

THINK SHARP

# Points

The Dallas Morning News

Section P

Sunday, May 19, 2019

DALLASNEWS.com



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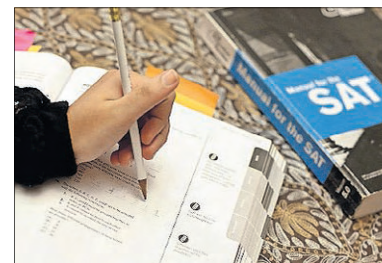
## TALKING POINTS



"Sometimes when I'm playing, a strange feeling comes over me, as though he's the one playing, but all along I'm playing for him, to thank him for what he's given me." — Eduardo Garza Jr. (above), 18, who won the Big Squeeze accordion competition in Austin and is competing in the Tejano Conjunto Festival, on his father, a Mexican migrant farmworker who brought the family to Texas. (Friday, The Dallas Morning News)

"I'm a freak for Taco Bell ... I get Combo No. 1: a burrito supreme and hard-shell taco with Diet Pepsi and the red packet of salsa — fire, obviously. I went to college at the University of Texas at Austin and began eating Taco Bell there. Now it reminds me of when my life was beginning and everything was new and full of ideas." — Colombian Ambassador Francisco Santos, on where he eats in Washington when he feels homesick. (Thursday, The Washington Post)

"This is really touching. Shannon and I were totally crying. I won't forget that moment as a teacher." — Michelle Bell, who, with Shannon Stevenson, directs the Truett Wilson Middle School orchestra in Haslet, after graduating eighth-graders surprised them by playing "Remember Me" from the Disney movie "Coco" at the end of their final performance of the year. The students organized the surprise, which required weeks of secret practice. (Monday, Fort Worth Star-Telegram)



"There are a number of amazing students who may have scored less [on the SAT] but have accomplished more. We can't sit on our hands and ignore the disparities of wealth reflected in the SAT." — David Coleman, chief executive of the College Board, which oversees the SAT, on plans to assign adversity scores to test takers to reflect their social and economic backgrounds. (Thursday, Wall Street Journal)

"For my generation, specifically ... social media has really been terrible. ... It does scare me when you see how exposed these young girls and young boys are, and they're not really aware of the news or anything going on. ... It's just — I don't want to say selfish because that feels rude — but I think it's dangerous, for sure." — Actor Selena Gomez (Wednesday, USA Today)

"We have indeed built and perfected a submersible that can easily and reliably take two people to the bottom of any point on Earth, even the Challenger Deep. This will allow for an unprecedented level of access for scientists and others to explore the ocean, increase our understanding of it, and hopefully make life better and richer in the future." — Dallas businessman Victor Vescovo (above), who became the deepest-diving human in history when his Five Deeps Expedition reached the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. (Monday, The Dallas Morning News)



"We didn't get the whole hog, but we are going to wind up with a lot of ham sandwiches." — John Crawford, who retired last year after more than a decade of heading Downtown Dallas Inc., on how Dallas' failed bid to win Amazon's second headquarters allowed the city to attract many smaller relocations. (Friday, The Dallas Morning News)

Have questions or comments about Points? Email [points@dallasnews.com](mailto:points@dallasnews.com)

# Kids can make a difference

## 9-year-old explains how her state parks idea became a bill



By LILY KAY

I made a difference, and so can you. I'm a kid, so you can imagine how hard it was for me to speak in front of a House of Representatives committee at the Texas Capitol. Why would I, a 9-year-old, be asked to testify in front of the House, Culture, Recreation and Tourism committee? I came up with an idea for a bill and was asked to explain it to the members of the committee. These are the steps I had to follow to get there.

- 1. Don't be afraid to ask questions and share your ideas.** My thought was that all fifth-graders in Texas should get into any state park for free. I had this idea during Thanksgiving break when my family and I went to two Utah and two Arizona national parks. National parks have a program called Every Kid in a Park that gives free park entry to fourth-graders and their families, and I asked if Texas has a program like that for state parks. That's when I learned that such a program doesn't exist.
- 2. Share your idea with your representative.** Tell your city, county, state or federal representative what you think, by email, letter or in person. I wrote a handwritten letter to Rep. Morgan Meyer, my state representative, then my mom emailed it to him.
- 3. Cross your fingers.** This is the most important part, because your elected official must like your idea and decide whether she or he will introduce it as a piece of legislation. If she or he doesn't like it, then go back to Step 2 and try asking another elected official. I was lucky that Meyer liked my idea, and it became House Bill 1561.
- 4. Track it.** An excellent way to keep track of the movement of your bill or any other bill is by creating a free Texas Legislature Online account, at [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov). On this site you can set up alerts on the bills, committees, topics and more that interest you.
- 5. Wait while the magic happens.** The committee either hears and votes on the bill, or doesn't. If it passes out of committee then, hopefully, it gets a vote on the House floor. During all of this, a senator needs to introduce a companion bill in the Senate. It must go through a similar process there. If the Senate passes it without any changes, the bill is sent to the governor, and she or he can either sign it into law or let it sit on her or his desk until time runs out. I'm crossing my fingers that HB 1561 will be signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott.
- 6. Celebrate.** Celebrate all your hard work with your friends and family. It takes a lot of researching, writing and speaking during this process, so make it enjoyable.
- 7. Get involved.** There are multiple ways to get involved. Over the years I've made welcome signs and served refreshments for meet-and-greets at our house, block-walked where I handed out information to neighbors about candidates, decorated cars with voting information and held signs at polls for candidates.

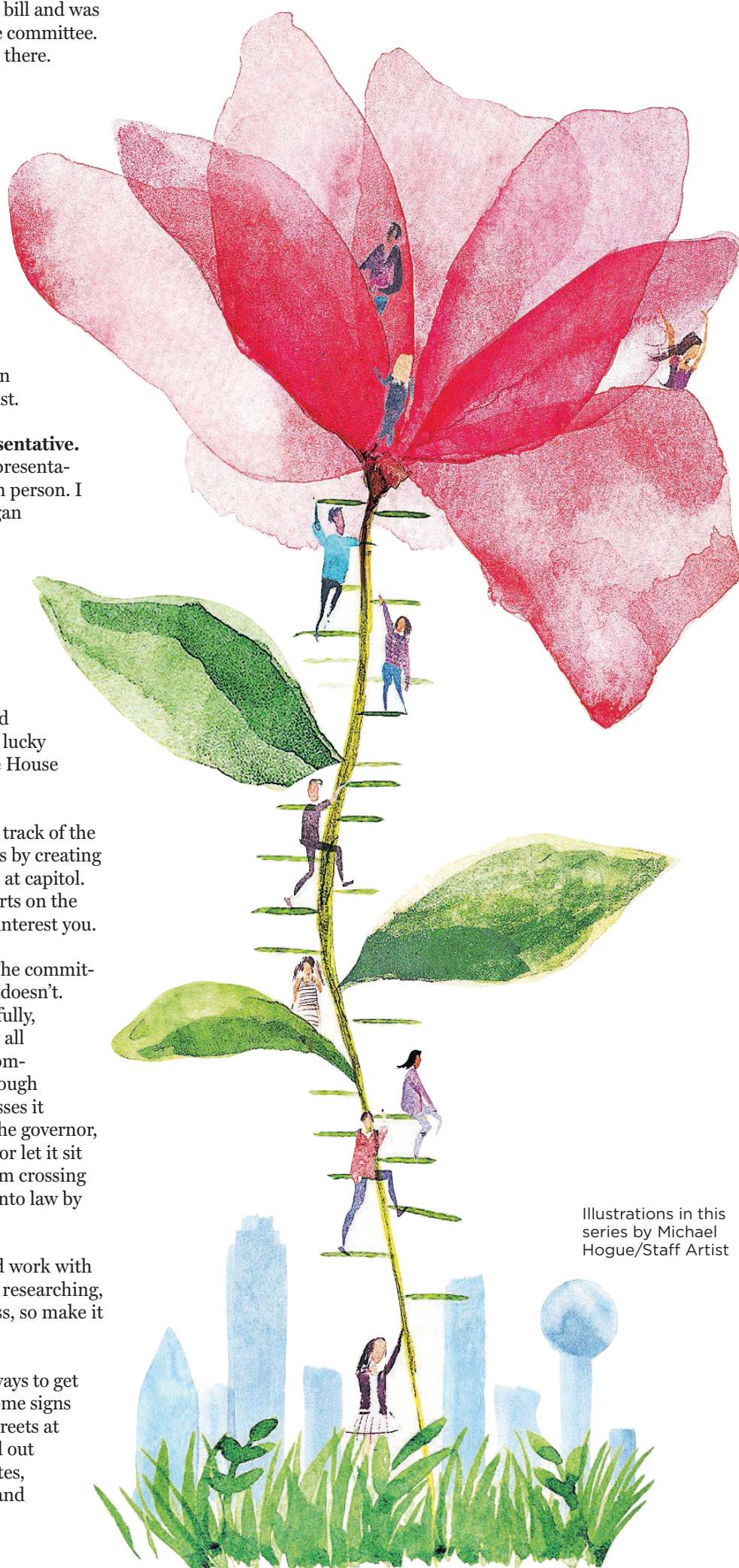
## The Neighborhood Kids

If you think children are the future, you are only getting half the story. Kids do great things for their communities every day, and we need their enthusiasm and energy to make Texas better right now.



As *The Dallas Morning News* editorial board explores ways to encourage civic engagement in North Texas, we found some excellent models among young people. For this special edition of Points, we asked them to write or tell us their stories about what they are doing for others, and how they made their ideas become reality.

Share this section with the children in your life, but first take a peek. We hope these young people will inspire you to get moving on your own big ideas.



Illustrations in this series by Michael Hogue/Staff Artist

See **KAY** Page 5P

# The Dallas Morning News

Established October 1, 1885

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Sunday, May 19, 2019

## EDITORIAL

# Help End 'Hungry Season'

Here's a simple way kids can make a difference this summer

**W**e know from research — and our own personal experiences — that the seeds of a lifetime of community service are often sown when we are young.

Our empathy and desire to help others is developed in some of us before we can walk. Doing good works is habit-forming and can transform lives.

That underlying spirit is alive in the inspiring work of the talented Texas kids featured in today's Points section. They're showing us that it doesn't take a giant project to change the world. It takes one kid with a great idea to make a big impact.

We're encouraged that these kids are setting examples for other kids — and adults — that when we pitch in to help where we can, we all benefit.

This summer, we've got another opportunity to get involved by helping The Dallas Morning News Charities summer feeding campaign. In its third year, the program aims to fill in the gaps during what nonprofit agencies call the "hungry season," when children aren't receiving food at the school cafeteria.

The campaign started last week and runs through July 10 with a goal of raising \$80,000 to benefit seven charities that provide meals through the summer months. Just \$40 provides enough healthy meals for a kid for the entire summer.

We see this campaign as another way for kids to help other kids by raising donations. Sadly, the need continues to be great.

The North Texas Food Bank says that 1 in 4 kids in our area suffer from food insecurity, meaning the children experience times when the household doesn't have enough food or faces uncertainty about food. The summer months are particularly tough for local charities that provide food. Donations typically go down just as more families are seeking assistance.

The donations from the campaign will go to help Brother Bill's Helping Hand provide 200 sack



File Photo/ Staff

**Volunteer Sulin Martinez** helps pack meals at Brother Bill's Helping Hand in Dallas.

lunches daily for kids attending summer camps.

Frisco Family Services will provide meals during the week and send kids home with weekend snack packs.

The North Texas Food Bank expects to distribute more than 13 million pounds of food, 4 million pounds of which specifically will feed kids.

We know that giving back helps the giver as much as it does the person receiving.

For school-age kids, volunteering builds social skills, develops awareness of others and promotes teamwork. High school students can improve their college applications and their job searches post-graduation.

For all of us, studies show, helping others makes us happier and gives us a better sense of purpose.

It creates stronger bonds among friends, family and co-workers. We build closer relationships and better connections.

Most important, when we work together, we build stronger communities.

North Texas, let's do our part to make sure no kid goes hungry this summer.

## DMN Charities Kids' Summer Feeding Campaign

Kids can help other kids by raising donations. Go to [dmncharities.com](http://dmncharities.com) to donate, which will help fund seven local organizations that provide food to children:

- Allen Community Outreach — Collin County
- Brother Bill's Helping Hand — West Dallas
- Crossroads Community Services — West Dallas
- Frisco Family Services — Collin County
- Network of Community Ministries — Richardson
- North Texas Food Bank — North Texas
- Sharing Life — Mesquite/Pleasant Grove

## THREE CHEERS

**1 City of Dallas cleanup crews** — Thank you, city of Dallas, for cleaning up the debris on the White Rock Creek Trail that was washed up from White Rock Lake in the huge storm last week. There were tons of trash, boulders, branches and reeds off Northwest Highway near Mockingbird Lane on Lawther Drive. All this was done within a few days of the incident. The amount of the debris extended for about a mile, and walkers were unable to use the path.

For the first time, I saw three ducks jump up onto the grass no doubt amazed they could swim to it. I walk the trail every day and have counted on average one duck to at most three ducks in the water.

There is a wooden sign alongside the road saying "Adopted by Pete Sessions and Friends." I wonder if that was when he was in office and, if so, why doesn't his replacement take over this responsibility? We really need help to maintain that section of the lake and keep that trash out of the water so that we can enjoy all the ducks and anything else out there.

Rosemary S. Price, East Dallas

**2 Judge Dominique Collins** — I was a visitor recently to Collins' courtroom (Criminal District Court 4) as she conducted her weekly sessions monitoring veterans who have found themselves in situations that require judicial consequences. I was very impressed with how Collins spoke per-

sonally with each veteran, using just the right balance of praise and encouragement to urge them to follow their programs to have their charges erased — except for one who had violated the trust of those trying to help him. He found himself removed from the program.

Since I do not live in Dallas County, I cannot vote for Collins when she comes up for re-election, but I urge anyone who is able to support her. Our country needs more judges like her.

Margaret Hamlin, Fort Worth

**3 Stamp Out Hunger food drive donors and mail carriers in Garland** — The 27th annual Stamp Out Hunger was May 11. Thank you to all of our customers for donating. We faced some obstacles this year, most of all the weather, but with your help, Garland was able to collect over 75,000 pounds of food for our local pantries. The National Association of Letter Carriers could not have done it without you.

Also a big thank-you to all the mail carriers who volunteered to participate in the food drive this year, from delivering the postcards and bags (where they were available) to picking up all the donated food.

Giving back to our community, even though it meant a longer day for most employees, is much appreciated.

Marykay Reynolds, Garland, Stamp Out Hunger coordinator for Garland



William "Bubba" Flint/Special Contributor

## LETTERS

### Young entrepreneurs inspire

Go volunteer at a high school. I guarantee you will feel like I do: optimistic about our future and theirs.

At least that's my opinion after spending this past academic year with an entrepreneurial class at Lewisville High School. The class, Incubator, is similar to *Shark Tank* and allows the students to be creative, learn about starting a business, failing and succeeding as a team, and working with folks in the community as coaches.

The students were receptive to feedback, wanted feedback and wanted to learn. After seeing their year-end presentations, I realized there is nothing to worry about — these kids have got it and will succeed and meet their goals.

There will be a winner from this group. One team will advance, but with that said, the other teams can and some will launch their ideas/companies. For this, I say three cheers to the students and teacher, and I can't wait to see what happens next for all of them.

If this one class at Lewisville High School is any indication of the talent pool in schools today, it's going to be exciting to see what the future holds. If you want to see for yourself, sign up to volunteer, meet, mentor or coach these kids, and I'm sure you'll feel the same.

Perri Brackett, Lewisville

### Why some don't vote

While I agree that voting is our civic duty, it's understandable that people do not participate. Many of us are turned off by politics, due to the negative influence of PACs and corporate money. We are also dismayed by district gerrymandering, which is being upheld by Supreme Court decisions. It seems inappropriate to tell minorities what their civic responsibility is if their votes are not going to be counted, as appears was the case in the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election.

W.R. Luster, McKinney

### Taylor listens to constituents

As a resident of the 3rd Congressional District, I'm elated to share my appreciation for newly elected Rep. Van Taylor. Taylor believes that the best ideas come from the people he works for and has a 100% constituent meeting policy. I've met Taylor three times already since his election. First with an organization I volunteer in called Results (working to end global poverty and alleviate the issues that contribute to it) and twice at coffee meet-ups that he holds regularly for his constituents.

I was born and raised in Zimbabwe, which still has one of the highest rates of HIV in the world. HIV/AIDS has affected my family in a personal way. Seven of my aunts and uncles contracted the virus, and two died. Today, through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Zimbabwe has recorded a 30% increase in the number of people on anti-retroviral therapy, bringing that number to 1.1 million people.

I'd like to thank Taylor for listening to me as I've been educating him on the important role of the Global Fund. I hope that he will join his colleagues soon in supporting the Global Fund.

Bukekile Dube, McKinney

### We should hold ideas dear

Re: "Voters took back the country," by Dianne Elkins, May 1 Letters.

Apparently, Elkins thinks that "voters took back the soul of the country." While I won't beat a dead horse by mentioning that

the majority of voters did not vote for Donald Trump, I would disagree that this president "continues to make America respected again."

America is not respected when it pulls out of agreements previously entered into (Paris climate accord, Iran nuclear deal, UNESCO and the Trans-Pacific Partnership) and threatens to pull out of NATO. It is not respected when it separates families and cages children, and certainly not respected when the president fosters an environment where racially motivated shootings occur often, or when churches, mosques and synagogues are no longer safe places.

Before you decry this philosophy, please do some reading about the origins of some of today's essential beliefs such as freedoms of speech, religion and press, not to mention programs including Social Security, Medicare, civil rights legislation and environmental programs. These are all liberal ideas come to life. Since you are a Christian, please pray that this president does not destroy these liberal ideas that you should hold dear.

Hans Voorn, Frisco



Rose Baca/Staff Photographer

### Stop third-party exclusion

House Bill 4416 is seeking to give voters fewer choices on their ballots. We Texans pride ourselves on our independence and freedom. But this bill is an insult to both of those things.

Texas already has some of the most restrictive laws in the country for putting candidates on the ballot. This bill seeks to double those and make it even harder. Only three states in the entire country have thresholds at the level proposed by this bill.

Voters should be able to choose for themselves whom they want to vote for.

We must not allow politicians in Austin to do that for us. One wonders what the bill's sponsor, Rep. Mayes Middleton, R-Wallisville, is worried about.

In the 2018 general election, he won by about 15% over his nearest opponent. His closest third-party opponent gathered only 2.1% of the votes, so did not influence his election. Analysis shows that, in general, third-party candidates affect the major parties nearly equally.

I'm asking all Texans to call their elected representatives in Austin and ask them to oppose HB 4416. Time is critical! This legislation is moving through the system right now.

David Koch, Plano

### Next mayor needs perspective

After watching the Dallas mayoral candidate debate stream (thank you), it seems to me that Dallas — all of it — would be better served by the candidate who has been away from the Dallas scene for a period and can have a better perspective and fresh view of our city than someone who has been so closely involved.

P.S. The next candidate who says he/she will fix city streets will not get my vote. Candidates have been saying this ever since the horse-and-buggy days, and nothing gets done!

Barbara Wiskow, Dallas

## LETTERS & VIEWPOINTS POLICY

We value reader submissions. We receive far more than we can print and publish a representative sample. Letters should not exceed 200 words. Viewpoints columns, which may be submitted through [viewpoints@dallasnews.com](mailto:viewpoints@dallasnews.com), should not exceed 600 words. Letters and columns are edited for length and clarity. Include your name, address with ZIP code and daytime phone number. Submissions become property of *The News*.

### ONLINE FORM

Please send us your letters via this online form [dallasnews.com/sendletters](https://dallasnews.com/sendletters)  
 We cannot accept letters via email or postal service



# Kids, write a letter to the editor and win prizes

By ELIZABETH SOUDER  
Staff Writer  
esouder@dallasnews.com

Try your hand at writing a letter to the editor and enter to win prizes. The best letter writers will get a session at a Nancy Lieberman summer basketball camp or Texas Rangers tickets. Your letter could even get published in the paper.

Kids ages 17 and younger may enter the contest by answering the question: **Who should be the next mayor of Dallas and why?**

To research the candidates in the runoff, Scott Griggs and Eric Johnson, look at our Voter Guide at [voterguide.dallasnews.com](http://voterguide.dallasnews.com).

Then submit your letter via our online form at [dallasnews.com/sendletters](http://dallasnews.com/sendletters).

In the first box asking the topic of your letter, write: **Kids letter contest**. And be sure to include your age in the box where you enter your name.

Deadline is May 28.

*Elizabeth Souder is assistant opinion editor and Points editor for The Dallas Morning News.*

Twitter: @esouder

Michael Hogue/Staff Artist

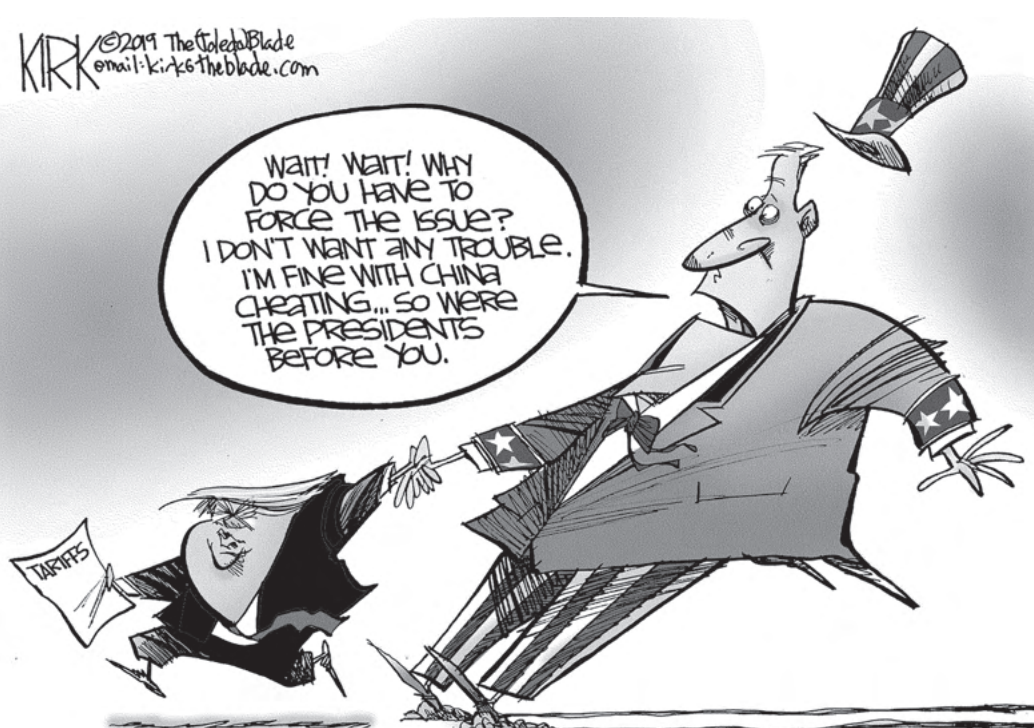
## THE WEEK IN CARTOONS



Ed Gamble/King Features Syndicate



Lee Judge/King Features Syndicate

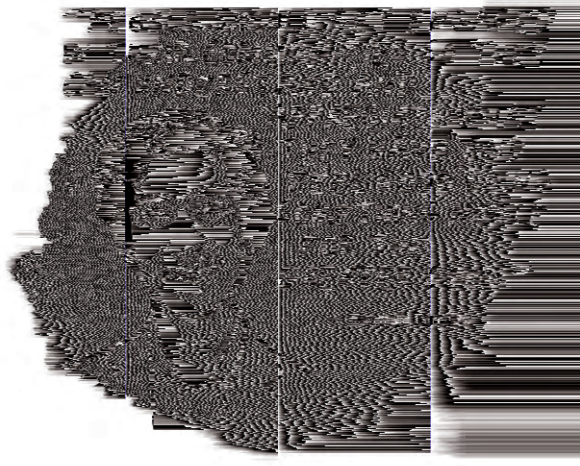


Kirk Walters/Toledo (Ohio) Blade



Ed Gamble/King Features Syndicate

# Teens find inspiration overseas, at home



### I'm a teen who travels the world photographing borders where tensions are high

By EKANSH TAMBE

The debate over construction of a wall to secure the border with Mexico tops the headlines. The border passes through mountains, hills, desert, plains, rivers, canals, sand dunes, cities and oceans. Every day, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents risk their lives to serve us, spending their days in isolation, treacherous terrain and extreme weather.

My photography project chronicles the fence, the culture and the people I encountered on an 11-day journey with my family along most of the 1,900 miles of the U.S.-Mexican land border.

Agents were kind to share their views on border security and the everyday challenges they face. Residents of both countries provided insight into their daily routines and their perspective on the border. As they shared inspiring and heartbreaking stories, I got a sense of the drug situation, hearing about it from the people whose lives have been affected the most.

As I listened, the impact the border has on citizens, residents, immigrants and federal agents began to unfold.

In December 2017, I explored the border between North Korea and South Korea with my dad and visited the Demilitarized Zone, the Joint Security Area, and a tunnel that North Korea dug to invade the South. I got a firsthand view of the areas hit by the Korean War near the Demilitarized Zone train and my discussions with the South Korean people led me to believe that peace is what's most important to Koreans.

Last summer, as a part of

my Boy Scouts Eagle project, my younger sister, Ashna, and I traveled Israel's borders with the West Bank (Palestine), Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Gaza. Residents of the West Bank and Israel told us amazing stories.

To see the rockets fired by Gazan militants was nerve-racking. The humanitarian crisis along the borders seemed overwhelming. We could feel the hatred and tension between some Israelis and Palestinians during a visit to Hebron. However, it was great to see people of four religions living together in the old city of Jerusalem.

I gave my photos to the National Border Patrol Museum, which will use my work to educate visitors. The museum shows a film of the photos to select groups. All proceeds of my book, *The Great Divide — A Journey Across the U.S.-Mexican Border*, go to charity.

Now, I am working on a project to present photographs I took at the border of Spain and Morocco and on a project related to the Berlin Wall.

I love photography and have over 10,000 photos shot along the borders I've visited, thanks to mentoring and assistance from my parents. These days, I have been engaged in public speaking, educating people on borders and photography.

*Ekansh Tambe is a freshman at St. Mark's School of Texas. This column is an excerpt of a presentation he gave at TEDxPlano.*

Check out some of Tambe's photos at [dallasnews.com/opinion](http://dallasnews.com/opinion)

### To help repair an ecosystem, this Scout raised 300 quail in his family's living room

By ROB CURRAN

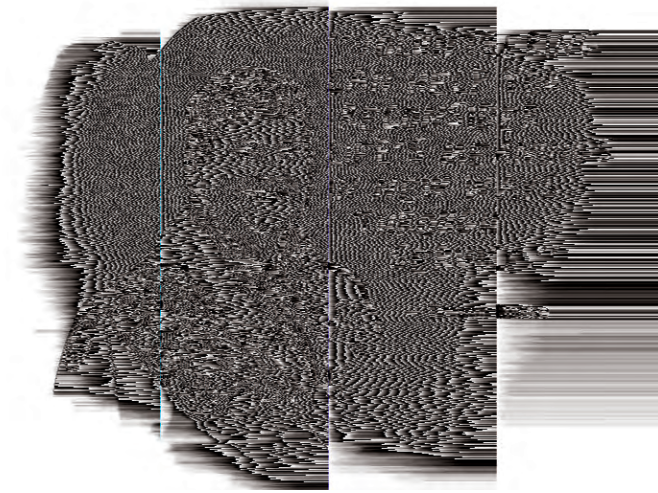
Trevor Burke had some unusual roommates during his senior year at St. Mark's School of Texas: a flock of northern bobwhite quail.

Breeders around the state had given or sold fertilized quail eggs to Burke at a discount. They were intrigued by his audacious plan: to repopulate the Blackland Prairie of North Texas with a species that once proliferated there.

But quail eggs need the warmth of the nest to hatch, and leaving them outside would have been fatal. To pursue his dream of revitalizing the habitat on which Dallas was built, Burke consulted with master naturalists and environmental scientists.

Then he consulted with his mom: How would she feel about him raising over 300 quail in the living room?

The Blackland Prairie is a distinct ecological region that roughly corresponds



with the most developed area of Texas: the Interstate 35 corridor from the Red River to San Antonio, over 300 miles south. Less than 1% of this prairie is protected, a few thousand acres of unspoiled grassland out of what Burke estimates were once millions.

At a TEDx Kids talk at Southern Methodist University, Burke called it "one of the most critically endangered ecosystems in North America."

Burke grew interested in

the Blackland Prairie while volunteering at the Conne-mara Conservancy in Allen. He has since won the President's Environmental Youth Award, along with awards from Disney, the Scouts and others for his work conserving the ecosystem. At the Twelve Hills Nature Center in Dallas, he propagated native grasses, using seeding techniques to elbow out invasive grasses like Bermuda.

Staff at the Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning

Area agreed to help Burke tag quail and release them in the center, one of the conserved areas of the Blackland Prairie. More than four-fifths of the northern bobwhite quail, whose name derives from their call, have died out.

Once the quail were hatched in the living room, Burke moved them to a converted dog cage in the yard, and from there to a large cage at the Lewisville Lake environmental center. When the birds reached about 14 weeks, Burke helped tag and release them. Some of them have been spotted nesting near the lake.

"My view is that we're going to have an impact either way on nature — we can't not have an impact on nature," Burke said. "So, if we're going to impact nature, let's make it as positive an impact as we can."

*Rob Curran is a writer in Denton. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.*

### I saw a man begging for food, so I decided to do something about hunger

By WILL LOURCEY

When I was 7 years old, I saw a man on the street corner holding a sign reading "Need a Meal." I asked my parents what this meant, and I couldn't fathom how there were people in my own community who didn't have enough food to eat.

Seeing a problem that needed to be addressed, I decided to do something about it. I gathered my friends from school, and together we founded FROGs, or Friends Reaching Our Goals. We decided to collect donations for the local food bank through lemonade stands and yard sales.

Nine years later, I'm 16 years old and the chief executive of FROGs. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has provided over 900,000 meals for the hungry in our community. Our mission is to inspire, empower and mobilize kids to make positive change in communities.

FROGs has dramatically changed since the compar-

atively primitive lemonade stands. Our projects have expanded and focus on current issues in Fort Worth. A few years ago, we became aware of the plight of food deserts, areas in which healthy produce is unavailable, in our urban environment. Many kids in East Fort Worth had no access to fresh, affordable produce, which was distressing. FROGs knew that we had to intervene and introduce these kids to a healthier, more productive dietary lifestyle. Thus, the FROGs Dinner Club was created.

The FROGs Dinner Club is a two-part event that occurs monthly. We partner with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County and provide a healthy, well-balanced, catered meal. The food can range from edamame to lasagna to shepherd's pie, often matching up with holidays and alternating between different styles of food. We want to encourage the kids to try new items and show them the benefits of a



nutritious diet.

The second part of the Dinner Club is the service project. We also want to teach the kids here that they can have a positive impact in their communities, similarly to how I was inspired when I saw that man on the street corner. We offer a variety of service-themed activities, from writing cards for hospital patients to filling bags with shelf-stable food for the hungry. The service project serves as a way to empower kids to stand up in

their areas and to contribute to positive change.

It doesn't matter where you live, what your background might be, we all have the ability to make our world a more peaceful and positive place. I like to tell kids to: See a need, make a plan, gather friends and change the world.

*Will Lourcey is chief executive of Friends Reaching Our Goals. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.*

## LIVING OUR FAITH

# Making higher connections

### Observing Jewish laws restricting human touch transformed my relationships

By RACHEL ROUHANI

Touch — something we take so lightly, but don't often realize that our lives revolve around. A firm handshake and you get the job. A hug with someone you like and you're in love.

Touching and physicality, even with just a friend, can be good, but it can also cloud judgment and make us forget how to connect with others on an intellectual, emotional and spiritual level. The Jewish concept of shomer negiah provides clarity and allows a person to appreciate and realize their self-worth.

Shomer negiah literally means "observant of touch," and it refers to someone who refrains from physically touching the opposite sex, excluding their immediate family and spouse.

One of the sources for this prohibition is from the book of Leviticus: "None of you shall come near anyone of his own flesh to uncover nakedness: I am the Lord." The rab-

bis extend this prohibition beyond sexual intercourse to all forms of touching. Today, some observers do not touch relatives outside of their immediate family, while others are more lenient with this view.

Other commentaries explain that the words "I am the Lord" signify that G-d appreciates someone who distances themselves from unholy acts to become closer to him. These words suggest that someone who takes advantage of physicality subsequently distances himself or herself from G-d's holy name.

Even though the laws of shomer negiah were created long ago, I believe they are still able to lead people to live more meaningful lives today.

For the past four months, I have been observing the laws of shomer negiah. At first, I merely wanted to see what it would be like. Then, I was given the book *The Magic Touch* by Gila Manolson. After reading the book, I was convinced. For the first time, I was given valid and understandable reasons on why it was helpful and perhaps even necessary to be shomer in today's world.

One of the main ideas the author gave for abstaining from touch was, "If you want something badly enough, you can fool yourself into

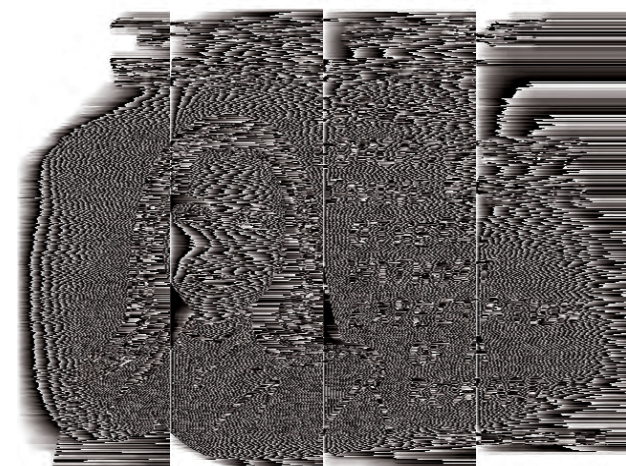
believing you have it, even when what you have is only superficially similar."

It is completely normal for every human to desire physicality, but because a person wants to be close and physical contact makes them feel close, they could think that they are close when, in fact, feeling close and being close are very different. This leaves a person with delusions of intimacy where no true intimacy exists.

Before being shomer, I, myself, was also blinded by the desire for this connection. I couldn't imagine a world where I couldn't high-five or hug someone of the opposite gender. Even though touch is one way to form bonds with others, I have found that the relationships that have formed or evolved through conversations and funny moments are much more valuable to me, and I cherish them more.

The author of the book addressed an idea in Judaism that is often forgotten in modern society: The body and soul work together as one. She explained that the soul defines one's identity and the body reflects it.

From this, it can be understood that physical intimacy without emotional intimacy is not a true expression of the self or of love. A body separated from its soul



is nothing. Physical love can be derived from emotional love. The other way around is like playing with fire.

I never realized what a difference it would make in my life when my body and soul connected. Now, every experience I have with others has a piece of my religion, and it makes each interaction I have significant. For example, instead of congratulating someone with a hug, I use kind words to express my sentiments, making us both feel special.

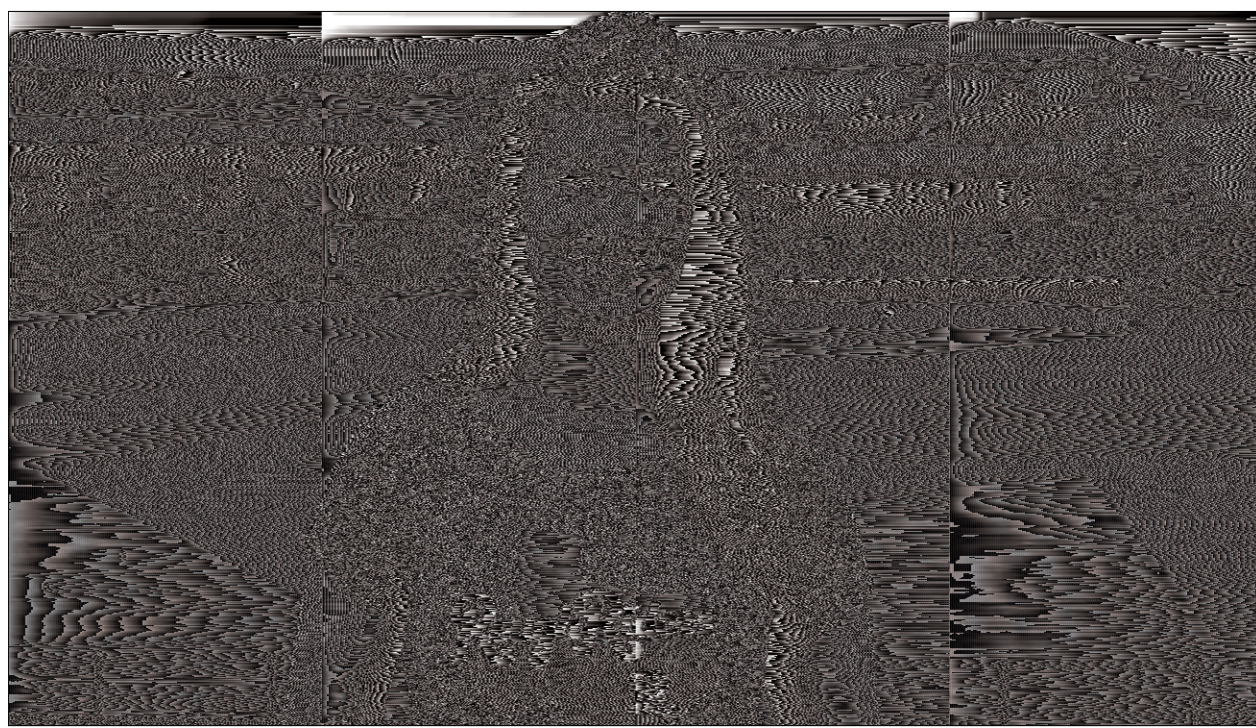
Those who argue against shomer negiah say that touching is a necessary part of life because even if you are put in an unfortunate situation because of it, you are able to learn from that hard or heartbreaking experience. Indeed, in every negative struggle, a positive lesson can be learned.

This does not mean, however,

that a person should intentionally experience a situation that will result in pain. By being physically intimate with someone regardless of how compatible emotionally, intellectually and spiritually you are together, you are setting yourself up to be let down by someone's emotional realities just because you fell in love with their physical capabilities.

Ultimately, being shomer builds stronger friendships, relationships and connection to G-d by allowing people to reflect and truly love themselves for who they are.

*Rachel Rouhani is a student at Yavneh Academy of Dallas. This column was first published in the school paper, The Bulldog Print, and it won first place this year in the commentary division of the Dallas Morning News high school journalism competition.*



Melanie Newman is a play-by-play announcer for the minor-league Salem Red Sox of Salem, Va., and part of the first all-female broadcast team in pro baseball.

# 'It doesn't matter how many people tell you no'

Yes, a woman could play Major League Baseball and some women are playing overseas professionally

By MAGGIE WHITFIELD



POINT PERSON

**I** like baseball because you never really know what's going to happen. You never know whether he or she is going to hit a home run or strike out. And I also love that although there must always be a winner and a loser, the game's still always fun. My favorite time is when two great teams are playing, and it seems the game's going to go on forever.

My dad loves baseball, and I learned to love baseball, too. But I'm a girl, but that's OK. It's more than OK! As a young girl, I didn't know baseball was a "boy's" game. It wasn't until I was 6 that I learned it was unusual for girls to play baseball. But that's not right. I think girls and boys are equal, and a girl can love baseball. If she wants to play baseball, she should be able to. Because a girl can do anything she wants, and that includes baseball.

That's why I loved talking to Melanie Newman. She does play-by-play for the Salem Red Sox as part of the first all-female broadcast team in professional baseball. She got the job after working for the Frisco Rough Riders. It's cool because she shows that women can love baseball, too, and that they can do anything in baseball boys can do. Like Melanie does and someday hopefully like me.

**How did you decide you wanted to get into sports broadcasting?**

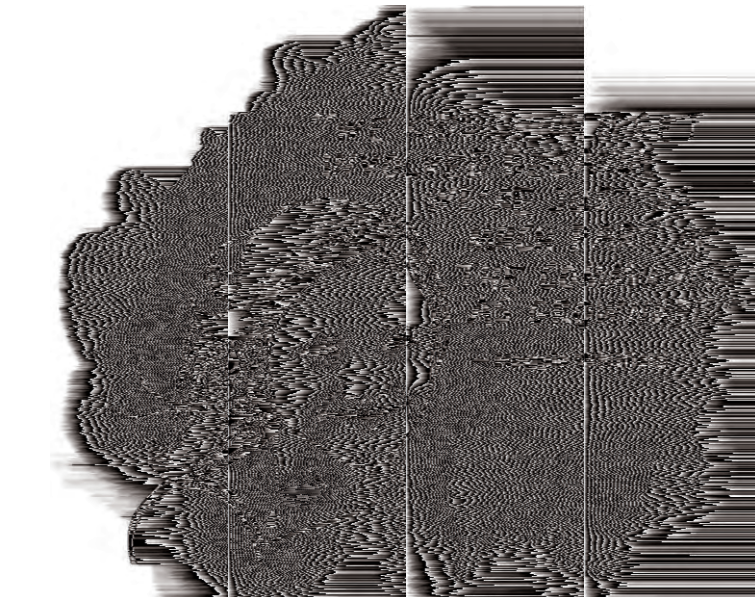
I just loved sports when I was a kid and I knew that I liked being around athletes, photographing them and talking to them. But it wasn't until I came a little more out of my shell and got into college that I found out I could talk about them on TV for a living.

**Do you think it's hard for a woman to do what you do?**

I think it's all how you feel and how you think about it. If your family and friends and the people who matter support you and you're willing to put in the time and effort and dedication to pursue what you love, it definitely pays off in the long run.

It doesn't matter how many people tell you no or how many people don't want you to be a part of it. It's that the people that matter most stand behind you and encourage you.

**What are some of the challenges you've had to overcome in your job?**



The schedule can be challenging just because usually from February until September and sometimes to Thanksgiving, I don't have a day off. So, trying to find a balance, to still have a life outside of work, seeing friends, seeing family, can kind of be

the hardest part of it. You really have to love your job to show up every single day for close to 200 days straight.

**Who helped you the most along the way?**

Definitely my teachers and the

people I studied under at school. The people in the industry who saw how hard I worked as a student and that I wanted to be involved. When they learned of opportunities, I was usually the first person that they reached out to. From there, it was just my responsibility to get to know as many people as possible at each work event so that I could build my network and start to develop relationships.

**Who's your favorite female athlete?**

That's a tough one. I think Serena and Venus Williams are awesome because not only are they top athletes as females, but they're also sisters. They carry their family into what they're doing. Now they're moms and wives, and it's becoming even more of a family event. They're showing that you can be a mom and have home life and still go out and be an amazing athlete.

**Do you have a favorite athlete, male or female?**

My favorite athlete overall is Bo Jackson. We grew up in an Auburn house. That was how I became familiar with him. My parents went on dates to games when he played football. But he didn't just play football. He also played baseball and he ran track and was just a really amazing athlete to watch. Now that he's retired, he spends a lot of time giving back to the community.

**What do you think is so great about baseball?**

I just think it's special that anybody can watch it and anybody can play it. There's no clock that moves it along. You're just relying on the talent of every athlete to move the game. But it's also a big part of America's history and our past and our present. Every single athlete comes from such a different background that there's always going to be something to relate to with every single player that comes through. And I haven't had a day yet where something didn't happen that I haven't seen before. I don't think there are many sports you can say that about.

**My favorite player is Adrian Beltre. Who's your favorite baseball player of all time?**

Oh, boy. That's a big one. Aside from Bo Jackson, I guess I'd have to say David Ortiz. Growing up in Boston, he just always had the biggest smile and the biggest heart. When Boston was attacked a couple of years ago, you could see his emotion and how much he cared for the community.

I think that's what I love about sports — it involves your community. Whenever you see athletes get attached to the people, and they make it more than about the money they're paid, I think that's special.

**What's your favorite baseball team?**

Growing up it was the Red Sox. But I've also liked all the other teams that I've worked with; the Texas Rangers, the Arizona Diamondbacks have all been a lot of fun. Then you start becoming fans of the athletes themselves, not just the team, which is even more different.

**Who's your favorite mascot?**

It's actually not a baseball mascot. But he's in the NHL. The Philadelphia Flyers' mascot named Gritty. I just think he's the funniest but also kind of intimidating. He's funny to watch. Outside of him though in baseball, Orbit for Astros might be my favorite.

**What's your favorite ballpark food?**

Probably a corn dog because I think if you do the corn dog just right, you really can't go wrong with it. I tried the pickle dog last year at the Rangers game. That wasn't bad either. I don't really like pickles, but it's on the stick. It's easy to carry around.

**Do you have a non-sports hero that inspires you, and why?**

Honestly, my mom and my dad and my grandmother. They all have had their share of things that they've had to overcome to be there for us and to support us. But my mom was a teacher for over 30 years. That's what she loved to do. I grew up knowing that I could do what I liked as well.

Then my dad. He's just always had the biggest heart for us. It meant so much to have that sympathetic and understanding side.

Then my grandmother was kind of my best friend when I was a little kid. She was probably the biggest supporter of everything I ever did. She's the reason that I got into pageants, which are what cracked me out of my shell and made me not such a mortifyingly shy human being. The three of them have meant a lot to me.

**Do you think there will ever be a woman to play Major League Baseball?**

Well, I really hope so. I know that a woman just became the first to sign a scholarship to play college football. I think when you see things like that happening and you see some of the girls that are making really big headlines with Little League teams and they're playing with all boys, I don't see why a woman couldn't play Major League Baseball.

Really, you can do just about anything that you want to do. There's no rule saying that she can't do that if she's not good enough. I'm really curious and kind of excited to see a day that that's finally happened. There are some women playing overseas professionally. Then, of course, we have the women's leagues over here. But actual Major League Baseball, I think it could happen.

**My dream is to become a Major League Baseball player for the Texas Rangers.**

Well, I think that's an awesome dream! I'll make sure I buy your jersey when that happens.

**If you had anything to say to girls who love baseball, what would it be?**

That girls don't have to be ashamed of the fact that they love baseball. Even if they want to be just a fan, or if they decide that baseball's something they want to work in, they can do whatever they please with it. It's an open and fair country, and baseball is there for everybody.

Baseball doesn't care if you're young or old, if you're in good or bad health, or if you're a boy or a girl. Baseball's meant for everybody who gets a chance to walk through the gates and watch it. I think that if it's something you enjoy, then go pursue it. If it makes your heart happy, then you should stick to it all the more. So if baseball's your thing, don't give it up just because somebody else thinks it's weird.

*This Q&A was conducted and condensed by Maggie Whitfield, a third-grader at St. Rita Catholic School in Dallas, on behalf of The Dallas Morning News.*

# 'We thought they needed to be appreciated'

How two fourth-graders rallied their school to show the janitors some love

By ROB CURRAN

**I**t was coming up to Valentine's Day, but fourth-graders Kaysha Johnson and Jordyn Rodriguez were not worried about how many cards or how much candy was coming their way.

"We were just walking in the hall, and we saw a paper on the floor," Jordyn said. "We knew the janitors would have to come and pick it up. We thought they needed to be appreciated."

Kaysha and Jordyn came up with an idea for their school, Coleman Elementary in Cleburne. In addition to the annual Valentine's event for students, perhaps they could start one for janitors and custodians. They had a sense that custodians didn't always get the respect they deserved, despite pulling hard shifts and presenting smiling faces to the children every day.

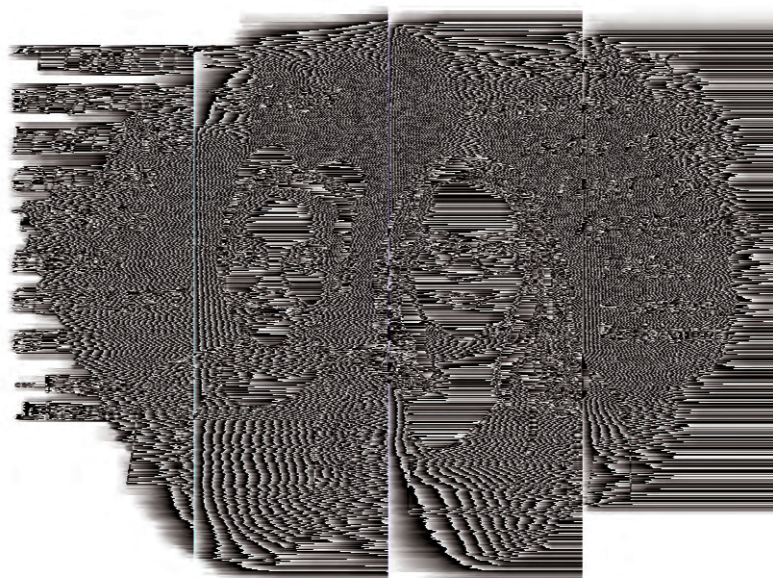
Teachers and staff were soon on board. The day after the Valentine's party for children, the cafeteria was decorated with signs and posters, declaring each student's appreciation for

the cleaners and maintenance workers. Principal Marla Roth said the custodians became emotional as they walked around the cafeteria, reading every single one of the love letters. The two girls touched a lot of people that day.

"I think that they have big hearts, that they have reached out and they've taken this upon themselves to plan this whole event for people

who sometimes go unappreciated," Roth said. "And because of these two, the entire school got to celebrate our custodians and the job that they do for us every single day."

*Rob Curran is a freelance writer in Denton. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.*



# Kay

Continued from Page 1P

As a family, we talk about issues and people running for office, and my brother and I go with our parents when they vote. Even though he and I don't vote, we usually get an "I voted" sticker, too. At school, I'm a student council class representative and was a page for the day in the Texas Senate this session. Kids can help with any bill by asking their parent to call or write their elected officials with their opinion to vote for or against it.

Unfortunately, not every candidate you want to win will actually win, and not every idea will become a law, but it's important to volunteer and try.

Whew! We've learned a lot already! Like the fact that I want to be the president of the United States someday, but I'm not eligible to run until 2045. I hope you'll vote for me.

"Don't debate. Lily's great!" Lily for President!

*Lily Kay is a fourth-grader at Mockingbird Elementary in Dallas. She wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.*

# Helping others is good for the soul

Foster kids deserve better luggage than trash bags, so I dived in to help

By HUNTER BEATON

When my parents adopted three foster children, I was very young and thrilled to have younger siblings come into our home. But I noticed something odd that they each had with them: a black trash bag. Out of curiosity, I looked inside. The bags held their clothing, dirty and with holes and maybe a stuffed animal. It made an awful impression on my young mind.

So years later, when it came time to plan a service project to become an Eagle Scout, I knew what I wanted to do. I did not want foster children to enter homes with trash bags as luggage. So as a high school freshman, I organized a project, raised money and purchased all the necessary bags to achieve my Eagle rank. I thought I

was finished. Honestly, I could just go on and be a high school student, playing tennis, studying for school and preparing for college. Little did I know I was being called to do something much different.

I realized the initial 100-bag donation would run out within a year, and agencies would go back to providing trash bags as luggage. My response was, "No kid deserves this!" So, with persistence, lots of meetings, people who believed in my idea, travel and coordination, I found a way to sustain the bags and take my idea nationwide.

I wanted the bags to be free. Who does not love free? Finding the right bag supplier in Flying Circle Gear, which gave me great discounts and high-quality bags, finding people to donate to the cause, and finding the right nonprofit that aligns with the foster children's welfare were key to the initial phases of the organization I founded, Day 1 Bags and Backpacks. But, how do you sustain it? I found legislators and child

welfare boards and created constant social media outlets to elevate awareness and create momentum to keep the funds coming in. I also have applied for grants to help sustain Day 1 Bags. It is work, but it is also rewarding. Persistence and keeping the mission simple are key.

As you may know, this travesty of trash bags as luggage does not happen only in Texas but also all across the United States. There are over 450,000 kids in care, and the number is not getting smaller. Support is needed to keep awareness alive and provide the dignity to children in care that they deserve. They are not trash!

With generous donations that come in from individual supporters, Day 1 Bags and Backpacks has been able to provide more than 27,000 bags nationwide during the past three years.

*Hunter Beaton is a high school senior in Boerne. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.*

"STOP BEING BUSY PEDALING THROUGH LIFE. YOU WILL DISCOVER THE REWARDS BY BEING INVOLVED IN HELPING OTHERS FAR OUTWEIGH OTHER DAILY BUSY ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE COME YOUR WAY."



— Hunter Beaton

"WE ALL HAVE TO LIVE AND COEXIST ON THIS PLANET TOGETHER. NO MAN LIVES ALONE ON AN ISLAND. THEREFORE IT IS OUR GOD GIVEN, INHERENT RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT AND CARE FOR ALL OF MANKIND."



— Kennedy Bentley

This teen is organizing a prom for the kids who always seem to get left out

By ROB CURRAN

Kennedy Bentley already has plans for her first spring break from Bethany College in Kansas next year: putting together a prom for students with disabilities.

Ahead of her senior prom at Richardson High School this year, Bentley, 18, got to thinking about the kids who never seem to get an invitation to the ball.

"I started to think about how we spend so much money — some kids spend almost \$1,000 — and how not everybody has the opportunity to do that," she said. "Their parents are already paying for medical needs and other classes they have to get through, and don't have the financial capacity to get kids to proms."

From the time she first met children with Down syndrome at her church, Bentley felt a personal connection. She tried to engage with the kids from special education classes in the hallways, but noticed that most everyone else avoided contact.

"People think it's not their problem — that person is someone else's problem. They don't

want to stop and take the chance to help that person."

Richardson's prom seemed like a moment when kids with disabilities might feel this exclusion most acutely, with the rituals and the venue less than ideal for the disabled.

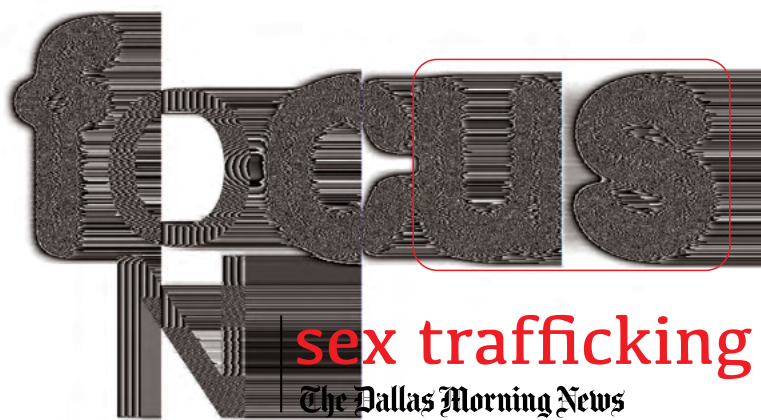
So Bentley decided to put on a prom for them. It was an ambitious project. She was active in the Interact Club, the youth branch of Rotary International, and worked with them to raise funds.

By the time she had all her ducks in a row, it was too late to host the prom she'd dreamed of. Unlike so many frothy prom dreams, however, her dream will not deflate when she graduates.

She has found a venue, Noah's Event Venue, which will host the prom at a discounted rate. Dallas entertainer DJ Mike has offered his services for free, clothing store Terry Costa will provide dresses and International Suit Wearhouse will dress the boys.

When she returns to Richardson from her studies in sports management in Bethany College next spring, she plans to put the finishing touches on a Cinderella story for kids too often left behind.

*Rob Curran is a writer in Denton. He wrote this column for The Dallas Morning News.*



You see them sometimes in the shadows, sometimes in the streets, sometimes on the sidewalks in parts of the city many of us don't go. Sometimes, too often, we don't see them at all. Across our city and region, thousands of people are trapped in sexual slavery, sold for their bodies in circumstances they cannot escape. We need to face their struggle and to answer their powerlessness with our power.

We can expose the truth about the sex trade. We can punish the traffickers for stealing someone's life and selling it. We can bring the victims back into freedom and fullness.

**Protect with us. Sundays in the Points section.**

build awareness.  
increase pressure.  
rescue lives.



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