Walsh custom ceramic objects are featured in the main lobby. They thank donors who contributed to the renovation.

Below: The Charles and Carole Lamar Artist Lounge is on the second floor. The center was designed to be flexible, with each area convertible to class space, a throw place or a quiet place to write and reflect.





Above: On the third floor, the rooftop terrace is for outdoor meetings, receptions and creative loafing.



Top right: The Winifred and Kevin Reilly Art Studio provides space for studios and has two kilns.



Bottom right: The black box theater on the first floor is flexible. Concerts, dances and dramas can be held within it. A recording studio is attached.





South Cameron High School seniors, from left, Jancy Lalande, Riley Marks and Ceyanna Brown stand at the site of the filled-in Creole Pool.



# *Home is a* **LONELY PLACE**

*Where do high school seniors  
of vanishing Cameron Parish  
go from here?*

BY C.E. RICHARD  
PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

**R**iley Marks, 17, paused to get her bearings, trying to recall where exactly her tall lifeguard chair had stood overlooking the deep end of the public swimming pool.

“We’re not exactly sure where, but it was somewhere over here,” she said, gesturing across a featureless patch of sand and seashells. Already, long runners of grass had begun to creep across the bare ground from the pasture nearby. Before long, it will be hard to tell that there was ever a pool here at all. »

But Riley and her friends, Jancy Lalande and Ceyanna Brown, both 17, retain vivid memories of the place that had once been a boisterous center of community life, especially for the young people of South Cameron Parish. As the head lifeguards, Riley and Jancy had spent many long afternoons keeping watch over their neighbors and teenaged friends splashing in the pool's sparkling water.

There had been a concession stand here called the Tiki Hut, Jancy remembered, peddling popsicles and ice cream sandwiches to the families that would gather poolside on long summer evenings. She recalled that, in the pasture adjacent to the pool, a pair of horses would charge back and forth along the fence line, intensely curious about the raucous crowds of children playing in the water. The horses are gone, and an unearthly silence hovers over the place now.

Hurricane Laura struck Cameron Parish on August 27 of last year, followed by Hurricane Delta six weeks later. The little village of Creole took the full brunt of it. Nothing here was left standing, and the Creole Pool had been transformed into a filthy hole in the ground, jumbled with dangerous debris. It was clear that it couldn't be salvaged, and the cherished community swimming pool was

filled in with dump truck loads of sand from the nearby beach.

"We don't have anywheres to hang out now," Jancy said, standing on the storm-scoured slab where the Knights of Columbus Hall used to be. Situated between the pool and the road, the KC Hall was where locals would come to celebrate graduation parties, baby showers and the other mile-markers of ordinary life.

But little of life in Cameron Parish is ordinary anymore and residents have spent the last year grappling with the same kinds of questions that people in other coastal parishes are now contending with in the wake of Hurricane Ida. Chief among them, "Is there still a future for us here?"

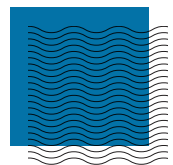
### Youthful defiance

At South Cameron High School, there are 16 students in the senior class, seven boys and nine girls. It is a big school, built to accommodate 500 students, but it feels mostly empty; today, there are only 205 enrolled there across grades K-12. Reconstruction and repairs are still ongoing.

On a Friday afternoon six weeks into their senior year, Riley, Jancy and Ceyanna gathered around a big table at the school with seven of their classmates. They unpacked and ate their



South Cameron High School was built to accommodate 500 students. Families have moved after hurricanes, leaving only 205 students across K-12.



### FOUNDATION FACT

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation has long been involved with preserving the Louisiana coast. After Katrina, the Foundation created The Water Institute of the Gulf, which provides water management advice to policymakers. With Commercial Properties Realty Trust, the Foundation is developing The Water Campus, a hub for coastal and inland water research in Baton Rouge.



Construction workers continue repairs to South Cameron High School's main building following hurricanes Laura and Delta.

lunches, sharing stories about their lives since Laura upended everything a year earlier.

"Driving back down here was probably the worst feeling ever," Riley said. All the familiar places that she and her friends knew were gone. Passionate about athletics, Riley said that the hardest part of all was seeing their school's beautiful new gymnasium, built less than a year earlier, reduced to a pile of rubble. "I could cry right now, thinking about it."

The hurricanes of 2020 had scattered the senior class across Texas and Louisiana. Some students bounced between homes for a while, staying with relatives and friends. Jancy and her classmates, Heaven and Brenlee, tried attending Bell City High School in Calcasieu Parish, but they were there for less than a month. "People would ask me, 'Why didn't you stay?'" Jancy said. "And

I was like, 'It's a good environment there, but it wasn't home.'"

Home is a much lonelier place now that so many of their storm-worn neighbors have packed up and moved away.

"Down Little Chenier is where all my family was—cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents," Riley recalled. "Now, the only real family I have down here is my aunt and Heaven," Riley nods to her classmate, who is also her cousin.

"We were going to move too, but I begged my mom to stay," Riley continued. "After Laura, I relocated to Grand Lake and I stayed there maybe a week because I cried every day to come back here. My mom finally said we wouldn't leave so I could keep going to school here." She paused, then added, "Yeah, it was rough."

The other kids told similar stories about pleading with their parents to

“We were going to move too, but I begged my mom to stay. After Laura, I relocated to Grand Lake and I stayed there maybe a week because I cried every day to come back here.”

—Riley Marks, senior

come back. Chase James is a basketball player whose mother lives and works in Crowley, more than an hour away. He persuaded her to let him move in with the family of his best friend, T-Wayne Smith, seated across the table from him. "My house got destroyed, so now I live with T-Wayne because it's the only way I could go to school here."

His classmate, Aaliyah Labobe, nodded. She convinced her folks to let her go back to school here too. "We're still living in campers for now," she said, knowing that changes are coming. "My family has decided that after I graduate, they'll end up moving somewhere else."

Many of these students had been in class together since pre-K, but their connections to each other run even deeper than that. Just about everyone around the table was related to each other across generations of kinship dating back to the original founding families of Cameron Parish. "We're all basically cousins," Riley explained.

Coming back to South Cameron High School was not easy for them. Classes resumed there in December 2020, but little was like it used to be. "When we got back here to school, we were all like, 'We can't do this, Ms. Lindsey,' Riley said, referring to SCHS's principal, Lindsey Fontenot. "We just can't do it."

For the first couple of weeks, the students walked the quiet hallways in shock. "We were just sad about everything. We would cry every day," Jancy said. "But at least we were back here."

They're back, and not without strug-

gle. But with graduation on the horizon and, beyond that, the wider world of adult life, the question on the minds of these young people is, what comes next? The official motto of the Cameron Parish School System is "Building the future of Cameron Parish one student at a time." What kind of future awaits them in a place that, increasingly, the grown-ups around them regard as uninhabitable?

### Over the hazy horizon

For nearly eight years, T-Wayne Smith's family owned a small seafood restaurant called Anchors Up, located a few miles down the road from the high school. Like most everything else, it was destroyed by Hurricane Laura. However, his parents didn't give up on their family business; instead, they adapted.

Now Anchors Up is on wheels, operating as a food truck parked on the slab



Chase James, right, moved in with his best friend, T-Wayne Smith, to finish high school in Cameron.



Above: South Cameron High School seniors, from left, Jancy Lalande, Ceyanna Brown, Riley Marks, Chase James and Aaliyah Labobe dine at the Anchors Up Grill. Hurricane Laura destroyed the restaurant; the owners opened a food truck in the same spot.

Right: South Cameron High School senior Ceyanna Brown cares for Miniature Zebus Casey Shadow, a 7-month-old calf, and Kenna. Brown plans to become a veterinarian and hopes to return to Cameron Parish.



where the restaurant used to stand. With outdoor seating at folding tables, it's one of the only places left where folks in Cameron Parish can still sit down together and eat. T-Wayne's friend and housemate, Chase James, helps out at Anchors Up. It does a brisk business, selling plate lunches and po-boys to the yellow-vested workers at the nearby Cameron LNG plant.

Some of the seniors from SCHS gathered there for lunch on Saturday. Standing in line for their order, the kids recognize Gatlin Welch, whom they knew from school. Gatlin had been a senior at SCHS four years earlier when they were freshmen. He was born and raised in Oak Grove, just a stone's throw from the high school. When he graduated, he chose to stay, taking a job at Cameron LNG. But like so many people in Cameron Parish, he makes his living in other ways too— alligator farming, crabbing and taking visitors out in the marsh for airboat rides. Whatever it takes to get by in a place of narrowing opportunities.

"The hurricanes definitely put a hurt on us," Gatlin concedes. "But the ones that did come back and get to stay, it just shows how much heart we have and how much we want to live down here," he said proudly. "No matter what life throws at us, we're going to come back stronger."

Talk to young people in other parts of rural Louisiana and you'll hear about the insatiable itch to escape the confines of small town life and chase down their dreams in big cities like Houston or Atlanta. Not the seniors at South Cameron High School. Like Gatlin, they know where home is—even if they're not sure what kind of work they'll find.

One of the girls wants to study to become an RN and work in nearby Lake Charles. Another talked of becoming a psychologist or social worker because, recognizing the trauma she has experienced in her life, she believes that she can help others cope with their own. Still another hopes to go to cosmetology



Aaliyah Labobe

school and come back to open a beauty shop somewhere here in the area.

Jancy Lalande knows what she wants to do too. She plans to study agriculture and ranch cattle, the way her family has done here since the days when Cameron Parish was first settled. After lunch at Anchors Up, she brought her friends to the barn where she keeps Drops, her Grand Champion prize-winning Braford bull. It's a breed of beef cattle that combines the virtues of a red Hereford with the heft and weight of a Brahman, she explained.

Jancy started showing cattle in livestock shows in fourth grade through the 4-H Club, one of the main pastimes for kids at SCHS, along with basketball. Jancy even rode in rodeos for two years, she said.

She coaxed the gentle bull out of the barn on a lead and into the sunlight so her friends could get a better look at her pride and joy. The bull was sleek and clean, brushed and ready for a livestock show the next afternoon on Sunday. Jancy has kept Drops, so named for the

“*We're still living in campers for now. My family has decided that after I graduate, they'll end up moving somewhere else.*”

—Aaliyah Labobe

“*No matter what life throws at us, we’re going to come back stronger.*”

—Gatlin Welch

teardrop markings under his eyes, for nearly two years since he was a calf. The enormous bull nuzzled her hand and affectionately pushed his body against hers, apparently unaware that he is no longer a baby.

“He’s fourteen hundred pounds now,” Jancy smiles. “And he’s only going to get bigger.”

Her friend Ceyanna Brown has plans to go to vet school so that she can come back to Cameron Parish and service the cattle industry, which has long been a mainstay of life along the coast. Like Jancy, Ceyanna was active in 4-H from an early age. She started out showing rabbits, which she still raises, but during one of the livestock shows she encountered a Zebu and immediately wanted some of her own.

“It took me about two years of begging my mom before she finally gave in and I got my first Zebu,” said Ceyanna. “I’m the first one in my family to show cattle.”

One of the smallest varieties of cattle in the world, the Zebu originated in India where they are regarded as a holy animal. Ceyanna’s prized cow, Kenna, is fully grown at only 400-lbs and is mother to a beautiful red calf, seven months old now and born no bigger than the family dog.

The frequent hurricanes mean having to move cattle to safety whenever the weather threatens. “It’s

always a concern,” Ceyanna said, noting that her animals had to be evacuated ahead of Laura. “So you always have to have a plan.”

Senior year of high school is all about planning and preparing. That’s especially hard for students living in coastal Louisiana, though, where just surviving the challenges of the present make the future much harder to imagine. The kids at South Cameron High School have few places where they can gather with their peers to talk about the lives that lay ahead of them.

More and more, these friends find themselves at the beach, which is separated from their high school by a stretch of marsh a quarter of a mile wide. The school is raised on tall concrete pilings, high above the inward rush of storm surges when hurricanes come. From this lofty perch, the students can gaze out the windows to watch shrimp boats plying the Gulf. No longer congregating around the community pool for carefree days, these young men and women now look out uncertainly on much wider horizons.

There are fewer students like them now than there used to be, but that doesn’t shake their determination. “Something like half our community has moved away,” Riley Marks said. “But this is still home. And it will always be home.” ■



Jancy Lalande hangs out with Drops, an 18-month-old Braford bull.

# Forever SWLA

## Storm-struck Lake Charles region embraces master planning to solidify its future

**WHAT'S \$17 BILLION?** It's Netflix's entire content investment for 2021 and the cost of Samsung's advanced semiconductor plant in Central Texas.

For Southwest Louisiana, \$17 billion is the cost of reclaiming home. That's the estimated damages from a four-punch storm combination: Hurricane Laura in August 2020, Hurricane Delta in October 2020, a winter storm in February 2021 and flash floods in May 2021.

The 300,000 people who live in and around Lake Charles are tough. Milestone hurricanes like Audrey (1957), Rita (2005), Ike (2008) and Laura have not stopped them. They are motivated to start anew. They'll get help from hundreds of donations to the Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana, including an anonymous donation in a plain envelope from New York of three dollar bills.

"That person, whoever they are and whatever motivated them to send their hard-earned money, will always be appreciated by the people of Southwest Louisiana," says Sara McLeod Judson, president and CEO of the foundation. "It's just so heart-

warming to me, and that continues to drive us every day in our mission to be better than before: because people care."

Another interesting donation after Laura found its way to the foundation. California philanthropists David and Angela Filo contributed \$2.5 million to underwrite a road map for Southwest Louisiana's future. David grew up in Moss Bluff before attending Stanford University, where he collaborated with Jerry Yang in the mid-1990s to create Yahoo!, the Internet's first popular search engine.

The Filos want the foundation to partner with regional leaders and residents to create a guiding master plan for Southwest Louisiana. It's their wish that the blueprint include regional planning for housing, economic development, infrastructure and water management.

"Those who are affected most can create and implement the most lasting change in their communities," said Angela Filo, expressing the couple's hope for Southwest Louisiana.

In October 2021, the foundation selected a team led by Pittsburgh-

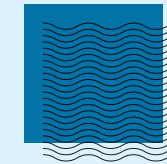
based Urban Design Associates to develop the master plan over 12 months. The plan will set the stage for better living in Southwest Louisiana, equipping the region to retain residents and businesses — and attract new ones — over the long haul.

"This has been very much a team approach in Southwest Louisiana, and we certainly see that continuing as we plan for future generations," Judson says.

The backdrop for the plan is complex. A deepened shipping channel and abundant natural gas have lured liquified natural gas titans to invest billions in the region, thereby helping to expand the area economy by 130% of its 2014 level within several years.

Meanwhile, punishing storms and their tidal surge destroyed communities, even taking out homes that were elevated to guard against rising seas. What's more, higher flood insurance rates are speeding up a retreat from the coast, particularly from the most vulnerable barrier islands.

Planners from UDA have all that and more to consider. But they won't be starting with a blank page.



### FOUNDATION FACT

The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana is a supporting nonprofit of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. Our staff helped Foundation SWLA raise money for relief and rebuilding after Hurricane Laura

Already completed is the 137-page Calcasieu Parish Long-Term Community Recovery Plan, which entailed hundreds of interviews with local stakeholders and recovery experts. The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury engaged Emergent Method, a Baton Rouge consultancy, to guide the process. Parish officials built on existing hazard mitigation plans, institutional knowledge and community input to identify six chief priorities: housing, critical infrastructure, the economy, community planning, community health, and natural and cultural assets.

"We definitely did not start from scratch," says Alberto Galan, a Calcasieu Parish recovery coordinator. The parish plan focuses on rapid response over the next several years, he said, using supplemental federal disaster aid as the spur.

The foundation's plan will address longer-term efforts to create more resilient coastal communities. Though chiefly focused on hardest-hit Calcasieu and Cameron parishes, Judson says the plan also will produce tool kits for adjacent Allen, Beauregard and Jefferson Davis parishes.

For both plans, rebuilding safe, affordable housing stock is critical. Half of Calcasieu's homes were damaged by the hurricanes, with one in four left uninhabitable.

To the south in Cameron Parish, 90% of dwellings were damaged with about half of them destroyed, says Clair Hebert Marceaux. She guides parish economic development as director of the Cameron Parish Port, Harbor & Terminal District.

"One of the most painful things I have ever seen as an adult is when someone who was born and raised here and loves this place, comes to the realization that they can't live here anymore," Marceaux says. "That's been really hard for me to see."

Her own family was paying \$7,500 in yearly insurance costs for an 1,800-square-foot home obliterated by Laura. They're restoring a damaged home about 2 miles away.

"It's not just a question for us to restore or retreat," she says. "It goes back to 90% of the world's population living within 100 miles of a coastline. And, unfortunately, we are the ones who currently are most

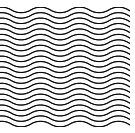
having to deal with that question."

By late 2022, the Foundation-led master plan will marshal federal, state and local recovery resources with private sector strengths to envision a long-term home for all who want to live in Southwest Louisiana.

"I think there is a balance that can be struck between the public and private sectors, with less bureaucracy and more innovation; I think that's important," says Marceaux. "I see it as a great opportunity, through this master planning effort, to really revolutionize not only the way we live in Southwest Louisiana, but around the world, and look to the future of how we live with water."

Adds Galan: "Getting secure water, secure broadband and secure electricity are very immediate needs in terms of effective long-term recovery. We're fortunate to have a good relationship with the foundation, and we'll be working with them hand-in-hand on their master plan."

—Gary Perilloux



# More than a gym

## Under Christian Engle, the Y is going regional and adding new services in Baton Rouge

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTO BY TIM MUELLER

**T**he YMCA of the Capital Area will open an early childhood education program at its A.C. Lewis branch in early 2022—a first for the YMCA in Baton Rouge.

It's a notable early step in a wide-ranging effort to expand the YMCA's role in promoting community health through initiatives to fight hunger, build affordable housing and extend the reach and scope of wellness services for children and adults.

"We will start with early childhood education and go from there," said Christian Engle, president and CEO. "We're trying to widen understanding of what the YMCA can be."

Potential projects under discussion include affordable housing that would be co-located with the YMCA so residents have ready access to everything from wellness services to after-school programs.

The nonprofit is exploring construction of a commercial kitchen to prepare

and distribute food to children and others in the wake of anti-hunger partnerships that began during the pandemic.

It's looking for ways to team with hospitals, health clinics, grocery stores, schools and others to form community hubs that might provide services from dentistry to fitness classes to childcare.

Meanwhile, the Y is also expanding its geographic reach. It began operations in Lake Charles and Hammond a year ago and is looking at potential new sites in Denham Springs and Gonzales.

"Our role is to be a conduit for good health. Our message is that we are who we need to be to support the community," Engle said. "We are a community resource and a charitable organization, and our mission is to have the biggest impact we can on our communities."

Central to the message: The YMCA is a lot more than the gym down the street. "It's a component, but it's not who we are," Engle said.

Evolving for maximum impact is not



### MEET CHRISTIAN ENGLE

**Age:** 53

**Hometown:** Military kid, but I consider Long Beach, Mississippi, as my hometown.

**Years with the Y:** 31

**Exercise regimen:** I lift weights, run, bike ride, swim—5 or 6 days a week.

**Most surprising thing about Baton Rouge:** We didn't know what to expect when moving here, and it is an underappreciated city. The culture, food and people are amazing.

**Hobbies:** I am an avid reader and attempt to play golf.

**Favorite childhood hero:** My father was a retired military vet and schoolteacher. He passed several years ago from Parkinson's.

**Favorite city visited so far:** Paris

new to the Y. The organization began in London in 1844 with Bible study for young men. Over time it moved into childcare and housing—the nation’s 2,400 YMCA locations are its largest provider of childcare—and, in the 1970s, fitness.

Wellness, including health classes like diabetes prevention, has become an increasingly important focus over the past 20 years or so. Expanding mental health services to young people is among its current global initiatives and one of

“

**The idea is to link healthy opportunities, but conversations about what that will look like will be different in every community.”**

—Christian Engle, YMCA director



interest to the Y in Baton Rouge.

In step with those changes, the regional organization has expanded programming to support for Parkinson’s patients and to fight childhood obesity under Engle’s leadership. It has hired a registered dietician to bolster the impact of wellness and nutrition offerings at sites like its Howell Place branch in north Baton Rouge, where BREADA hosts a farmers market.

The pandemic created new community needs and the chance to respond to them. The Y teamed with the Baton Rouge Health District to open daycares and day camps for the children of health care workers and first responders after the pandemic closed schools in spring 2020.

It partnered with public schools to offer space for virtual learning, setting up socially distanced cardboard cubicles for more than 300 children at several branches when schools remained closed in late 2020. When a vaccine became available, its branches served as public vaccination sites.

The expansion into anti-hunger work involved partnerships with local nonprofits like the Three O’Clock Project, which provides after-school snacks and summer meals to children, to distribute and even warehouse food. The Y’s food-insecurity efforts continue. During a recent week, the organization distributed about 200 boxes of produce through its branches.

“The pandemic gave us the chance to show what we can do for the community,” said Engle, who got his first job out of college with the YMCA of Santa Barbara and has been with the organization ever since, some 31 years.

Engle wants Baton Rouge to think big when it comes to what it wants the Y to do next. He has gathered renderings of about 30 recent iterations of the YMCA in cities from Texas to Canada as real-world examples of what’s possible in Baton Rouge.

The YMCA of Seton in Calgary,

Alberta, for instance, includes a 25,000-square-foot branch of the public library inside it. In New York, University of Rochester Medicine has partnered with the Y to co-locate medical clinics and fitness centers. The YMCA in Nashville last month announced a 60-story residential tower with a 100,000-square-foot Y.

At the University of Washington in Seattle, the campus recreation center is a YMCA that is also open to the public. In Colorado Springs, a local YMCA shares a site with an urgent care clinic and physician offices.

There are also real-world examples of YMCAs that combine affordable housing with programming from swim lessons and summer camps to support services for homeless veterans. The Gateway Family YMCA in Elizabeth, New Jersey, owns and operates affordable housing for families, transitional housing for homeless vets and dormitories for single men and women that connect residents to addiction-recovery programs and job training.

Engle has personal understanding of YMCA housing initiatives. The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, where he spent eight years before moving to Baton Rouge, owns shelters and affordable housing that make it Connecticut’s largest housing provider.

He sees no reason why community partnerships in Baton Rouge can’t create similar hubs of housing and services—or something entirely different. “In some communities, what’s needed might be a community theater, while in another it might be a fitness center or housing,” Engle said.

He adds that the local Y is positioned for impact: There is a location within 12 minutes of about 95% of the capital region’s population.

“The idea is to link healthy opportunities, but conversations about what that will look like will be different in every community,” he said. “These conversations are happening now.” ■



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. Please contact Edmund Glering at (225) 387-6126 or [eglering@braf.org](mailto:eglering@braf.org) to guide you.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*



# The art .of doctoring

The new home of a renowned residency program reflects its roots in the state's charity hospitals

BY SARA BONGIORNI | PHOTOS BY TIM MUELLER

**L**ouisiana State University's internal medicine residency in Baton Rouge has had two homes in its first half-century.

It began at Earl K. Long Hospital in the summer of 1971. The program moved in 2013 to the newly built Medical Education and Innovation Center near Our Lady of the Lake, its teaching hospital since Earl K. Long closed that year.

Over 50 years, the program has trained many of the region's internal medicine physicians and built a reputation as the best program of its kind in the state and among the best in the nation.

The residency regimen achieved that success in two places that could hardly be more different. Earl K. Long was rundown and antiquated years before its closure and subsequent demolition. The MEIC is open and light, a tranquil and inviting space where artwork and even trees on an outdoor teaching terrace celebrate the history of medicine.

Nevertheless, the center's striking sense of place has roots in what happened inside the state-run hospital for the poor. The connection centers on an enduring culture of top-notch science and human-centered instruction that puts a premium on the humanity of

patients and young doctors alike.

Dr. George Karam, who directed the program for 30 years, believed in nurturing residents at a time when residency programs didn't put stock in that. Residents were taught—and still are—to diagnose according to both possibility and probability. It's an approach that prizes collegiality, mentoring and opportunities for humor—even happiness—and residents and medical students loved it from the start.

"Fourth-year medical students would fight for the chance to do the internal medicine program there," said Dr. Leo Seoane, chief academic officer for Ochsner Health. "You knew they cared about you. It was powerful."

Dr. Dean Lauret understands the approach from multiple perspectives. Two weeks into a rotation at Earl K. Long, the New Orleans native called his wife and suggested they move to Baton Rouge so he could do his residency there. Lauret never left. He spent three years as a resident, another as chief resident, and then joined the teaching faculty.

"The objective is to create critical thinkers who nurture their patients. I knew right away this is where I wanted to be," said Lauret, who became program director two years ago when Karam



Dr. George Karam, longtime director of LSU's internal medicine residency



A statue of Hippocrates, the father of medicine, stands in the first floor lobby of the LSU Medical Education and Innovation Center.

moved into the assistant director's role.

Preserving the humanities in medicine in a large, modern hospital became a focus about 10 years ago as the program prepared to transition from Earl K. Long to the MEIC.

Dr. Catherine Lucey, a visiting professor from the University of California, San Francisco, noted at the time that

Earl K. Long residents were purpose-driven individuals who had sought out the opportunity to care for vulnerable patients. Changing locations could mean some residents might go elsewhere, Lucey observed.

Karam was committed to preserving a sense of meaning beyond science at a much different place—and keeping

the top students the program had long attracted.

“We did not want to lose the person who was looking for the humanities in medicine, not just the science,” Karam said. “We love it here, but we worried about losing the core to who we were. We were going someplace very different.”

In time, the design of the MEIC itself emerged as new source of meaning beyond medicine. Its art installations draw on places as varied as ancient Greece, the LSU campus and New Orleans’ Charity Hospital to highlight humanistic values in medicine.

Its indoor and outdoor spaces encourage connection and contemplation. Open-air conversation rooms on the terrace are tucked behind antique wrought-iron doors. The landscaping includes plane trees like those that shaded Hippocrates as he taught medicine to his students. Twisting red-glass reeds by blown-glass sculptor Dale Chihuly provide striking contrast against lush greenery and a nod to Baton Rouge in the form of red sticks.

Artwork includes an antique embroidery-on-watercolor depiction of Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing, placing a crown on the head of a man to guard against quackery. A large, commissioned reproduction of Enrique Alferez’s sculpture “Louisiana at Work and Play” hangs in the lobby, a tribute to the original’s place on the façade of Charity Hospital.

“The building became a way to connect purpose-driven people to humanity in medicine,” Karam said. “It became the next iteration of defining what purpose could be.”

It also means Earl K. Long Hospital is never far away.

“Its roots are absolutely in that facility

on Airline Highway,” Lauret said.

The internal medicine residency program continues to attract top students. Over the past few years, residents have gone on to Johns Hopkins, the National Institutes of Health and

Vanderbilt for additional training.

Graduating medical students in Baton Rouge and New Orleans have selected it as the outstanding clinical program in the medical school every year since 2005.

“People who come out of there look at medicine as a calling,” said Ed Silvey, Baton Rouge Clinic’s chief medical officer. “We are blessed to have it in Baton Rouge.” ■

## A CENTER FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION

BATON ROUGE HAS DEVELOPED into a busy training hub for residents and medical students in a host of medical specialties. Three leading universities—LSU, Tulane and Australia’s University of Queensland—offer residency programs or clinical rotations in partnership with Our Lady of the Lake, Baton Rouge General Medical Center and Ochsner Health.

Most training takes place within the 1,000-acre Baton Rouge Health District in the Essen-Bluebonnet-Perkins Road corridor that contains the region’s large hospitals.

“People may not be fully aware of how much medical education goes on here,” said Dr. Venkat Banda, program director of the Baton Rouge General Medical Center’s internal medicine residency program, which is affiliated with Tulane.

The best-known program—it celebrated 50 years in July—is LSU’s internal medicine residency, which began at Earl K. Long Hospital in 1971 with three residents. Dr. George Karam has been instrumental in helping it flourish.

The teaching hospital has been Our Lady of the Lake since the public hospital closed eight years ago.

The Baton Rouge branch of LSU’s New Orleans medical school also offers residencies in emergency medicine, psychiatry and obstetrics/gynecology. Medical students do clinical rotations in Baton Rouge at the Lake’s main hospital, Woman’s, and the Lake’s freestanding children’s hospital.

The Baton Rouge General established residencies in internal and family medicine in partnership with Tulane. It has trained about 1,200 residents since 1990

through its current program and an earlier partnership with LSU at Earl K. Long.

Ochsner has trained medical students in Baton Rouge since 2008 in partnership with the University of Queensland. Students complete their first two years at the university’s main campus in Brisbane, then do third- and fourth-year rotations at Ochsner sites in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

“Baton Rouge is a great center for medical education,” said Dr. Leo Seoane, Ochsner’s chief academic officer.

Residencies hold particular importance to community health because 60% to 70% of residents practice medicine within 100 miles of where they train.

LSU’s internal medicine program has exceptional staying power. About 80% of its residents since 1993 have remained in the region.

The American College of Physicians describes residencies as a public good that also foster medical innovation and research and speeds technological advances. Their importance wasn’t lost on a 1993 task force of regional government and health leaders studying ways to improve health and health care in Baton Rouge.

Among their recommendations: nurturing and expanding medical education.

Dr. Karam, longtime director of LSU’s internal medicine residency program, praises the ecumenical nature of regional medical training. “When you train people, they tend to stay, and the quantity and quality of your medical care improves. We’ve got young, bright, inquiring minds affiliated with health care in our community.”

—Sara Bongiorno

» PENNINGTON GOES GLOBAL

Pennington Biomedical's Steven Heymsfield and Justin C. Brown are on a team competing for millions through the Cancer Grand Challenges. They propose to study cachexia, a state in which cancer patients lose muscle mass. Eleven teams were shortlisted. Four will win up to \$25 million each to pursue their ideas.

Also, a story about a Pennington study that upends conventional wisdom about metabolism was picked up by publications around the world. The study suggests human metabolism peaks much earlier and starts its inevitable decline later than you might think.



URBAN COOLING

A joint report by McKinsey and city network C40 identifies 15 ways that urban areas around the world can adapt to climate risk. The report outlines threats Baton Rouge is already experiencing, including extreme heat and heavy rains.

Four recommendations for all cities: increase awareness through research and risk assessments; incorporate climate risk through city actions and policies like zoning and urban planning; set up early-warning systems; and enhance financing programs like climate insurance.

Recommendations for inland places like our own: plant trees near roads to deflect heat; build cool roofs and pavements; and construct nature-based areas for drainage.



NUMBER >

400 GIGAWATT-HOURS

**Amount of energy** Wind Catching Systems says can be produced by its radically different offshore wind turbine. One floating farm of 50 turbines could power 100,000 homes, five times more than the largest turbine in the world.

ROOMBA FOR ROADS

Baton Rouge needs a few hundred of these street-sweeping robots by Enway. Says the company in a tweet: "When everybody's workday is over, our self-driving sweeper's shift begins. We enable fully autonomous cleaning, charging and dumping operations without human intervention." Testing of the sweeper is underway in Singapore.



SAY BYE TO THE SWIPE

Mastercard may be the first payment network to phase out cards with magnetic stripes. Mastercards will be chip-only worldwide by 2029. In the first quarter of 2021, Mastercard saw 1 billion more contactless transactions compared to the same period in 2020.



QUIET AIRPLANES

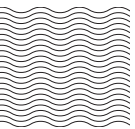
DHL is the first company to order electric cargo planes from a Seattle company. It will add 12 Alice fully electric planes from Eviation to operate on routes of less than 500 miles, the range of the planes. Alice planes require 30 minutes or less to charge per hour of flight time and are cheaper to maintain because electric engines have only a few moving parts.



TRACING TRASH

One man's trash is another man's data. With a federal grant, Tampa Bay Estuary Program is cataloging trash it gathers from water bodies to understand the point of origin. Tampa officials will appeal to businesses that are sources of the rubbish.

Local angle: The upstart Louisiana Stormwater Coalition has been advocating to clean and maintain local waterways. As in Tampa, trash washes into Baton Rouge waterways from urban drains. The coalition has installed a trash catcher on Bayou Fountain and is raising money to expand its efforts.



COLLIN RICHIE

### ACTS OF RESTORATION

Rain and sun are no match for outdoor art in Louisiana. The Martin Luther King Jr. sculpture is an example of how weather can be merciless here. Located near the entrance of city hall, time in the open-air had faded it so much that few remembered the original colors.

We realized more art must be reclaimed. Susie Anders, who restored the MLK monument, surveyed public art in Baton Rouge for the Foundation. She evaluated about 25 pieces and identified about 10 that must be restored within the next five years, including Frank Hayden's Oliver Pollock pictured above. She also outlined plans for annual upkeep to lengthen the time needed before fuller restorations.

In September, the Foundation board approved a project to restore more

public art. The civic projects staff will coordinate with Mayor Sharon Weston Broome's office, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge and the Downtown Development District to proceed.

We thank fund donors who have contributed to this project and all our members, whose annual donations underwrite all initiatives for civic good. You can join our members with a minimum gift of \$200 at [BRAf.org/membership](http://BRAf.org/membership).  
—Mukul Verma

The Foundation collaborated with local government, nonprofits, businesses and civic-minded people to renew the sculpture, and celebrated restoration of the spirited orange and blue colors at an event in spring.



“My life after India began with the Arts Council”

Geeta Dave  
Visual Artist

Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge provides opportunities to bring our community together through arts and cultural programming. Make an impact in your region by supporting the Arts Council during 225Gives this November 15th - 30th.

#ArtFormsCommunity with **your** help.

[artsbr.org/225gives](http://artsbr.org/225gives)



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*These victories,*  
**THEY BELONG TO OUR  
MEMBERS**

Members of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation support all our civic projects. With them, the Foundation is saving and beautifying the University/City Park lakes and leading a movement to bring passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Our members get credit for helping us restore the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument, reducing the jail population by nearly half, and opening a counseling center that calms people who are in the throes of a crisis.

Memberships start at \$200. Join us at **[BRAf.org/membership](https://www.braf.org/membership)**.

*Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation*