



LITTLE ROCK

Spirée

SEPTEMBER 2024 \$ VOL. 23

Nº7

FALL FASHION ISSUE

Jude Frances

TRUNK SHOW

Thursday, October 10



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SEPTEMBER 22-29, 2024



The FREE festival features more than 40 authors,
music, cooking workshops, book giveaways,
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SixBridgesBookFestival.org

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Support for the Six Bridges Book Festival is provided, in part, by the Arkansas Arts Council, an agency of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This project is also supported in part by a grant from HumanitiesAR and the National Endowment for the Humanities and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Central Arkansas Library System gratefully acknowledges the support of the Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau; the Brown Chair in English Literacy at the University of Arkansas and the Community Literacies Collaboratory; the Rebsamen Fund; and the many other donors and partners who make this festival possible. The Junior League of Little Rock is a partner for the Little Readers Rock events.

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Get to know the fluffy, fun-loving pup who took home the title of *Soirée's* Cutest Dog 2024.

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Georgina Chapman, co-founder and creative director of luxury brand Marchesa, shares her insight into the world of high fashion and bringing her new line to Little Rock.

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The Good Fight

As the Arkansas Foodbank marks a milestone battling hunger, it looks to deepen its roots in communities and on local farms.

On the cover

Model KATIE DAVIDSON with AVA MODEL MGMT. Photographed by JASON MASTERS. Art direction by EMMA DEVINE. Styled by JOSIE BURNETT. Hair & makeup by LORI WENGER. Photography assistant: REBECCA CRIDER. Sweater by ARCH4, jacket and skirt by ARMA from BARBARA JEAN. Jewelry by DESIGNER COLLECTIONS from LAURA B LUXURY. Shot on location at PINNACLE VALLEY FARM.

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For this year's WFA Women of the Year, it's all about opening doors for others.

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Katie and Dr. Ramey Marshell reflect on the wide-reaching impact of this year's Bolo Bash, and we meet some of the medical professionals furthering the ripple effect from Baptist Health College.

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Amid revisions and renovations, the Six Bridges Book Festival shows a CALS focused on the future.

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Fall Fashion: Wild and Free

Saddle up and discover the luxury of the countryside with rural, all-American styles of the season.

Dress by STAUD, glasses and bag by BRUNELLO CUCINELLI from B.BARNETT. Jewelry by DESIGNER COLLECTIONS from LAURA B LUXURY.

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THE TRIUMPH OF NATURE

ART NOUVEAU FROM THE CHRYSLER MUSEUM OF ART

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024 TO JANUARY 12, 2025

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS.

LOSE YOURSELF IN THE DETAILS
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The Triumph of Nature: Art Nouveau from the Chrysler Museum of Art is presented by Terri and Chuck Erwin.

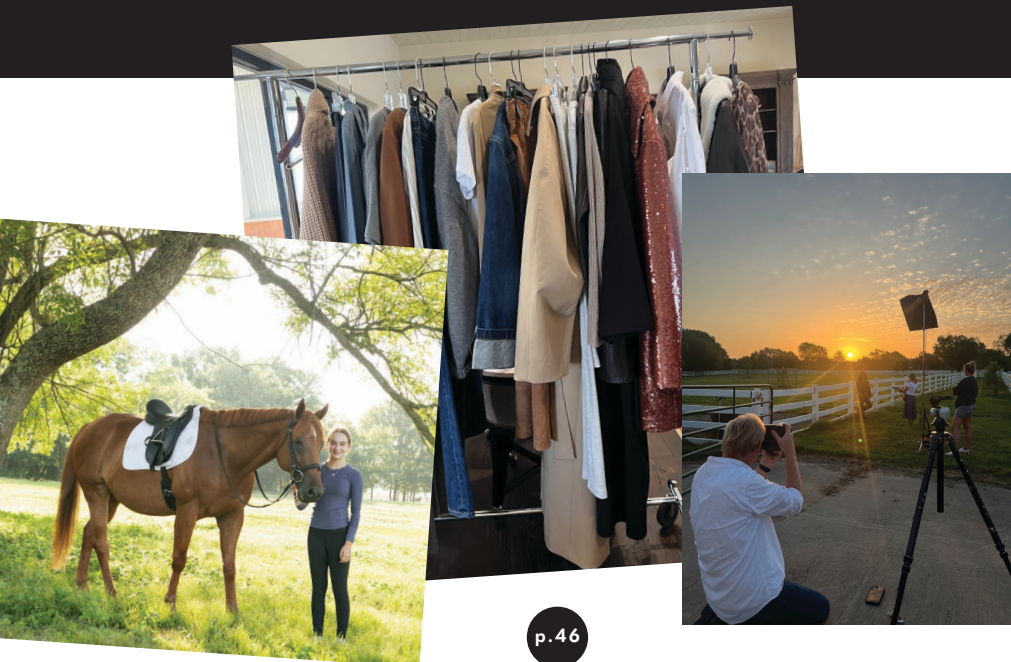
The Triumph of Nature: Art Nouveau from the Chrysler Museum of Art is organized by the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C.

ABOVE: Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory, *Waterlily Vase*, 1900, Blown and cameo glass,
Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Image courtesy of the Chrysler Museum of Art,
Photograph by Edward Pollard, © Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory.

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ARTS AND ARTISTS

A/MFA Arkansas Museum
of Fine Arts

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ARKMFA.ORG



p.46

"While working to solidify our vision for this month's **fall fashion** feature, we knew we wanted to adopt a cinematic eye almost reminiscent of vintage Ralph Lauren, and to create a world with depth and visual richness," says art director Emma Devine. "On set, it really did feel like we were filming scenes for a movie! Getting to see our team at work showing amazing clothes in a beautiful setting was such a wonderful experience."

"When we started discussing the concept, **Pinnacle Valley Farm** was the first place our minds went to," stylist Josie Burnett says. "We've photographed there many times, but we knew this would be different. Plus, we got to shoot with **Cheeky the horse!** Cheeky is shown competitively and handled by the wonderful **Stella Youngbauer**. Stella helped Cheeky stay on set, get ready for the next look and gave him lots of grass and scratches to keep him happy. He was gentle and sweet and made our model feel comfortable."

"We knew going into the shoot that comfortability was key, not just with Cheeky, but with a fall wardrobe in July temperatures as well. We began early at 5 a.m., which allowed us to beat the heat and get some dreamy sunrise shots. Despite the busy schedule, it was still a relaxing day on the farm, and we all wanted to stay long after wrapping."

Special thanks to Lee Hatcher for opening up these gorgeous grounds to our team!



p.36

Another favorite on-set moment this month was creating these flower arrangements for our **Power of the Purse** photo shoot. Blooms from Tipton & Hurst and handbags from B.Barnett make quite the power couple.

p.34

"Arkansas has a robust agricultural economy and yet is one of the most food insecure states in the country. This is unacceptable."

- HALLIE SHOFFNER,
ARKANSAS FOODBANK BOARD MEMBER



Somehow the time (and fur) has flown, and this summer marked the 10th annual, fan-favorite **Cutest Dog Contest**. To celebrate, we dug through the archives to pay homage to all the canine cuties who have worn the crown so well.



2014
THEODORE



2015
LUCY JEAN



2016
THEODORE



2017
HOLLY JOLLY



2018
MINER



2019
LOUKA



2020
BRUCE



2021
CHARLIE GOOSE



2022
KONA



2023
HODGES

SEE THE 2024 WINNER'S
EDITORIAL DEBUT ON P.18.



SEPTEMBER

DATES TO REMEMBER

TRUNK SHOWS

5 & 6 MASHBURN

12 & 13 LAFAYETTE 148

12 & 13 MARA LABELL

19 & 20 SENTALER

19 & 20 SUSAN BENDER

OCTOBER

DATES TO REMEMBER

TRUNK SHOWS

3 & 4 MARLA AARON

10 & 11 DANIEL WINGATE

17 & 18 FRANK AND EILEEN

EVENTS

15, 16, & 17 NATURA BISSÉ
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SEPTEMBER 2024 / VOL. 23 NO. 7

PUBLISHER / Mandy Richardson
EDITOR / Jess Ardrey
ART DIRECTOR / Emma Devine
PHOTOGRAPHER / Jason Masters

EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR & STYLIST / Josie Burnett
ONLINE CONTENT SPECIALIST / Sarah Dixon
EDITOR & RESEARCHER / Rebekah Eveland

SALES & MARKETING

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SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE: \$29.95 PER YEAR. • SEND ADDRESS CHANGE TO ARKANSAS BUSINESS, P.O. BOX 3686, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72203

SOIRÉE IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY ARKANSAS BUSINESS PUBLISHING GROUP, 114 SCOTT ST., LITTLE ROCK, AR 72201, P.O. BOX 3686, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72203, PH: 501.372.1443, FAX: 501.375.7933.

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CONTACT US

PHONE: 501.372.1443

MAIL: 114 Scott St., Little Rock, AR 72201

TO REACH THE EDITOR: jardrey@abpg.com

TO ADVERTISE: mrichardson@abpg.com

TO SUBMIT AN EVENT FOR THE CALENDAR:
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Featuring Co-Founder and
Creative Director of Marchesa
Georgina Chapman

RECEPTION

October 9, 2024

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

42 at the Clinton Presidential Center
1200 President Clinton Avenue
Little Rock, AR

LUNCHEON

October 10, 2024

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

City Center
315 N. Shackleford Rd
Little Rock, AR

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TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FOUR



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DAY OF GOODNESS BENEFITING GOODNESS VILLAGE

Day of Goodness benefiting Goodness Village, Sept. 24, tours start at 9 a.m. at Park Avenue Lofts or Palisades at Chenal. See the comfortable apartments provided to families receiving medical treatment.

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BRIGHT FUTURES

The **Wolfe Street Foundation** opened its new Youth Empowerment Project Teen Center this summer, a “first-of-its-kind teen recovery program” for the state. Designed for grades 7-12, the community-based initiative addresses substance use disorder with elements like peer support staff, mental health resources and academic assistance.

After years of planning, the **Arkansas Symphony Orchestra** will finally open its new headquarters, the Stella Boyle Smith Music Center, with a three-day celebration Sept. 13-15. Festivities include concerts, tours, food trucks and even a parade stretching from the First Security Amphitheater to the new East Village space.

The **Argenta Contemporary Theatre** is expanding its education program with the new, 3,700-square-foot Benson/McAdams Argenta Contemporary Theatre Academy. The space will be home to many classes, camps and workshops currently held in ACT II, and will be located next door above the Thea Foundation offices.

BIG MOVES



The **Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund** hired Christine Gronwald as its new director of development.



The **CARTI Foundation** board added Cathy Gammill and Jordan Longnecker.



City Year Little Rock added four new board members: Emily Jordan Cox, Randy Jones, Raymond Long and Mark Wilson.



Dr. Rachel Eells has been named the inaugural **Windgate Foundation** endowed director of the UA Little Rock School of Education.



Forward Arkansas added Victoria DeFrancesco Soto and Jared Henderson to its board of directors.



Goodwill Industries of Arkansas added two new faces to its roster: Bryant Taylor as vice president of donated goods and Louis Alderman as director of operations.

LET'S SCRAMBLE

September marks the return of event season as calendars fill up with charity galas, but don't forget about the fairway. This month alone has multiple fundraising golf events in store including the **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas & North Louisiana** Golf Scramble, the **Baptist Health Foundation** Bolo Bash Golf Tournament, the **AEDD** Tee Off Classic and the 30th annual **Wolfe Street Foundation** Golf Classic.



GIFTS, GRANTS & HIGH PRAISE

A \$250,000 seed grant from Olivia Walton's Ingeborg Initiatives (a fund of the **Arkansas Community Foundation**) helped found the Doula Alliance of Arkansas, a new organization designed to increase access to and support doulas, as well as build collaboration between doulas and physicians, all in order to improve maternal health in Arkansas.

The **Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts** received a multi-year grant totaling \$450,000 from the **Windgate Foundation** to support educational programs like the Windgate Art School and other needs. Likewise, AMFA supporter Michael Laughter made an unspecified donation that will reduce tuition for select art school classes by an average of 17%.

The **Arkansas Foodbank** will receive the Headliner of the Year Award at the Arkansas Press Association's Press Freedom Gala.

The Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence awarded more than \$630,000 to 11 organizations to help prevent child abuse and neglect, including Little Rock's **Community Connections** and **Carter's Crew**.

The Root Cafe received a \$50,000 grant from the Backing Historic Small Restaurants program presented by the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** and American Express.

UAMS reported its second highest fundraising year on record, raising more than \$40.8 million through gifts and philanthropic grants in the 2024 fiscal year.

3

“Responders”*Opening Night*

7 p.m., Arkansas Repertory Theatre. Info: 501.378.0405, therep.org.

5-21

Acansa Arts Festival of the South

Multiple venues. Info: 501.663.2287, acansa.org.

11

“The Sunshine Boys”*Opening Night*

7:30 p.m., Argenta Contemporary Theatre. Info: 501.353.1443, argentacontemporarytheatre.org.

“What the Constitution Means to Me”*Opening Night with the Actors Theatre of Little Rock*

7:30 p.m., Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church. Info: actorstheatrelr.org.

12

Dancing With Our Stars
benefiting the Children's Tumor Foundation

6 p.m., Statehouse Convention Center. Info: 646.738.8551, ctf.org.

Zoo Brew and Cocktails,

SEE MORE and add yours at littlerocksoiree.com/datebook.

Too! benefiting the Arkansas Zoological Foundation

6 p.m., Little Rock Zoo. Info: 501.661.7200, littlerockzoo.com.

13

Trivia Bee benefiting Literacy Action of Central Arkansas

6 p.m., Grace Presbyterian Church. Info: 501.372.7323, literacyactionar.org/trivia-bee.

13-15

Stella Boyle Smith Music Center Grand Opening
with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

1101 E. Third St. Info: 501.666.1761, arkansasymphony.org.

“Bold New Moves”
with Ballet Arkansas

Argenta Plaza. Info: 501.223.5150, balletarkansas.org.

“Peter Pan” presented by Celebrity Attractions

Robinson Center. Info: 501.244.8800, celebrityattractions.com.

15-17

“The Music of Craig Courtney” with the River City Men's Chorus

St. James United Methodist Church. Info: 501.377.1080, rivercitymenschorus.com.

19

A Night in Vegas benefiting Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas & North Louisiana

5:30 p.m., The Hall. Info: 501.978.3118, rmhcarkansas.org.

Beards & Blue Ribbons benefiting the Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation

6 p.m., Chenal Country Club. Info: 501.379.8027, arprostatecancer.org/events.

20

Lettuce Grow benefiting the St. Joseph Center

5:30 p.m., St. Joseph Center of Arkansas. Info: 501.482.1908, stjosephcenter.org/lettuce-grow.

21

Southern Silks Stakes benefiting the Methodist Family Health Foundation

6 p.m., Embassy Suites Little Rock. Info: 501.906.4209, methodistfamily.org/southern-silks-stakes.

23-29

Six Bridges Book Festival with the Central Arkansas Library System

Multiple venues. Info: 501.918.3000, sixbridgesbookfestival.org.

24

Day of Goodness
benefiting Goodness Village

6 p.m., Chenal Event Venue. Info: 501.530.0095, goodnessvillage.org/dayofgoodness.

24-28

“Gridiron 2024”

Arkansas Repertory Theatre. Info: 501.378.0405, therep.org.

26

Driving Away Hunger
benefiting Potluck Food Rescue

5:30 p.m., Eastside Scrapyard. Info: 501.371.0303, potluckfoodrescue.org/events.

27

Gala for Life benefiting the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

6:30 p.m., Statehouse Convention Center. Info: 501.686.6113, thegalaforlife.com.

28 & 29

Aaron Diehl Plays Gershwin with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

Robinson Center. Info: 501.666.1761, arkansasymphony.org.

Meet Alex

LITTLE ROCK SOIRÉE'S CUTEST DOG 2024

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA MAYES

Armed with a pep in his paws, perpetual “Tongue Out Tuesday” energy and the most pillowy-soft curls this side of the stratosphere, Alex danced his way through a panel of judges, two rounds of reader voting and some very stiff competition to win the 10th annual Little Rock Soirée Cutest Dog Contest crown.

Now get to know the fluffy, fun-loving pup who came out as top dog.





ALL ABOUT ALEX

BREED: Maltipoo

APPROXIMATE AGE: 1

OWNERS: Ajai & Ka'Leisha Evans

PERSONALITY: "Playful"

AJ & LEISHA'S FAVORITE THING ABOUT ALEX: "His ability to make others feel happy by giving hugs and standing up clapping his paws."

HOW ALEX SPENDS HIS DAYS: "When Alex is not cuddled under his mommy Leisha, he spends his days with his favorite humans, best friend Duncan and girlfriend Moo at Hounds Lounge in Bryant."

HOW ALEX CAME HOME: "After Leisha's service dog passed in 2022, AJ made her a promise that if she finished her doctoral coursework, she could get another dog. So, for her 34th birthday in May 2023, she asked to go to Puppy Dreams, and Alex (formally Ben) cuddled with her and AJ right away. It was love at first play."

HIS FAVORITES

TREAT: Sweet potato wrapped in chicken

PLACE TO EXPLORE: His neighbor's backyard

TOY: A chocolate-scented teddy bear

ACTIVITY: Chasing balls

LOCAL BIZ: Hounds Lounge in Bryant

GUILTY PLEASURE: Pup cups and Starbucks sweet cream foam

The 2024 Little Rock Soirée Cutest Dog Contest is presented by Hounds Lounge Pet Resort and Spa.

CAUSE & COUTURE

Georgina Chapman, co-founder and creative director of luxury brand Marchesa, shares her insight into the world of high fashion and bringing her new line to Little Rock.

BY JOSIE BURNETT | PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARCHESA

Haute couture line Marchesa is best known for its unapologetically romantic designs. The dresses tell dreamlike, fantasy stories shrouded in ultra-feminine and whimsical energy. Developed by co-founder and creative director Georgina Chapman, the fairytale pieces have become a red carpet favorite among celebrities and socialites, and they will soon take over the Baptist Health Foundation's Bolo Bash Luncheon runway.

Soirée spoke with Chapman in an exclusive interview to discuss her new collaboration with Dillard's, how she approaches the creative process and the importance of giving back.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCES WITH FASHION.

GC: Even from a young age I was always very interested in fashion. As a child, I loved to visit the costume department at the Victoria and Albert Museum and spend my time pouring through magazines. During my teenage years, I started experimenting with clothes and creating my own garments. I carried my passion into college when I attended art school to study costume design. The concept of escapism in costume and the historical aspects of fashion has always intrigued me.

HOW DID MARCHESA MATERIALIZE?

GC: Marchesa came about through a mix of passion, hard work and the support from my family I had early on. One of my first major influences was the stylist Isabella Blow, who really believed in our vision. She asked me to create couture pieces for her to wear to Paris Fashion Week. Her advice to focus on evening wear, especially while it wasn't being widely done, was invaluable. Thanks to her guidance, I honed in on that one skill. I also feel incredibly grateful for Anna Wintour's mentorship and friendship over the years. Her insight and encouragement have helped me navigate the complexities of the fashion industry.

MARCHESA LAUNCHED IN 2004. HOW HAS THE BRAND EVOLVED IN 20 YEARS?

GC: Reflecting on the past 20 years, evening wear seamlessly led to designing wedding gowns for women. Over time, this expanded in Marchesa Notte and Marchesa Rosa, offering more accessible options for evening and day wear. We also introduced a kids' couture line and fine jewelry, broadening our collection to a wider range of needs. I am proud that throughout this journey we've remained true to the Marchesa DNA by maintaining our commitment to creating timeless pieces that women can cherish and pass down through generations. I'm thrilled about the next chapter and our partnership with Dillard's for Muse by Marchesa. They've been ideal collaborators, sharing our commitment to quality and craftsmanship. Offering our designs at a more accessible price point while maintaining the quality is truly exciting.

WHERE DO YOU DRAW INSPIRATION FROM?

GC: I find inspiration can be evoked in me by so many things such as travel, literature and art. It's different every season depending on what the team and I feel strongly about. Once we have a theme that we like, we start building a story around it.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS AND HOW YOU DEVELOP NEW DESIGNS.

GC: I sit down with the team and discuss ideas for each collection. Our designers are all specialized within their area — for example, embroidery and textiles, as well as draping and 3D experimental design — so it is important to listen to the different vantage points. We start with a concept, and then we do a lot of research to build a story together. We collect visual imagery for large-scale mood boards which then accompany us throughout the process from beginning to end.

SHOP THE MUSE BY MARCHESA collection at Dillard's, and see Chapman Oct. 9 at the Bolo Bash Luncheon.

THE EXCLUSIVE MUSE BY MARCHESA LINE WITH DILLARD'S LAUNCHES THIS MONTH. WHEN DID THIS COLLABORATION PROCESS BEGIN, AND WHAT'S THE INSPIRATION BEHIND IT?

GC: We absolutely love working with Dillard's. It's been a wonderful journey. The creative process began with a conversation between our team, and it quickly gained momentum. Everyone was eager to create something unique, a collection that stands out while capturing the true essence of Marchesa and our DNA.

AS THE FEATURED GUEST SPEAKER OF THE BOLO BASH LUNCHEON, WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE EVENT AND ITS MISSION?

GC: When Dillard's presented the idea of collaborating with the Baptist Health Foundation, I was immediately drawn to it. It's always so fulfilling to merge fashion with a meaningful cause. I have immense respect and gratitude toward our health care workers. Supporting the Baptist Health College Little Rock's mission to prepare the next generation of health care professionals and nurses is especially meaningful. Being able to contribute to such an important mission while showcasing our designs will be a truly rewarding experience.



GEORGINA CHAPMAN wearing one of her MUSE BY MARCHESA pieces exclusive to DILLARD'S.



Quality early care and education is vital to your child's development in **the first five years.**

Written by Kelli Hilburn, Better Beginnings Program Administrator

A solid foundation

Every child deserves the best start possible and the opportunity to start kindergarten with a solid foundation from which to continue their education.

The first five years

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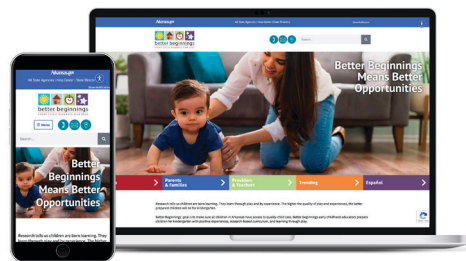
Employers can see higher workforce efficiencies, and a stronger economy for their community.

Better Beginnings

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Scan the code to visit the Parents and Families pages on our website.



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Click the orange banner at ARBetterBeginnings.com to find star-rated quality early care and education providers who can help your child start kindergarten with a solid foundation from which to continue their education.

Give your child the best start with quality early care and education.

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THE COMMUNITY



STEM-POWERED SUCCESS

DR. JUSTIN LUTTRELL

Director of STEM and Blended Learning for PCSSD

THE PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (PCSSD) boasts many dedicated educators and administrators from 25 schools across central Arkansas. According to Dr. Justin Luttrell, Director of STEM and Blended Learning for PCSSD, their STEAM-powered approach to learning sets them apart. “From our early intervention and exposure programs in STEM to our accelerated progressions and career pathways, PCSSD is unmatched in its offering for students,” shares Dr. Luttrell.

How does PCSSD plan to incorporate science, technology, engineering, art and math during the 2024-2025 school year? Dr. Luttrell answers questions about their comprehensive approach.

Q: How are elementary students introduced to STEAM?

A: Outside of our core curriculum programs, the elementary schools will experience our fourth consecutive STEM is LIT! Initiative. We'll take children's literary works and combine them with a challenge in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. This year, we will explore scientific processes and mathematical dialogue.

Q: How do STEAM programs progress in secondary schools?

A: Our secondary schools will continue offering core STEM curriculum with our additional acceleration pathways, including the opportunity to gain Algebra I, Algebra II, and Physical Science credits before entering high school. With the addition of career exploration opportunities through our Career and Technical Education and Academy programs, students can experience STEM through industry-driven contexts.

Robotics is another great opportunity for students to compete in STEM fields. Additionally, our district is always striving to improve upon and continue previous events such as STEM-centered fairs, competitions and world records, and career pathways.



Q: With PCSSD's increased focus on STEAM the past few years, what results are you seeing?

A: The University of Arkansas Office for Education Policy just published a report indicating PCSSD outperformed other districts in the metro area in elementary, middle, and high school. Additionally, the same published report indicates that PCSSD outperformed the state average.

We hope to continue our upward trajectory and mitigate areas of concerns as we strive to give our students the best educational experiences possible.

ABOUT PCSSD

Pulaski County Special School District spans more than 600 square miles in central Arkansas and requires highly skilled and passionate personnel to adapt educational policies and personalization to 25 schools. Every school is accredited by the Arkansas State Board of Education. PCSSD has served schools across Pulaski County since July 1927.

PCSSD is committed to creating a nationally recognized school district that assures that all students achieve at their maximum potential through collaborative, supportive and continuous efforts of all stakeholders.



501.234.2000 / pcssd.org

WHEN DO OVERBITES OR UNDERBITES NEED MORE THAN BRACES?

SAGAR MEHTA, M.D.

Chief of plastic and reconstructive surgery and craniofacial team director at Arkansas Children's Hospital and assistant professor of surgery at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences



Q: What are the most common causes of overbites or underbites?

A: These conditions can be caused by an abnormal growth of your upper jawbone (the maxilla) or lower jawbone (the mandible). It can be something you're born with, and you can be otherwise healthy. In other cases, it can be associated with a congenital anomaly or a traumatic event.

Q: At what age are overbites or underbites diagnosed?

A: Most children get their first true orthodontic treatment around 12 to 14 when their adult teeth come in. That's when braces are used to align the teeth, and it is frequently when abnormal jaw growth is identified. Sometimes, children who have issues with feeding or sleep disturbances can be diagnosed earlier.

Q: How is the severity of overbites or underbites measured?

A: A discrepancy of 4 or 5 millimeters between the upper and lower jaw can be difficult to correct with braces and may require jaw surgery. At Arkansas Children's, we can admit our surgery patients overnight to ensure they're eating and drinking well before they go home after surgery.

Q: What are the risks of not correcting overbites or underbites?

A: It can cause difficulties eating and drinking. If the upper or lower jaw is pushed back significantly, it can restrict a child's ability to breathe. Those patients sometimes have more severe sleep apnea. Surgery can improve their ability to breathe, eat and drink. Correcting the condition can also help psychosocially.

Learn more about craniofacial conditions treated at Arkansas Children's at archildrens.org/plastics or call 501.449.0731.



HOSPITALS • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

1 Children's Way,
Little Rock, AR 72202
501.449.0731

ASK THE EXPERT

Shana Nolen

Head of School, The Anthony School

Q: Recently, *The Anxious Generation* has been a topic of conversation among school leaders, parents, and social psychologists. Do you have ideas about how schools can address the concepts in this book?

A: We have a real opportunity here to partner with parents and the broader community to address what is happening to childhood. For those who have not read it yet, this book centers around two main themes: the negative effects of growing up in a phone-based environment and the healthy, positive benefits of a play-based childhood. Every

child in our school has at least two opportunities for recess each day. Kids need to move to think, and that's not opinion; that is science. Studies show the positive effects of physical activity on brain function including improved memory, concentration and attention—not to mention the social and emotional benefits. Now we are looking for ways to incorporate more unstructured free play (with minimal “toys” and minimal adult intervention) so that our students are better able to exercise their creativity while practicing the art of sharing, negotiating and “working it out.” I am also supportive of schools which choose to be phone-free, but that is an article for another time!



The
ANTHONY
SCHOOL 

THE ANTHONY SCHOOL
501.225.6629
anthonschool.org

ASK THE EXPERT

Dr. Natalia Hodge

Orthodontist & Owner, Hodge Orthodontics

Your Child's Smile Matters: Expert Orthodontic Advice for Parents

Q: Why is it important to bring kids for an orthodontic consultation early?

A: Early orthodontic consultations are crucial because they help identify and address potential issues before they become more complex. For kids 7 and older, early treatment can guide proper jaw growth, correct harmful habits and improve appearance and self-esteem, setting the foundation for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

Q: How do I choose between braces and aligners for my child?

A: It's often a matter of personality. Some kids do well with braces, which are fixed to the teeth, and others thrive

on aligners, which are removable and must be worn for the majority of the day. Parents know their kids best and offer invaluable insight into which option suits them.

Q: What differentiates Hodge Orthodontics?

A: At Hodge Orthodontics, we offer personalized treatment plans tailored to each patient's needs. Our custom braces increase efficiency, and our remote monitoring system allows for frequent check-ins with fewer office visits. This ensures timely delivery of care, shortens overall treatment time and fits conveniently into your family's busy schedule.



 **Hodge**
ORTHODONTICS

HILLCREST: 2924 Kavanaugh Blvd.
WEST LITTLE ROCK: 11811 Hinson
Road, Ste. 100
501.916.2545
hodgeortho.com



Saturday, Sept. 14

Tinkerfest is back for its 13th year at the Museum of Discovery! This one-day festival celebrates innovation, creativity and the arts with hands-on activities for kids of all ages. Experience DIY fun and explore science, technology, engineering, art, and creativity.

MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY
501.396.7050 | museumofdiscovery.org

LITTLE ROCK soirée kids AGENDA

Storytime is adventure time



Stop by for baby, toddler, or preschool groups.
With 15 libraries, there's always a storytime happening near you.

CALS CENTRAL ARKANSAS LIBRARY SYSTEM
cals.org



WACKADOO!

Emmy award-winning phenomenon "Bluey" brings back its live stage show to the Robinson Center.

OCT. 2-3
CELEBRITYATTRactions.COM

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MATHNASIUM
The Math Learning Center

mathnasium.com/littlerock | 501.522.9101 | littlerock@mathnasium.com

LITTLE ROCK soirée kids

Resource Guide for Families With Disabilities

No two families are the same, and neither are their needs. On the following pages, you'll find a list of local services, support groups, schools and other resources for children and families with various requirements and abilities.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS PROVIDED BY ADVERTISERS.

ADD/ADHD

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock
1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.org

Offers comprehensive evaluations, therapy services, mental health counseling, full-time preschool and school-aged education for children and adolescents, plus vocational training for children, adolescents and adults.

KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock
5600 Commerce Court, Ste. B, Sherwood
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers outpatient occupational and speech therapies for children ages 0-21.

REACH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH - KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17680 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 1, Benton
300 S. Rodney Parham Road, Ste. 12, Little Rock | 501.575.2344 | kidsourcetherapy.com/reach-behavioral-health

Offers outpatient counseling for children, adolescents, adults and families.

ADVOCACY

DISABILITY RIGHTS ARKANSAS

400 W. Capitol Ave., Ste. 1200
800.482.1174 | disabilityrightsar.org

Navigating the education and legal systems can be daunting, especially when your child is facing suspension, expulsion or exclusion

due to their disabilities. DRAs comprehensive services address a wide range of issues, including education advocacy, voting rights, civil rights, litigation, public policy, transition services and training opportunities, plus much more. If DRA can't assist you directly, it will connect you with the resources you need to advocate for your child's rights and access the support they deserve.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

EASTERSEALS ACADEMY WEST

3724 Woodland Heights Road, Little Rock
501.227.3600 | eastersealsar.com

KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock,
5600 Commerce Court, Ste. B, Sherwood
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers outpatient occupational and speech therapies for children ages 0-21, as well as applied behavioral therapy to help children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder to reach their fullest potential.

REACH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH - KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17680 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 1, Benton
300 S. Rodney Parham Road, Ste. 12, Little Rock | 501.575.2344 | kidsourcetherapy.com/reach-behavioral-health

Offers outpatient counseling for children, adolescents, adults and families.

TEAM UP PROGRAM - KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers a specialized and intensive program focused on sensory wellness and family training for children ages 0-21 with sensory challenges.

BEHAVIORAL ISSUES & MENTAL HEALTH

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock
1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.org

Offers comprehensive evaluations, therapy services, mental health counseling, full-time preschool and school-aged education for children and adolescents, plus vocational training for children, adolescents and adults.

KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock
5600 Commerce Court, Ste. B, Sherwood
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers outpatient occupational and speech therapies for children ages 0-21.

REACH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH - KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17680 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 1, Benton
300 S. Rodney Parham Road, Ste. 12, Little Rock | 501.575.2344 | kidsourcetherapy.com/reach-behavioral-health

Offers outpatient counseling for children, adolescents, adults and families.

BLINDNESS/VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S EYE CENTER

1 Children's Way, Little Rock
501.299.2135 | archildrens.org

These pediatric specialists provide expert care for problems related to the eye including childhood cataracts, glaucoma, amblyopia and issues with the retina, cornea or eyelids. New parents often become concerned when they notice their baby's eyes don't appear focused or are crossed. If erratic eye behavior — common in newborns — persists after six months, further examination by a pediatrician is recommended. The Eye Center offers specialized treatments from surgery to glasses or contact lenses. Arkansas Children's provides access to care for the mental and emotional developmental issues that can stem from misaligned eyes.

DEAFNESS/SPEECH & HEARING

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock
1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.org

Offers comprehensive evaluations; speech, occupational and physical therapy services; mental health counseling; full-time preschool

and school-aged education and vocational training for children, adolescents and adults with language and learning disabilities and/or developmental disabilities.

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S ENT DEPARTMENT

1 Children's Way, Little Rock
501.474.6099 | archildrens.org

These highly specialized pediatric otolaryngology doctors use holistic approaches to care for a wide range of ear, nose or throat (ENT) conditions. The ENT team uses the most advanced systems and procedures to address a child's specific condition and their physical and mental well-being. They are nationally and internationally recognized experts in caring for common and complex otolaryngology conditions, from ear infections and tonsillitis to larynx reconstruction or hemangiomas. For common procedures like adenoid or tonsil removal or ear tube placement, Arkansas Children's ENT team offers Fast Pass scheduling and surgery.

ARKANSAS RELAY SERVICES

501.247.7335 | arkansasrelay.com

Offers telephone service for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability.

DENTAL

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S DENTAL CLINIC

1 Children's Way, Little Rock
501.830.4988 | archildrens.org

These dental programs provide care for patients with limited access to traditional dental care due to age, medical or economic limitations. These services are divided into two distinct programs. The first is a hospital-based program that provides complex dental and craniofacial care with a team of specialists for patients with medical, developmental or structural anomalies. The second is a school-based model that provides care for children through school clinics, mobile dental clinics and a traveling sealant program. Arkansas Children's Dental Outreach operates four mobile dental clinics, providing comprehensive dental care to children regardless of the family's ability to pay.

DISABILITY GROUPS

CAMP ALDERSGATE

2000 Aldersgate Road, Little Rock
501.225.1444 | campaldersgate.net

Camp Aldersgate provides barrier-free experiences for individuals age 6-35 with special needs.

As a caller with a speech disability, do you need to communicate on the telephone with confidence?

Arkansas Relay will do this for you by assisting in your telecommunication needs.

Arkansas Relay also offers webinars to learn more about services for people who have speech disabilities at arkansasrelay.com/webinar.

For outreach program, contact:
- alice.berry@t-mobile.com
- arkansasrelay.com/outreach

Speech-to-Speech (STS)

This service is designed for people who have a Speech Disability or those who use an assistive voice device.

With STS, you can call anyone on the phone. A relay operator ensures that you will be heard and understood.

arkansasrelay.com/sts



Hearing Carry-Over (HCO)

Hearing Carry-Over is the ideal solution for people who are unable to speak if they want to listen and type on their phone calls.

They type on their text telephone/teletypewriter (TTY) and the relay operator reads their words aloud to the other party.

arkansasrelay.com/hco

ARS
ARKANSAS RELAY



EASTERSEALS ARKANSAS

3920 Woodland Heights Road, Little Rock
501.227.3600 | eastersealsar.com

Includes developmental preschools, pediatric speech and language, physical and occupational therapy, plus an adult center for training and wellness, which assists adults with finding jobs.

EDUCATION

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive
1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.org

Offers comprehensive special education options for early childhood and school-aged children using early intervention and specialized teaching methods integrated with therapy and other professional support.

EASTERSEALS ACADEMY AT RIVERDALE

1617 Brookwood Drive, Little Rock
501.663.6965 | eastersealsar.com

Serves children with special education needs, including those with learning and physical disabilities or needs beyond those which mainstream school programs serve.

EASTERSEALS DEVELOPMENTAL PRESCHOOL

3920 Woodland Heights Road, Little Rock
501.227.3600 | eastersealsar.com

Provides early childhood education and pediatric therapy for children ages 3 months to 6 years old who have special needs and developmental disabilities.

EASTERSEALS OUTREACH PROGRAM

3920 Woodland Heights Road, Little Rock
501.227.3770 | eastersealsopts.org

Assists teachers, parents, administrators and therapists in development or implementation of appropriate programs for their students who may experience difficulties in the classroom.

LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

810 W. Markham, Little Rock
501.447.1000 | lrzd.org

Offers special programs for grades K-12 and enhanced autism services K-5.

PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

925 E. Dixon Road, Little Rock
501.234.2000 | pcssd.org

PCSSD spans more than 600 square miles in central Arkansas and requires highly skilled and passionate personnel to adapt educational policies and personalization to 25 schools. Every school is accredited by the Arkansas State Board of Education. PCSSD has served schools across Pulaski County since July 1927.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock
1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.com

Offers comprehensive evaluations, therapy-specific evaluations and evaluations for CES Medicaid Waiver services for children, adolescents and adults.

KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock,
5600 Commerce Court, Ste. B, Sherwood
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers outpatient occupational and speech therapies for children ages 0-21.



Archild is an Early Intervention Day Treatment (EIDT) program, Better Beginnings daycare and pediatric therapy provider for children six weeks through 18-years old. Outpatient and EIDT therapy services include speech, occupational and physical therapies. Founded in 1971, Archild has been serving special needs children and their families in Little Rock for over 50 years. Our dedicated team of early childhood and special education teachers and pediatric therapists work together to create and implement individualized plans designed to help each child we serve maximize their abilities and potential.

We accept ARKids First, PASSE and private insurance. For more information, visit us at archildschool.com or call 501.280.9195.



LEARNING

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock | 1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.com

Offers outpatient academic therapy (specialized tutoring) for individuals with learning disabilities, as well as full-time preschool and school-aged education for children and adolescents with language and learning disabilities and/or developmental disabilities.

KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock
5600 Commerce Court, Ste. B, Sherwood
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers outpatient occupational and speech therapies for children ages 0-21.

PATHFINDER INC.

2520 W. Main St., Jacksonville | 501.982.0528 | pathfinderinc.org

Pathfinder provides preschool and adult/family services for Arkansans with developmental disabilities.

MEDICAL

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

1 Children's Way, Little Rock | 501.596.6902 | archildrens.org

Arkansas Children's is the only health care system in the state solely dedicated to caring for Arkansas' more than 700,000 children. The private, nonprofit organization includes two pediatric hospitals, a pediatric research institute and USDA nutrition center, a philanthropic foundation, a nursery alliance, statewide clinics and many education and outreach programs all focused on fulfilling a promise to define and deliver unprecedented child health.

SNELL PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

625 N. University Ave., Little Rock | 501.664.2624 | snellarkansas.com

Full-service orthotics, prosthetics and pedorthics facility specializing in pediatrics.

NUTRITION

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock | 1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.com

Offers lactation consulting and feeding therapy through speech and occupational therapy programs for infants, preschool and school-aged children.

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S COACH CLINIC

16101 Cantrell Road, Ste. 114, Little Rock | 501.298.1391 | archildrens.org

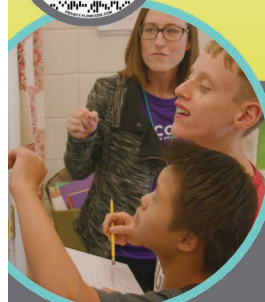
The Center for Obesity and its Consequences in Health (COACH) Clinic is a family-centered, multidisciplinary outpatient clinic designed to prevent and treat obesity in children and teens through lifestyle changes. The COACH Clinic is for patients 4-17 years old and their parents or caregivers who have been referred by their pediatrician. The COACH Clinic requires a strong commitment and readiness to make changes for the caregivers and the child or teen. Patients referred to the COACH Clinic receive monthly care and counseling throughout their visits.



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for individuals with learning differences
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Snell now offers Talee®, the most advanced 3D scanned and printed cranial remolding orthoses on the market. These orthotic helmets are thin, lightweight, breathable, and provide the most effective solution for treating plagiocephaly (severe head shape deformity) in newborns.*



*Effectiveness of Conservative Therapy and Helmet Therapy for Positional Cranial Deformation. Steinberg et al; Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery; March 2015

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HOT SPRINGS ■ MOUNTAIN HOME ■ NORTH LITTLE ROCK ■ RUSSELLVILLE ■ WHITE HALL



LITTLE ROCK
SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Rockefeller Early Childhood Center (NOW OPEN!)

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To get more information about your options, visit:

www.LRSD.org/register

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S EATING DISORDERS CLINIC

1 Children's Way, Little Rock

501.669.8799 | archildrens.org

This multidisciplinary specialty clinic offers specialized outpatient services for evaluating and treating eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and other eating disorders. Parent or family attendance at an educational session is required for patients recommended to this program. The session includes information on causes, medical complications, behavioral and emotional symptoms and treatment of eating disorders. The session will also include discussion of how parents and other family members can be helpful and supportive of their child or adolescent. Additional educational resources will be provided.

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S NUTRITION CENTER

15 Children's Way, Little Rock | 501.300.9949 | archildrens.org

ACNC is a research center focusing on improving child health by exploring the links between food and nutrition and optimizing how the body utilizes nutrients throughout development. ACNC is one of only two research facilities focused on pediatric and maternal nutrition and metabolic health in the U.S. The faculty and scientific staff are dedicated to discovering the fundamental biology of the childhood brain and metabolic processes and how diet and physical activity (both maternal and child) impact these networks. ACNC maintains around a dozen active research studies and regularly recruits new participants.

EDUCATION is for **EVERYONE**
Protecting that right is Vital
...YOU CAN HELP



We are faced with numerous calls from parents trying to get special education services for their children (up to age 21) but are facing difficulties from the school system. The call volume for these services are drastically increasing & we can't keep up with the demand.

We need YOUR HELP NOW.



HOW YOU CAN HELP: By supporting our work through your charitable donation (link below), your generosity will help us expand our reach to assist even more people.



DONATE TODAY AT DISABILITYRIGHTSAR.ORG/DONATE



Creating life-changing experiences for individuals with special needs.

campaldersgate.net

RECREATION

LITTLE ROCK ZOO

1 Zoo Drive, Little Rock
501.661.7200 | littlerockzoo.com

The Little Rock Zoo is certified as sensory inclusive through KultureCity with staff trained to accommodate neurodivergent individuals. Families can access social stories on the website to plan their visit. Sensory bags are available on-site for those in need, and several quiet spaces are provided for breaks. Additionally, a special sensory night is held during the yearly GloWILD exhibit.

THERAPY

ACCESS

10618 Breckenridge Drive, Little Rock
1500 N. Mississippi St., Little Rock
501.217.8600 | accessgroupinc.com

Offers speech, occupational, physical, feeding and mental health therapy evaluations and services for children and adolescents. Therapy is offered for both outpatient clients as well as integrated into the preschool and ACCESS Academy services for qualifying students.

ARCHILD

7723 Colonel Glenn Road, Little Rock
501.280.9195 | archildschool.com

Archild provides day habilitation, speech, occupational and physical therapies.

ARKANSAS CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION & THERAPY

1 Children's Way, Little Rock
501.669.8799 | archildrens.org

The Carolyn & Gerald Hamara Rehabilitation Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital provides the highest level of family-centered, evidence-based care to patients and their families or caregivers. The rehabilitation therapists collaborate with patients, their caregivers and physicians to establish appropriate, individualized treatment plans for promoting maximum independence and quality of life. Resources at the Department of Rehabilitation at Arkansas Children's Hospital include pediatric physical and occupational therapists, orthotics and prosthetic specialists and a therapy pool. Medications and other non-invasive therapies are often the first line of treatment. Surgery with pediatric specialists is available as needed. Each patient's care is personalized to their unique needs.

EASTERSEALS ARKANSAS PEDIATRIC OUTPATIENT THERAPY

3920 Woodland Heights Road, Little Rock
501.227.3600 | eastersealsar.com

Offers pediatric outpatient physical, occupational and speech and language therapy to children.

KIDSOURCE THERAPY

17706 I-30 Frontage Road, Ste. 3, Benton
100 Gamble Road, Little Rock
5600 Commerce Court, Ste. B, Sherwood
501.315.4414 | kidsourcetherapy.com

Offers outpatient occupational and speech therapies for children ages 0-21.

Visit
littlerocksoiree.com/kids
for an expanded list
of resources.



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Fostering growth and independence for all children

OUR PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Small classes
- Licensed special educators
- Board-certified PT, OT and speech therapists
- Nursing staff on site daily
- Large, fully-equipped therapy center
- Transportation

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Pathfinder, Inc.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

2400 W. MAIN STREET, JACKSONVILLE

501.982.4578 | PRESCHOOL@PATHFINDERINC.ORG
PATHFINDERINC.ORG

Services provided M-F, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., year-round



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WE ARE EXCITED TO CELEBRATE OUR 80TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR AND CONTINUE OUR MISSION TO EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO LIVE, LEARN, WORK, AND PLAY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

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EASTERSEALSAR.COM

The GOOD FIGHT

As the **ARKANSAS FOODBANK** MARKS A
MILESTONE BATTLING HUNGER, IT LOOKS TO DEEPEN
ITS ROOTS IN COMMUNITIES AND ON LOCAL FARMS.

By ASHTON RAY | *Photography by* JASON MASTERS | *Hair & makeup by* LORI WENGER

IT'S A CRUEL IRONY that so many Arkansans go hungry while farming remains one of the state's biggest industries, and it's not lost on Hallie Shoffner.

As CEO of Delta Harvest and an Arkansas Foodbank board member, Shoffner has a unique perspective of how the two worlds operate, where they overlap and, perhaps most importantly, where they don't.

"Arkansas has a robust agricultural economy, and yet is one of the most food insecure states in the country. This is unacceptable," she says. "The Arkansas Foodbank is helping feed the state and advocating on behalf of the people of Arkansas. They are taking bold, innovative and data-driven steps to not only provide food, but find the root causes of hunger and address those."

In 1984, the Arkansas Foodbank launched to supply affordable food services to local agencies, then merged with the farmer-driven Arkansas Rice Depot in 2016. Today, the nonprofit entered its 40th year having distributed more than half a billion pounds of food, making it the largest hunger relief organization in Arkansas.

The Foodbank is a hub for more than 300 hunger relief charities across 33 counties. It serves as what chief development officer Sarah Riffle calls "the acquisition and distribution point," collecting food items to give to member pantries to then share with families facing hunger in their communities. It's a simple idea, but Riffle is quick to point out the importance of understanding the complexity of hunger and the continuous effort needed to address it effectively.

Member pantries are very diverse, including church pantries, shelters, schools and after-school and summer child care facilities. Last year alone, the Foodbank distributed more than 40 million pounds of food through these partnerships.

"In Arkansas, one in six residents face food insecurity, meaning they do not always know where their next meal will come from," director of external affairs Ebony Mitchell says. "This issue is especially pronounced in children, with one in five children experiencing food insecurity, and among minority communities, where disparities are starkly evident."

To combat these statistics, the Arkansas Foodbank deploys its Food for Families and Food for Kids programs.

Food for Families provides access to healthy and nutritious food by supporting local agencies. Small grants help agencies build capacity and purchase equipment, while training sessions are conducted to teach best practices and new programs are designed and implemented for tackling barriers to food security. Meanwhile, a mobile pop-up pantry provides direct distribution at centralized locations all over Arkansas.

The Food for Kids program partners with similar groups to make sure children receive food over the weekend, after school or throughout the summer months. Their main strategies for ensuring access to nutritious food is by sending items home in backpacks, stocking school pantries and hosting summer feeding sites.

But one of the biggest hurdles Shoffner faces in and outside the fields is disrupting how people think about food sources.

“Americans have little to no relationship with where their food comes from, and that puts us at a disadvantage in advocating on our own behalf if something threatens that supply,” Shoffner says. “It doesn’t matter whether that supply comes through a grocery store or a food bank. Having a relationship with where your food comes from, understanding how it gets from the source to your table, that’s valuable knowledge.”

Part of that knowledge includes understanding the disconnect between a thriving farming economy and rampant hunger. As agriculturally rich as the Delta is, Shoffner says, it lacks a robust offering of nutritious crops that actually feed the community. Soybeans and corn are two of the most popular and lucrative, but much of that is exported, and the corn is typically grown as animal feed.

With this in mind, Shoffner says her involvement with the Foodbank has already inspired her work at Delta Harvest.

“For my part, as a farmer having a relationship with the Arkansas Foodbank and understanding their mission and process in providing people with nutritious food, it inspires me to diversify my operation, which is primarily commodity crops,” she says.

As part of those diversification efforts, Delta Harvest also serves as the first regional food hub in the area. The operation connects small- to mid-sized farmers with food buyers, businesses and consumers while promoting environmental sustainability, social justice and economic development, with hopes of encouraging others to do the same.

“Arkansas Foodbank has opened our eyes to not just the problem, but a solution for feeding Arkansans by encouraging more farmers to produce and equitably distribute healthy food throughout our state,” says Shoffner, who donated some of her own specialty rice to raise awareness of the role she believes agriculture should play in the Foodbank mission.

Meanwhile, the Foodbank has set several ambitious goals to ring in its milestone year. These include expanding its reach through new partnerships, raising an additional \$400,000 in operating support and increasing the distribution of nutritious food, particularly fresh produce. The organization will also host Central Arkansas Restaurant Weeks Sept. 9-20 to raise awareness and funds.

HALLIE SHOFFNER WEARING
CLOTHING FROM BARBARA/JEAN.
SHOT ON LOCATION AT THE
HISTORIC ARKANSAS MUSEUM.



Strengthening its volunteer base and enhancing community engagement are also top of mind for the organization. The biggest needs currently include serving shifts at the volunteer operations center, organizing food drives and creating personal fundraisers. Riffle says financial donations are the most effective way to support the mission, as every dollar donated provides enough food for five meals.

“As we celebrate our 40th anniversary at the Arkansas Foodbank, we want everyone to know about our enduring commitment to fighting hunger and our appreciation for the community’s support over the years,” Riffle says. “We’re excited about the fresh energy and diverse perspectives that our new board members bring, which will help guide us forward.”

Shoffner sees the possibilities, too.

“There are advantages in a truly collaborative, back-and-forth relationship between the farming community and the Arkansas Foodbank,” she says. “We can learn from the distribution model the Foodbank has to better understand food supply chains and how we can interact with those in a better, more efficient way for people who are hungry.”

LEARN MORE AT [ARKANSASFOODBANK.ORG](https://arkansasfoodbank.org).

Staying Power

*Cathy Tuggle,
Lenore Trammell and
Dr. Nirvana Manning.*

*Clothing, bags from B.BARNETT.
Florals from TIPTON & HURST.*



For this year's WFA Women of the Year, it's all about opening doors for others.

BY ALEXIS PETERS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON MASTERS

HAIR & MAKEUP BY LORI WENGER

THE WOMEN'S FOUNDATION OF ARKANSAS (WFA) was founded by women, for women in 1998. And 26 years after its launch, the organization continues to support the economic security of women and girls across the state through programs, research, grantmaking and more.

All of WFA's work is targeted to meet the needs and address the vulnerabilities of specific groups, including its signature Girls of Promise conference.

"Our research found that eighth grade is the pivot point for girls to feel confident in pursuing a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) career," WFA Communications and Development Coordinator Kennedy Kasten says, "so we launched our eighth grade Girls of Promise conference in response to this gap."

To date, the event has introduced STEAM career paths to nearly 8,000 girls.

Another WFA program, the Tjuana Byrd Summer Internship, connects college-aged women of color with paid summer internships in STEAM-focused roles. According to Kasten, the program is now plugged in with nine leading STEAM companies and has resulted in 60 internships, eight full-time job offers and several internship extensions since 2021.

WFA supports Black women entrepreneurs through the Women's Economic Mobility Hub. The initiative involves a six-month education and network program that includes a \$5,000 unrestricted grant. Since launching in 2021, the program has seen 50 graduates with the WFA investing more than \$250,000 in their businesses.

WFA's Save10 program and finance clubs empower women on a personal finance level. Save10 encourages women to save 10% of their income for retirement with an estimated \$191,520,000 of retirement savings committed since 2019.

"And we're just getting started," Kasten says.

Finance clubs offer women accessible resources for financial decision-making.

"Think 'book club,' but for talking about finances," she adds. And since 1999, the annual Power of the Purse luncheon

has given the WFA a chance to raise funds, highlight its latest work, debut new initiatives and spotlight women who are making a difference in their respective fields and beyond. This year is no different.

At the 2024 event, Cathy Tuggle, Lenore Trammell and Dr. Nirvana Manning will be recognized for their outstanding work in philanthropy, business and public service, respectively.

"Our honorees are truly a power trio when it comes to their accomplishments across the state," Kasten says. "They are extremely influential in a variety of career fields and communities all around Arkansas."

Cathy Tuggle

Woman of the Year in Philanthropy

CATHY TUGGLE, WFA's Woman of the Year in Philanthropy, is focused on service throughout her career and beyond. Tuggle owns two companies, Apartment Hunters and Arkansas Suites, both real estate relocation services with a focus on making the process of moving less stressful for their customers.

"We're very service-oriented, and I think that's why I enjoy servant leadership," she says.

Tuggle uses her expertise and resources to support WFA's Tjuana Byrd Summer Internship Program. For the past four years, her company has assisted with furnished apartments for interns in both Little Rock and northwest Arkansas. In addition to offering discounts, Tuggle's company has donated a furnished apartment annually. Beyond lodging, she and her team stay involved with the interns, helping them plug into the community and hopefully encouraging them to call Little Rock their home.

Apart from her direct support of the WFA, Tuggle has served on boards of organizations that support the community like AR Kids Read, Fifty for the Future and the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

But when asked to reflect on why she is being honored this year, Tuggle chooses to focus on small, behind-the-scenes touches

she infuses into her career and volunteer work.

"I think that I'm more like a connector, trying to bring people together," she says.

But just her presence on a team can change the culture. She once joined a board that was, in her words, "a little stuffy." Undaunted, Tuggle started hugging everyone before each meeting.

"And they sat back a little bit like, 'Oh, we've got a hugger coming into our room.' But now, 15 years later, in that boardroom, everybody's hugging, everybody's shaking hands and showing their true selves."

Another of her trademark "small" but meaningful acts of service is that, throughout her 33-year career, Tuggle has always made it a point to acknowledge her friends' and colleagues' birthdays.

"I just want to try to bring a little bit of joy into everybody's lives," she says. "We're all humans. We all want to love, and we just need to forget about the negativity and bring positivity, even if it's just for a few minutes."

Admittedly uncomfortable with the spotlight, Tuggle's motivating mindset is one that's increasingly hard to find.

"One day, I'd like to look back on all the different things that I've assisted in and volunteered for and say, 'Hey, I was part of that.' I don't want to say that I did that, I want to say that I was a part of that."

Lenore Trammell

Woman of the Year in Business

LENORE TRAMMELL'S FIRST encounter with the WFA was, in her words, "quite an introduction." Last year, Trammell was honored as one of WFA's Top 100 Women of Impact. As relatively new to the state — having only been an Arkansan for about a decade — the honor put WFA on her radar. But once the organization was in her sights, she was all-in on its mission.

"I was super excited to see what they're doing in the community," Trammell says. "Uplifting a girl uplifts the community. It has an amazing ripple effect, so I'm excited to be affiliated with them."

She especially connects with the Save10 initiative. The encouragement for young women to make financially sound decisions through saving, investing and supporting small business dovetails with work she's already involved with through her church and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

As WFA's Woman of the Year in Business, Trammell is being honored for work at Big River Steel where she's served as the chief administrative officer, chief compliance officer and general counsel since 2014. As an executive with an impressive array of titles, her work has been diverse, and she's been a key player since Big River transformed a soybean field in Osceola to a steel mill on par with other businesses in the county.

Yet no accomplishment brings her more pride than supporting southern Mississippi County.

"I think, in a lot of respects, I am probably the heart of Big River. I handle the things that impact the community most specifically," Trammell says.

Her unofficial title as "heart of Big River" is made tangible

through her work as president of Big River Steel Cares, the company's nonprofit arm. The organization hosts backpack drives, sponsors camps for local kids and, in its signature event, provides community members with everything needed for a Thanksgiving meal. Her strong connection with the community even made it possible for Big River Cares to jump in to provide a new playground when a local Head Start program needed a new place for kids to play.

"Those are the kind of things that really do help to make you more than a business in the community — you're a partner in the community."

As a woman in business, Trammell makes it a point to build relationships with and support other women. She was able to do just that when she submitted the name of a fellow mom and local physician to interview for a position at Big River. Her recommended candidate got the job and has served as the medical director for several years.

"It wasn't enough for us to just bring jobs to the county," Trammell says, "we also wanted to take some of the people who were here and see what we can do to provide them with opportunities. We were able to do that, and I'm very pleased that we were able to help her business in that way."

Trammell is also focused on supporting girls interested in STEAM careers.

"We don't see a lot of women in higher roles in organizations, and certainly not in the steel industry. I will say that I am super, super honored to be recognized because if nothing else, it tells some little girl who is interested in the way that cars are made, in manufacturing, in engineering, in some of these fields that are typically very male dominated, that there are women out there doing it and being very successful in it," Trammell says.

"I hope that what the WFA does in terms of highlighting women in roles that are kicking butt helps to encourage our next generation of women leaders. Don't give up. It's not always going to be easy, but it's always going to be worth it."

Dr. Nirvana Manning

Woman of the Year in Public Service

DR. NIRVANA MANNING'S DAY job puts her in the position to impact women's lives every day.

She is an OB-GYN by trade and also serves as the chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Services (UAMS), as well as the director of women's health services.

"Everything that deals with women and health falls underneath my umbrella at UAMS in some way, shape or form," she says.

But in 2021, Manning multiplied her impact by getting involved with grant work. Her first legislative project focused on expanding access to contraception in Arkansas in the immediate postpartum period.

"It was hard to get for women because some insurances weren't covering it, mainly Medicaid, and over 50% of the population that delivers in the state of Arkansas is Medicaid," she says.



Power of the Purse

Benefiting the Women's Foundation of Arkansas

Oct. 2, 11:30 a.m.

Statehouse Convention Center

womensfoundationarkansas.org

Working with UAMS, she received an 18-month pilot grant to collect data. After 12 months, she had enough research to present to the legislative body, and through her work, Act 581 was passed, ensuring health care providers are reimbursed by Medicaid for conception during postpartum.

"While I love, love, love my clinic and taking care of my patients one-on-one, this was an ability for me to now help women on a much larger scale."

Encouraged by the grant's success, Manning's advocacy work hasn't slowed down since, especially on the Maternal Mortality Committee for the state of Arkansas.

"We're number 5-0 out of 50 states in terms of maternal mortality," Manning says, "so I have been doing tons of advocacy with regard to how we can help improve that."

Her work includes teaching every delivering hospital different emergency care for women, supporting rural hospitals and bringing more midwives, OB-GYNs and family medicine OBs to the state.

Manning has also helped increase access and quality of puberty education for girls across the state. When her oldest son first encountered a puberty lesson in school, he shared his concern about the lack of knowledge from his fellow students. His experience inspired Manning to research sex and puberty education in Arkansas.

"I found out that puberty education in our state was just hit or miss," she says. "Some schools did it, some schools didn't do it at all. Some schools did it in eighth grade, where I would argue that the ship has sailed for most people."

That's when she got the idea for Girlology, a puberty seminar designed for girls ages 8-13 and a caregiver. Manning partnered with two pediatric gynecologists to deliver a medically accurate course on girls' bodies and the changes they should expect.

"I think in the first couple, we were building trust in the community. Just like, what are you teaching our children? Is this going to be okay? And then after that, it kind of blew up," Manning says.

And while she requires no advertising to quickly fill all 500 seats, Manning knows the true value is starting conversations between girls and their caregivers.

"Now they know they have a trusted person they can go to for their issues."

Unsurprisingly, WFA's work for women and girls resonates with Manning, who had the opportunity to speak at a Girls of Promise event.

"It gave me chills," she says. "This is everything I love and believe in. Take these young girls, show these amazing careers that they can be a part of and they can see people like them in these positions. They know this is not unattainable."

Health Caring

HAIR & MAKEUP
BY LORI WENGER.
KATIE'S CLOTHING
FROM BARBARA/
JEAN. RAMEY'S
CLOTHING FROM
J. DUKE & CO.



Katie and Dr. Ramey Marshall on the wide-reaching impact of this year's Bolo Bash

BY JESS ARDREY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON MASTERS

For Katie and Dr. Ramey Marshall, joining forces with the Baptist Health Foundation seems as though it was always in the cards. Both eager to build community and both in the medical field — Katie as founder and CEO of Spectra Tox and Ramey as a cardiologist in the Arkansas Cardiology Clinic at Baptist Health Heart Institute — the two are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of a health system and its patients.

Soirée sat down with the Marshells to discuss their roles as Bolo Bash 2024 chairs, what's in store for this year's events and how funds will effect the future of health and the state at large.

How did you get involved with the Baptist Health Foundation?

RM: Population health within Arkansas has been a common bond we have shared since day one of our relationship. Both native Arkansans, Katie and I met while serving as the president and vice president of the Student Health Advisory Committee during our undergraduate tenures at the University of Arkansas. We married while we were attending the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences — me for medical school and Katie for graduate school. We then spent six wonderful years in Birmingham, Alabama, starting our family while I completed my internal medicine residency and cardiology fellowship at the University of Alabama Birmingham. In 2020, we had the fortunate opportunity to return home to start our next chapter with two amazing additions to our family, Madison and Mason.

Starting my cardiology practice at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock was a perfect fit for me. It allowed me to work with some of our state's finest health care providers. They also had the bandwidth and trust across the entire state to afford me opportunities to open very successful cardiology outreach clinics in El Dorado, Clarendon and DeWitt.

When I was asked by my partner, Dr. Scott Davis, to succeed him on the Baptist Health Foundation Board, I again found a very fulfilling opportunity. In my position, I have witnessed firsthand the faith-based, compassionate approach the leadership of our state's largest health care system takes in enriching the care of Arkansans.

What about Bolo Bash drew you in?

KM: The first Bolo Bash was held 35 years ago in 1989. That first event netted over \$50,000 with proceeds benefiting the transplant program at Baptist Medical Center. Since then, the Bolo Bash Luncheon has raised millions to support the mission of Baptist Health in improving access and treatment across the state. To be a part of this long-standing tradition is such an honor, and we are proud to be able to do our part as the chairs this year to ensure its continued success for the next 35 years.

This year's area of purpose is the Baptist Health College. With nursing shortages plaguing much of the country, how does this spotlight affect the college?

RM: The primary focus of this year's Bolo Bash is raising funds to help update and expand the Baptist Health College. The Baptist Health College at Little Rock was founded in 1921 and currently offers certificates and degrees in medical laboratory sciences, nuclear medicine technology, occupational therapy, radiography, surgical technology and nursing (among others). Baptist Health College has a long and distinguished history, produced some of the state's best nurses and health care support staff and has been critical to help meet the needs of the global staffing shortage crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now as we come out of the pandemic, it is time to return our focus to enriching the training and experience our college can offer these bright, ambitious students. This will ensure we can continue to meet the ongoing staffing shortage needs and growing complexities of health care both on a local and statewide level.

What do you wish more people knew about the college?

KM: Before working with the Baptist Health Foundation, I was unaware of just how much of an impact this college has on health care outcomes for our state. Some recent statistics that most Arkansans are also probably not aware of: more than 15,000 nurses are needed in Arkansas; 59 counties in Arkansas are medically underserved; the college graduates over 300 nursing and allied health students each year; the college offers certificate and diploma programs, two-year associate degrees and a number of baccalaureate degree programs in affiliation with partnering universities; and it offers nine programs of study in patient care and laboratory roles.

The shortages in health care reach beyond the field of nursing, and Baptist Health College is in a unique position to train professionals in all of these essential and understaffed fields. Our goal for this year's Bolo Bash is to raise \$250,000 with all proceeds benefiting the Baptist Health College of Little Rock. This money will be used to enrich the programs currently offered and support an expansion of the facility to increase student enrollment. The more students we can enroll each year, the more progress we make toward bringing down that staggering number of shortages seen throughout the state.

As for the events, do you have any new elements in store for this year?

KM: In years past, the reception held the evening before the luncheon has not been as heavily publicized as its own event. This year we are expanding our reach to include more people than just those attending the luncheon on Thursday. In speaking with a lot of members of the community, we found there was an untapped group of the population eager to give back and get involved with the mission of the Baptist Health Foundation. With our new venue for this year's reception, we are going to be able to accommodate more people and will have more space for live demonstrations and displays.

The silent auction will start at the beginning of the week of the Bolo Bash Luncheon. We will have all of the auction items on display at the reception and at the luncheon. The auction will close at the conclusion of the luncheon. All bidding is done through the online portal, so whether you are attending the reception,

the luncheon, both or neither, you are able to bid on these wonderful items that have been generously donated by so many of our local merchants and professionals.

What do you hope attendees gain from guest speaker Georgina Chapman?

KM: As the co-founder of the fashion line Marchesa, former judge for "Project Runway," model and actress, Georgina's list of accolades is a testament to her drive and determination to be successful in these ultra-competitive industries. We are thrilled to have her as our guest speaker and look forward to her insight as a successful multi-industry entrepreneur.

What are you most excited about for the event itself?

KM: The fashion show is such an iconic aspect of the Bolo Bash Luncheon. This year, all of the models in the show who will be featuring the new line from Marchesa are current students at the Baptist Health College. They will be sharing their stories of how the college has impacted their lives while getting the opportunity of a lifetime to model a brand known for designing dresses for celebrities such as Scarlett Johansson, Jennifer Lopez, Cate Blanchett, Anne Hathaway and Penélope Cruz.

Bolo Bash *benefiting the Baptist Health Foundation*

Reception:

Oct. 9, 6 p.m., 42 Bar & Table

Luncheon:

Oct. 10, 11:30 a.m., City Center Little Rock

bolobashluncheon.org

As Bolo Bash aims high to bring in major funding for Baptist Health College, meet some of the medical professionals furthering the ripple effect from the school into the communities beyond.

Monica Hall

IV specialist, RN III, retired 2022

Departments: neurology, GI endoscopy, outpatient surgery, bronchoscopy | **Graduated:** 1981 (LPN program), 1992 (RN program)



Why did you choose this field? God chose me to be a nurse to serve others, therefore I gave it my best providing the best quality of care for every patient and their family placed in my care. Also, my mother retired from nursing after 33 years, and after listening to her stories, seeing the compassion and fulfillment in her eyes impacted me to become a nurse.

What was your proudest moment on the job? One of my proudest moments as a nurse was receiving an unexpected recognition from my supervisor and administration department. After a patient made two separate generous donations to the Baptist Health Foundation in my name, they doubled the amount with a second donation.

What was your biggest challenge in the workplace? COVID was the biggest challenge in all of my 40 years of nursing. Patients were not allowed visitors, wearing masks, the number of admissions and deaths kept rising across all ages. This was such a challenging time for the employees, the facility, patients and families, but we stayed focused on priorities while continuing to give our best.

How did BHCLR prepare you in an unexpected way? Baptist Health College prepared me for nursing with great clinical and classroom teachers that challenged us with hands-on skills and tests while building our confidence and commitment to provide the highest quality care and to be successful, compassionate nurses.

What kept you motivated every day? Knowing that I was able to join in with a team of excellent nurses and staff to give the facility, patients and families the best quality of care they deserved and make a positive difference motivated me to go to work each day. Nursing was certainly a rewarding profession. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to serve the community for 40 years.

Emily Brown

OTR/L, clinical director of Joyous OT

Graduated: 2018



Why did you choose this field? Occupational therapy restores and promotes skills and abilities to help people fully and meaningfully participate in their lives. The more I explored OT, the more I realized what a good fit it is for who I am. I grew up on the autistic and attachment spectrums, so I know what it's like to live with sensory processing difficulties and trauma. I focused my older teen and young adult years on inner growth, healing my own challenges and cultivating my own strengths. OT lets me give back by serving children and adults who can benefit from my own struggles, discoveries and growth.

What has been your proudest moment on the job? Our clinic specializes in working with clients who have attachment disruptions and developmental trauma. I love every aspect of my job, and there are beautiful moments in every session. We encourage parents to participate in the OT sessions. It is special to see parents and children build bonds of connection, attachment and love through play. Sometimes clients who have experienced severe trauma become emotionally overwhelmed. It is profound to be fully present with them with love in my heart. Overwhelm and frustration pass, and the chaos they feel transforms into peace.

What's your biggest challenge in the workplace? It can be challenging to find enough OT providers who specialize in attachment disruption and developmental trauma for referrals.

How did BHCLR prepare you in an unexpected way? The BHCLR professors are excellent and caring. The fieldwork placements are highly instructive. I love learning and was pleasantly surprised at the breadth and depth of the program. I learned about a wide range of settings and diagnoses and felt completely prepared to enter the field with confidence, start my own clinic, collaborate with other OTs with ease and even further my education by obtaining a master of occupational therapy degree.

Demond White

RN, Arkansas Children's hematology/oncology unit

Graduated: 2022



Why did you choose this field? I chose to become a pediatric nurse because I have a serving heart and wanted to help kids. I have a huge passion for kids and love their resilience. When someone goes to the hospital or brings their kid, they trust that you can help them feel better. I also aspired to be like my mother, who is a nurse practitioner.

What has been your proudest moment on the job? Each time I get the chance to spend time with my patients playing games or interacting with them. The smile that comes to their face brings me joy. Also, getting to witness my patient ring the bell because they defeated cancer.

What's your biggest challenge in the workplace? The biggest challenge I face in the workplace is the not-so-fun part of my job — when a patient relapses or we come to a point where there is nothing else we can do to defeat cancer. It's getting the news that my patient is stopping treatment and going on palliative care.

How did BHCLR prepare you in an unexpected way? Baptist Health College helped me with the hands-on aspect of the nursing field.

What keeps you motivated every day? Knowing I get to spend time with kids and play games with them. There are times at the end of my shift I tell my patient I am going home for the day, and they get sad. But then I tell them I will be back the next day, and they light up with excitement.

Kelley Hamby

System Chief Nursing Officer, Baptist Health

Graduated: 1994



Why did you choose this field? I spent three summers as a candy stripper at Arkansas Children's Hospital during my teenage years. Seeing the impact the staff made on the patients and families in their toughest and most challenging days was amazing, and still is today. The compassionate staff in our facilities minister to others every day by their actions and words on some of the happiest and saddest days of others.

What has been your proudest moment on the job? I began my career at Baptist Health as an information associate with the goal of attending nursing school to become a registered nurse. Baptist Health has afforded me the ability to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse and to practice my profession.

What's your biggest challenge in the workplace? Staffing shortages are one of the most significant workforce challenges health care institutions are facing today. These looming shortages have been long-standing issues for decades prior to COVID, but have since been amplified with the added stresses, burnout and workloads resulting from the pandemic. Shortages are projected across several clinical roles including nursing, physicians and support staff. Several studies show there will be more than 190,000 annual job openings for registered nurses through 2032.

How did BHCLR prepare you in an unexpected way? Critical thinking skills. Nursing often involves quickly identifying a problem, determining a solution and implementing effective treatment. Educators and clinical instructors introduce you to critical thinking tools for assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluating care.

What keeps you motivated every day? My calling to serve. This has been the most rewarding career I could have ever dreamed of, but that does not mean there haven't been hard days. Why I get back up every day and do it again is the opportunity to serve and help others.

The Next Chapter

AMID REVISIONS AND RENOVATIONS, THE SIX BRIDGES BOOK FESTIVAL SHOWS A CALS FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.

BY ASHTON RAY

This month the literature lover's favorite event, the Six Bridges Book Festival, will return for its 21st year with plans to host approximately 50 authors for free panel discussions, readings, book signings and other events.

Hosted by the Central Arkansas Library System, most festival events will be held within CALS Library Square in downtown Little Rock.

"For our attendees, what makes the festival so special is its accessibility," festival coordinator Drew Herget says. "Most of the festival is free — including the opening night reception — allowing anyone to come, meet these authors and interact with others who share their passion for books. That kind of access to authors is rare, and it's one of the things that truly makes the Six Bridges Book Festival so special."

And while plans for this year's event have been in the works since 2023, CALS faced a major hurdle this summer when the festival's first-ever chairperson, former Arkansas Senator Joyce Elliott, suffered a stroke.

"We were thrilled to have former Senator Joyce Elliott accept the role," communication director Tameka Lee says. "She has been a longtime supporter of the library and a champion for education, and we continue to send thoughts and prayers for her recovery."

Despite her absence, education remains a key factor of the festival, which not only allows thousands of readers to meet some of their favorite authors, but also sends many presenters into local schools to inspire young readers and writers.

"The WITS (Writers in the Schools) program is one of my favorite things about the festival," director of programming Ellen Samples says. "Giving students opportunities to meet and listen to authors, as well as receive a free copy of their books, is a great way to connect youth to literature and the festival."

This year, approximately 20 authors are slated to participate in WITS, representing a range of backgrounds and genres including Jasmin Graham, a marine biologist focusing on

The Book Fest Bunch's Can't-Miss Events

DREW HERGET: Jasmin Graham on her memoir "Sharks Don't Sink: Adventures of a Rogue Shark Scientist"; Brian Fairbanks, who has written a book on outlaw country music called "Willie, Waylon, and the Boys: How Nashville Outsiders Changed Country Music Forever"; Ann Byrn's cooking demonstration from her book "Baking the American South"; the romance panel with Susie Dumond and Myah Ariel.

TAMEKA LEE: Ayana Gray's session with Kamillah Cole, author of "So Let Them Burn." ("I keep telling everyone that I binge-read Ayana's 'Beasts of Prey' trilogy, so I'm eager to hear her insights and see her interact with Kamillah.")

ELLEN SAMPLES: Dr. Bettina Love's presentation on her book "Punished for Dreaming."

ELIZA BORNE: Jasmin Graham of "Sharks Don't Sink"; Ilyon Woo, who won the Pulitzer Prize this year for "Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom"; Lana Williams on "The Container Garden Recipe Book," who is giving a demonstration as part of her talk.

sharks; Carrie Sun, who has written a memoir on her time working in private equity; Margot Livesy, a Scottish-born fiction writer; and Eli Cranor, an Arkansas native who writes mysteries and thrillers.

"I have had the pleasure of attending a WITS visit and have witnessed the authentic connection many students have with writers in the classroom setting," director of development Eliza Borné says. "It would not be unusual for a visiting author to report to us that their time in the classroom with students was the highlight of their visit to Little Rock."

Also with young readers in mind, the Little Readers Rock event held in partnership with the Junior League of Little Rock will take place on a Sunday this year instead of its traditional Saturday slot.

"We hope this change allows parents and caregivers who are interested in attending author sessions for adults to have an easier time participating in panels and sessions on Saturday, while also still enjoying family events at our children's library the next day," Samples says.

The festival will conclude with a special ticketed event to raise funds in support of the festival itself. Ann Patchett, best-selling novelist and author of essays and children's books, and Robin Preiss Glasser, illustrator of the "Fancy Nancy" series, will have an onstage conversation about creativity and collaboration at the CALS Ron Robinson Theater.

"The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with tickets selling extremely well," Lee says. "It's thrilling to have an author of her caliber, along with Robin Preiss Glasser, at the festival. This occasion presents a chance to hear two phenomenal storytellers in conversation while also financially supporting future festivals."

This year's festival also presents the perfect opportunity to reveal some of the main library branch's renovation plans to the local reading community.

Borné says one of the most attractive

features of the transformed library will be the new meeting spaces on the fifth floor offering the added benefit of the best views of the library. Another new eye-catching element will be the building's open roof terrace.

"This space will be perfectly suited for hosting programs like author panels, readings and cooking demonstrations," Borné says. "The Six Bridges Book Festival already has wonderful venues, and to be able to include beautiful new meeting spaces at the main library will help make the festival even more appealing to authors and audience members."

"I often say that with the renovated main library, central Arkansans will have the world-class facility they deserve. Programs like the Six Bridges Book Festival will help bring the building to life and inspire community members to return again and again."

"I truly believe the festival helps foster community," Herget says. "If you've ever spent any time with a room full of readers, you know what I mean. The joy of loving a book, of wanting to share that with someone, that's what it's all about."

Six Bridges Book Festival

Hosted by the Central
Arkansas Library System

SEPT. 22-29

SIXBRIDGESBOOKFESTIVAL.ORG

JACKET BY TWP CLOTHING,
PANTS BY ARMA, SHOES
BY PEDRO GARCIA FROM
BARBARA/JEAN. JEWELRY
BY DESIGNER COLLECTIONS
FROM LAURA B LUXURY.



WILD AND FREE

The winds of fashion change are blowing once again, and this season they're coming from the countryside. Western wear holds a long-standing tradition, and fall collections are giving a nod to the frontier lifestyle with pieces that are easygoing and classic. With the country calling and the sun on the horizon, it's time to kick up a little dust, channel your inner cowgirl and see what's all the rage on the range.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON MASTERS. STYLED BY JOSIE BURNETT.
ART DIRECTION BY EMMA DEVINE. HAIR & MAKEUP BY LORI WENGER.
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: REBECCA CRIDER.
MODEL: KATIE DAVIDSON WITH AVA MODEL MGMT.
SHOT ON LOCATION AT PINNACLE VALLEY FARM.



DRESS BY ZIMMERMANN
SHOES BY PEDRO GARCIA
BAG BY CHLOE, JEWELRY
FROM BARBARA/JEAN.

JACKET BY TWP CLOTHING,
PANTS BY ARMA FROM
BARBARA/JEAN. JEWELRY
BY DESIGNER COLLECTIONS
FROM LAURA B LUXURY.



SHOES BY KHAITE
FROM B.BARNETT.



BAG BY CHLOE FROM
BARBARA/JEAN.

COAT AND SHOES
BY KHAITE, JEWELRY
FROM B.BARNETT.



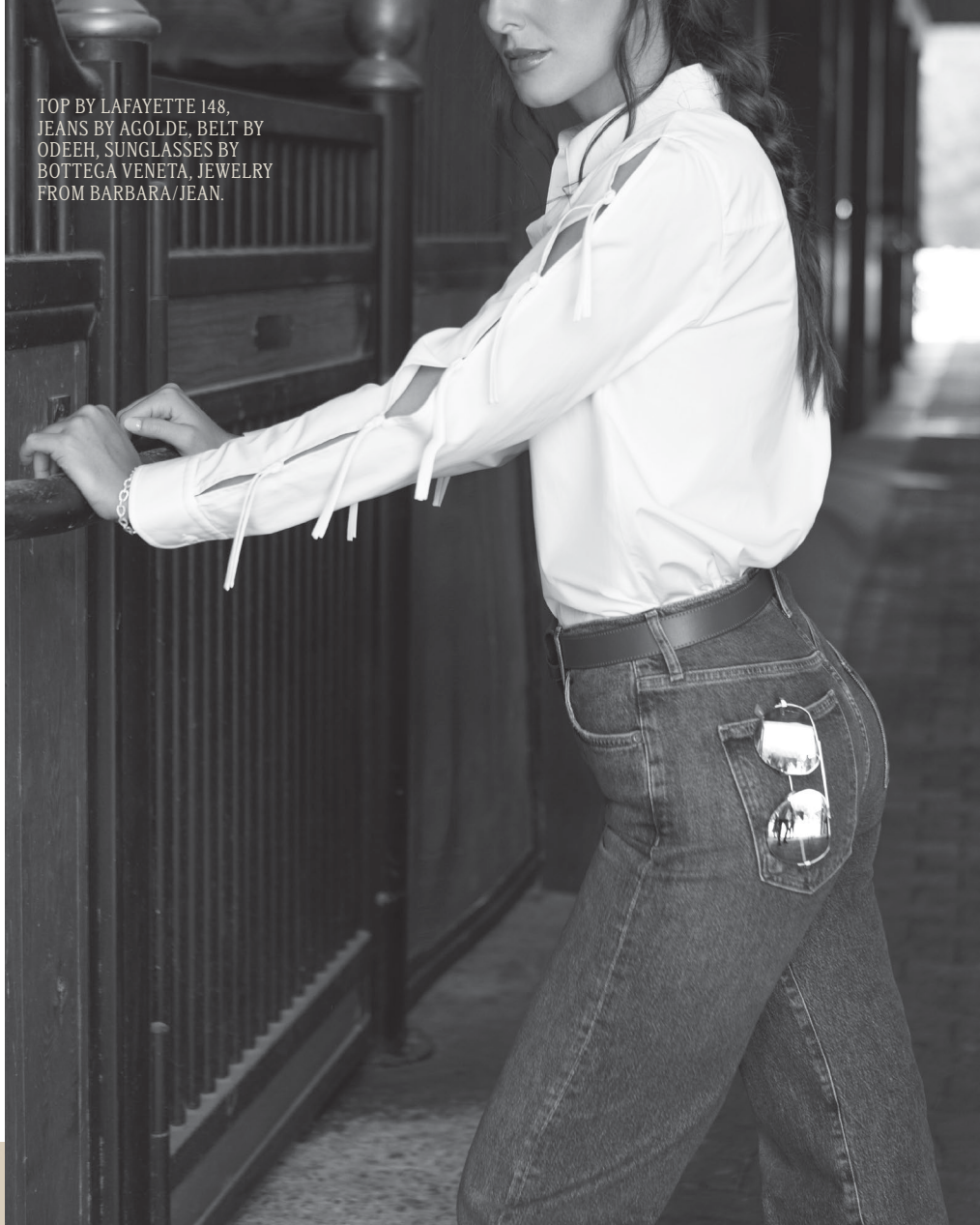
JEWELRY BY DESIGNER
COLLECTIONS FROM
LAURA B LUXURY.



BAG BY WANDLER
FROM BARBARA/JEAN.



TOP BY LAFAYETTE 148,
JEANS BY AGOLDE, BELT BY
ODEEH, SUNGLASSES BY
BOTTEGA VENETA, JEWELRY
FROM BARBARA/JEAN.



SHOES BY PEDRO GARCIA
FROM BARBARA/JEAN.



JACKET AND SHOES BY
KHAITE, JEANS BY THE
ROW, BAG BY PROENZA
SCHOUER, JEWELRY
FROM B.BARNETT.





COAT AND SCARF BY ARCH4
SHOES BY TORY BURCH. BAG
BY CHLOE FROM BARBARA
JEAN. JEWELRY BY DESIGNER
COLLECTIONS FROM LAURA B
LUXURY.

SWEATER BY BRUNELLO CUCINELLI,
BAG BY PROENZA SCHOULER, BELTS
BY B-Low THE BELT, BELTED COAT
BY FORTE FORTE, SHOES BY KHAITE
FROM B.BARNETT.



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Thank You!

I am truly grateful to all of my clients who have voted us as one of the top insurance agents in Central Arkansas for the past 13 years. You have made the work so rewarding and enjoyable. I look forward to many more years serving the needs of Shelter's clients.

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JSnider@ShelterInsurance.com

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LITTLE ROCK soirée

BEST INSURANCE AGENTS 2024

A solid insurance policy should always be one of your top priorities, but having a dependable agent to guide you is worth just as much, even if finding them is its own challenge.

To help in the process, we're happy to present this year's list of trusted agents, all chosen by *Little Rock Soirée* readers and fellow agents based on customer service, accountability and ease of access.

CONGRATS TO THE 57 AGENTS WHO MADE OUR 2024 LIST!

GINGER ALEXANDER
STEPHENS

DENNIA BEARD
STATE FARM

ED BENNETT
MCGRIFF

RUSS BERRYHILL
BERRYHILL INSURANCE
GROUP

DENNIS BOST
STATE FARM

LEE BRIZZOLARA
SUNSTAR INSURANCE
OF ARKANSAS

CHRISTINE BROOKS
THE HATCHER AGENCY

BRADY BURTON
G&G INDEPENDENT
INSURANCE

JAMES CHAVEZ
ENCOMPASS
FINANCIAL PARTNERS

CHRISTY CINGOLANI
THE HATCHER AGENCY

AUSTIN CRAIN
MCGRIFF

DJ CROWSON
TREAT INSURANCE
AGENCY

ROBBI DAVIS
GALLAGHER BENEFIT
SERVICES

SCOTT DAVIS
GALLAGHER BENEFIT
SERVICES

ROBERT ELLIS
THE HATCHER AGENCY

ROBIN FLETCHER
THE HATCHER AGENCY

KELLY FRANCE
GLEASON INSURANCE

JENNI GATLIN
THE HATCHER AGENCY

CHARLIE HADFIELD
HADFIELD AGENCY

NICK HALL
CROSS POINTE
INSURANCE ADVISORS

GREG HATCHER
THE HATCHER AGENCY

KAYLA HAYNES
THE HATCHER AGENCY

GARRETT HENDRICKS
STEPHENS

MARK HICKMAN
MIDARK INSURANCE
GROUP

DOTTIE HIGHFILL
THE HATCHER AGENCY

DAVID HOFFMANS
ITRUST

DEWEY HOPKINS
MCGRIFF

IVAN HUDSON
IVAN HUDSON AGENCY

TIM HYDE
ECHELON INSURANCE
GROUP

CHRIS JENKINS
THE JENKINS AGENCY

JENNIFER KING
ALLSTATE

KALEIGH MARSH
GALLAGHER BENEFIT
SERVICES

ADAM MCGHEE
MEADORS ADAMS
& LEE

ANDREW MEADORS
SUNSTAR INSURANCE
OF ARKANSAS

ERIN MOORE
THE HATCHER AGENCY

MATT MORRIS
STATE FARM

ANTHONY OTWELL
STATE FARM

WHITNEY OWENS
STATE FARM

JK PATTERSON
MEADORS ADAMS
& LEE

CHRISTY PETTIT
SHELTER INSURANCE

CHARLOTTE POTTS
STATE FARM

DAWN POWELL
PARAMOUNT
FINANCIAL

DENISE PRATER
GALLAGHER BENEFIT
SERVICES

DAVID RAATH
THE HATCHER AGENCY

STEPHEN RIKARD
FARM BUREAU

JOHN ROGERS
G&G INDEPENDENT
INSURANCE

BRANDIE SANDERS
THE HATCHER AGENCY

JAY SNIDER
SHELTER INSURANCE

JOHN STARLING
JTS FINANCIAL

MONICA TREAT
TREAT INSURANCE
AGENCY

LEE TUXHORN
STATE FARM

OLIN WAGE
STEPHENS

MALISSA WALLACE
MIDARK INSURANCE
GROUP

CODY WALTERS
G&G INDEPENDENT
INSURANCE

DON WARDEN
THE HATCHER AGENCY

MATT WARDEN
SHELTER INSURANCE

BROOKE WILLIAMSON
SUNSTAR INSURANCE
OF ARKANSAS

On the following pages, you'll meet some of these agents through paid promotional content. Whether they choose to advertise in the magazine has no bearing on this list.

THE HATCHER AGENCY



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DOTTIE HIGHFILL

27 years at The Hatcher Agency

Dottie Highfill works with small and large group employers and enjoys the relationships she has built in the community. She loves to play tennis and travel with her friends and family.

ROBERT ELLIS

26 years at The Hatcher Agency

Robert Ellis enjoys providing “Outrageous Service” and helping companies enhance all their employee benefit needs. He and his wife Meredith have a son, Payne, and daughter, Sage. He loves to play competitive golf and travel with his family.

JENNI GATLIN

19 years at The Hatcher Agency

Jenni Gatlin was born and raised in Little Rock and holds a degree in early childhood education. She loves her relationships with her clients and is very proud of her big family of six children and six grandchildren.

BRANDIE SANDERS

2 years at The Hatcher Agency

Brandie Sanders enjoys building relationships with her clients and helping them navigate the world of benefits. She lives in North Little Rock with her husband.

ERIN MOORE

16 years at The Hatcher Agency

Erin Moore enjoys providing great service to her clients and forging lasting relationships along the way. She resides with her family in west Little Rock.

The Hatcher Agency was started on Sept. 1, 1990, by Greg Hatcher. It has been Arkansas' top producing employee benefits agency for 34 consecutive years and has become the largest organically grown employee benefits agency in the country. The agency has been voted Best Insurance Agency in Arkansas every year since 2004. Hatcher credits "Outrageous Service" and community involvement as his staples of success. He was inducted into the Arkansas Insurance Hall of Fame in the fall of 2022.

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT:

Top row: Dottie Highfill, Robert Ellis, Greg Hatcher, Jenni Gatlin; Bottom row: Brandie Sanders, Erin Moore

THIS PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT:

Christy Cingolani, Don Warden, David Raath, Robin Fletcher; Bottom Row: Christine Brooks, Kayla Haynes



CHRISTY CINGOLANI

1 year at The Hatcher Agency

Christy Cingolani holds a bachelor of science degree in dietetics from the University of Central Arkansas and began working in employee benefits in 2012. She resides in Little Rock and in her spare time enjoys hiking and giving back to her community.

DON WARDEN

10 years at The Hatcher Agency

Don Warden assists clients with all their property and casualty needs and has his health and life licenses. He is a Paul Harris Fellow and, through the years, has been very active in various charitable endeavors. He and his wife Lisa have a son, a daughter and six grandchildren who all reside in Little Rock.

DAVID RAATH

11 years at The Hatcher Agency

David Raath and his team specialize in providing best-in-class benefit packages to businesses of every size across virtually every zip code in the state. He's married to the love of his life and is run ragged by his two teenage sons.

ROBIN FLETCHER

25 years at The Hatcher Agency

Robin Fletcher specializes in health, life and medicare for individuals. She was born in Memphis and attended the University of Central Arkansas where she received a bachelor of business administration degree in accounting.

CHRISTINE BROOKS

10 years at The Hatcher Agency

Christine Brooks was born and raised in Little Rock and holds a degree in business marketing. She and her husband Parker are blessed with a 1-year-old son and two dachshunds. She loves the outdoors and spending time with family, and the best part of her job, she says, is the lasting relationships built with her clients.

KAYLA HAYNES

7 years at The Hatcher Agency

Kayla Haynes is a lead account executive in her seventh year with The Hatcher Agency. She specializes in benefits consulting and has a passion for providing great service to her clients. She enjoys traveling and spending time with her family.

MONICA TREAT

TREAT INSURANCE AGENCY
Specializing in Medicare



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 Facebook: /treatinsuranceagencyinc



Monica Treat is the proud owner of Treat Insurance Agency. She started the company in 2008 by driving the entire state of Arkansas selling insurance out of the trunk of her car. The business has grown organically through referrals and word of mouth. Sixteen years later, Treat Insurance Agency employs seven women and is one of the most sought-after agencies in Arkansas for its expansive knowledge on Medicare.

"I'm grateful and honored to say that I've been featured several times in Soirée, so I struggled with what I wanted to share in this article," Treat says. "I didn't want it to be redundant, and more importantly, I don't want it to be hollow."

"My heart's desire is to share something real and authentic — something that can give hope, encouragement and connection."

What have you been working on in 2024?

All the things! I decided at the beginning of the year that I was going to go after things that scared me. Instead of picking one, in typical all-or-none fashion, I chose several. I love Sherwood and have thought about being a part of city leadership for a while, so I went for it and I'm running for Sherwood City Council Ward 4. I've also wanted to flip a house for years. My husband is a custom home builder, and with his building knowledge and my love for design, I knew we could do

something special. I bought a 100-year-old house in Park Hill and we are in the process of turning it into a masterpiece. On top of all of that, we are in the process of building our dream home. This is something we have been working toward for 20 years and it's more than we ever could have dreamed for. And last but not least, the insurance agency is expanding! We are adding two new employees to our NLR office and expanding to NWA through two awesome women that are going to take over the Medicare market in Fayetteville. Woo Pig! In January, I put on my letter board "2024 is the year, dear." That put me in a mindset to chase after things that I feared, but that I also knew could be so fulfilling.

What was the motivation behind you making this a milestone year?

My mom passed away two years ago, and I really struggled with depression after she passed. I was trying to learn how to navigate life without the woman who brought me into it, without the woman who taught me how to be independent and without the woman who taught me how to be a businesswoman. I learned so much from my mom during her life. She taught me resilience, grit, perseverance, confidence, a strong work ethic and how to hold my own. Ironically enough, she taught me so much through her passing, too. I learned that life is so incredibly short and fragile. It's caused

me to have a better perspective of what deserves my time and attention and what doesn't. It's made me dig deep to decide who I want to be and what I want to accomplish in my lifetime. It's given me a sense of urgency to run after the things that make my heart skip a beat, but to also slow down to enjoy the moment. I knew that I had to get busy in 2024 chasing after all of the things to pull myself out of the depression from losing her. I knew she would want me to shine. I knew that she would want me to use all of the strength that she instilled in me to do great things. So here I am, giving it my all.

LIGHTNING ROUND

Things you live by:

- There's never an easy time to do hard things.
- Coffee in one hand, confidence in the other.
- You will never get what you don't ask for.
- "Success is buried on the other side of rejection." —Tony Robbins

Things you live for:

- Connecting with authentic people
- Pompom earrings
- Lookout Point Lakeside Inn in Hot Springs
- Singing every word in the pit of a Morgan Wallen concert

DJ CROWSON

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Darla “DJ” Crowson launched her journey with Treat Insurance Agency in 2021, quickly earning recognition as one of the company’s leading agents. Her exceptional client relationships are driven by her approachable nature and genuine loyalty. DJ’s passion for helping people is evident in her personalized approach and her unwavering dedication to ensuring each client receives the support and clarity they need.

What other interests do you have beyond insurance?

I’m a farm girl. We have 10 acres with a variety of the most precious animals. It’s like having your very own personal petting zoo, complete with miniature donkeys.

What are you excited about in your personal life or career?

I’m the most excited about finishing our farmhouse and getting to decorate it. Pinterest, here I come!

What advice would you give to someone who is approaching Medicare eligibility for the first time?

Take your time and consult with a local independent agent who can provide a comprehensive overview of all your available options.

What changes in the Medicare landscape are you most excited about or concerned with?

I’m beyond excited that the complicated “donut hole” in Medicare Part D is finally being eliminated in 2025.

LIGHTNING ROUND

Hometown: Vilonia

Hobbies: I love to read, it’s my favorite daily escape.

Cannot live without: Lip gloss

Favorite date night: Back porch fires, football and drinks with the husband

Latest obsession: Pinterest

One piece of advice you always live by: No matter what happens in life, always keep the faith.

DENNIA BEARD

DENNIA BEARD
STATE FARM
INSURANCE AGENCY



1010 Military Road, Benton
501.778.6066 | insurebenton.com
LinkedIn: Dennia Beard - InsureArkansas
Facebook: Dennia Beard - State Farm Agent
X: @insdealsinheels



When Dennia Beard was 11 years old, her house burned to the ground. She was at camp when it happened, and what she had with her was all she now owned. Her family had lost everything. “I am not sure what we would have done without an existing homeowners policy in force,” she says. “My superhero dad built a new one and we moved into our brand new home within six months. This is where my passion for insurance began.” This experience, and the many more that followed, curated a love for working with families to solve problems, to help manage the risks of everyday life and recover from the unexpected.

What makes your customer service outstanding?

It is our genuine care and commitment to each customer. Our agents listen attentively to their needs, offer personalized solutions and go the extra mile to ensure peace of mind and clarity around both simple and complex concerns.

What's a typical day look like?

The morning begins with briefing the leadership staff and planning for the day. After a quick huddle with the entire team, there are client meetings and calls. My day always ends with a quick end-of-day review.

What type of coverage do consumers often forget to purchase?

Disability coverage. Many underestimate the likelihood of becoming disabled and being unable to work. Disability insurance provides income replacement in such cases, but is often overlooked because people think it is covered elsewhere. Typically, it isn't.

Is it better to have a high insurance premium and low deductible or vice versa?

Choosing between a high insurance premium with a low deductible (or the opposite) depends on several factors, including your financial situation, tolerance for risk and your propensity to use the coverage.

How often should coverage be reviewed?

Insurance policies should be reviewed at least annually, but there are specific times and events — like a birth, marriage, divorce or retirement — that should prompt a review to ensure you have adequate coverage and are not overpaying.

When should companies consider coverage for employment practices or cyber liability?

Immediately. I have had too many friends who own businesses that needed this coverage and it wasn't in place. This is another example of assuming something is covered by your general business policy when it is not.

LIGHTNING ROUND

Neighborhood: Westcliffe in Ferndale

Hometown: Monticello

Last good read: “Unreasonable Hospitality” by Will Guidara

Favorite thing to do in Little Rock: Shop! Love The Heights and Hillcrest

Go-to lunch spot: City Silo

Two things you like to do outside the office: Be outside

Last Vacation: Disney World

CHARLOTTE POTTS

CHARLOTTE POTTS
STATE FARM



17200 Chenal Pkwy., Ste. 290, Little Rock
501.821.1441 | charlottepotts.com

707 Main St., North Little Rock
501.791.1100 | charlottepottsinsurance.com

LinkedIn: charlotte-potts-8042a5b4

Facebook: @charlottepottsstatefarm



From her 10+ years as an insurance agent and her relationships in the community, to roles as wife and mom Charlotte Potts loves it all. The Hazen native is guided by her faith, and she and her teams find joy in working toward helping clients protect against risks.

What makes your customer service outstanding?

My teams and I strive to make each customer feel like they are family. We personalize each interaction and tailor policies to meet each person's needs. Customer service is the most important facet in my agency.

What's a typical day look like?

There is no typical day in insurance! There are customer and team meetings, lots of phone calls, property inspections, educational events and also family commitments, including readying our son for college this fall. The days fly by.

What type of coverage do consumers often forget to purchase?

"Income protection," meaning life insurance and disability insurance. Most people think their

biggest asset is whatever costs the most. In reality, it's their ability to financially provide for their family. Passing away prematurely or losing their ability to work can impact the standard of living and trajectory of their family's lives.

Is it better to have a high insurance premium and low deductible or vice versa?

That depends on what works best for each customer and their financial situation. Every client is different because every household financial situation is different.

What is one of the biggest mistakes people make when it comes to their homeowner's insurance?

Not looking over your policy documents to see what's covered and what's excluded. Be proactive in asking questions. You don't want to find out you don't have coverage when a claim occurs.

How often should coverage be reviewed?

Yearly at minimum and at every life event or change.

What's the difference between insurance for replacement costs versus actual value?

Replacement cost is how much you will need to build your home from the ground up. Market value is how much someone will pay for your home as it stands. Sometimes it costs much more to build than to buy because of the cost of building materials. It's not often that market value and replacement cost are the same.

LIGHTNING ROUND:

Neighborhood: West Little Rock, Roland, North Little Rock

Hometown: Hazen

Family: Husband, Shane (26 years), son Landon (freshman at the University of Arkansas this fall), dog Luna

Favorite thing to do in Little Rock: Have dinner with friends and family, host get-togethers, or go to concerts

Go-to lunch spot: Local Lime

Two things you like to do outside the office: Entertain and travel

Last vacation: Morgan Wallen concert in Dallas

DAWN POWELL

PARAMOUNT FINANCIAL



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As the founder of Paramount Financial, Dawn Powell is focused on helping clients work toward their retirement dreams through a well thought out strategic plan. She is committed to giving unparalleled service while at the same time ensuring her clients have the bright retirement future, to which she believes everyone is entitled.

Powell was born in upstate New York, grew up in Sherwood and attended the University of Arkansas, where she obtained her undergraduate degree. Powell entered the insurance industry in 2002 and has since made working with retirement and pre-retirement individuals the focus of her career. She holds life and health licenses in Arkansas, Texas, Florida and North Carolina. Today, Powell resides in central Arkansas with her husband, Matt, and their two children, Abby Rhea and Lilly.

What makes your customer service outstanding?

At Paramount Financial, our sole focus is YOU. Both my team and I pride ourselves with providing an exceptional customer experience. It is not our goal to meet the client's expectations, rather to exceed them. The utmost importance is placed on integrity and transparency. Helping individuals achieve their retirement goals is our top priority. Our experienced professionals are dedicated to educating clients on the various ways they can create a plan designed to help them achieve financial freedom. Economic uncertainty can present challenges for many, and it may take more than just market performance to provide the confidence deserved for a secure financial future. We understand the importance of utilizing insurance, estate preparation and tax strategies to ensure the client's confidence in the future.

How often should coverage be reviewed?

Annually, at minimum. More often should a life-changing event occur.

What are the most important factors to consider when choosing a life insurance company?

Financial stability, company ratings, solvency and claim-paying history

LIGHTNING ROUND

Neighborhood: Robinwood

Hometown: Sherwood

Last good read: "Hello Beautiful" by Ann Napolitano

Go-to lunch spot: Cheers

Two things you like to do outside the office:
Travel and anything outdoors

Paper or digital calendar: Both!

Last vacation: Seaside, Florida

JOHN STARLING

PRESIDENT,
JTS FINANCIAL
SERVICES LLC



1616 Brookwood Drive, Little Rock
501.227.0194 | jtsfs.com | info@jtsfs.com
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John Starling has long emphasized that “everything is a team effort” at JTS, a full-service insurance consulting firm headquartered in Little Rock. Starling, JTS founder and president, credits his dedicated and passionate team with the company’s tremendous growth in recent years, making it one of the largest independently owned and operated employee benefits firms in the region.

An attorney with a background in labor and employment law, Starling entered the employee benefits insurance industry in 1998 and has since launched or acquired multiple companies in the benefits arena. JTS is focused on specialized health insurance programs, outstanding customer service and providing savings to clients across a variety of industries, including large and small private businesses, nonprofits, associations, public school districts and municipalities.

JTS and its family of companies now operate in nine states with approximately 200 employees.

How is your service and focus different from your competition?

Simply put, we provide solutions to our clients that other brokers/consultants can’t or don’t want to do. Since we started, we have made it our mission to stay ahead of our customers’ needs and on the cutting edge of technology and service offerings, and we make the investments necessary to do just that. We now offer everything from consumer-directed health plans — like FSAs and HSAs — and self-funded plans to benefits administration systems, human resources consulting and turn-key bill reconciliation, as well as online and in-person benefits enrollment and employee education. We’ve also helped clients establish and manage health clinics to expand health care access for employees and control health plan costs.

We call this our “intentionally different” approach, and our team has taken it to heart. This customer focus shows in the incredible feedback we receive from our clients. We are always working to meet customer needs, and if that means we need to work a little harder and reinvest in our business to develop expanded service offerings, we will happily take on the challenge.

To what do you attribute your companies’ tremendous growth?

The growth of JTS and our associated companies over the past decade is primarily due to one thing: employees who share our client-focused philosophy. We have put together a dedicated and experienced team with members spread across 14 states who all believe in being “intentionally different” from anyone else in this industry.

We simply couldn’t maintain the level of service and success we expect without the team we’ve put in place. We’ve set very high expectations among our customers, and we meet and exceed those expectations only because everyone in our family of companies is passionate about our mission.

We take the time to have open and honest conversations with clients about what they and their employees really need. We aren’t here to push specific insurance companies or insurance products. We look out for the best interests of our clients, and we’re with them throughout the process, providing ongoing customer service with an eye toward helping them manage their health care costs.

BINGO BASH

Access Group held its 17th annual Bingo Bash fundraiser at The Hall. Hosted by the Access in Action young professionals group and emceed by Lance Restum from the Arkansas Travelers Youth Foundation, guests enjoyed food, fun, prizes and lots of bingo. The event raised more than \$80,000 for Access' mission of building brighter futures for children and young adults with learning differences and special needs.



1. Sarah Brantley, Annemarie Dillard Jazic, Frances Mitchell, Betsy Rhodes
2. Mark St. Pierre, Jackson Gammill, Chase Barnes
3. Andrea Smith, Nathan Coulter
4. Allie Smith, Elizabeth Ivory
5. Taylor Clenin, Shelby Gatewood
6. Sarah Bemberg, Danna Karras, Hannah St. Pierre
7. Peyton Barnes, Tanya Barnes
8. Rob and Maggie Brown, Nicole Gore



WFA COCKTAIL RECEPTION

The Women's Foundation of Arkansas held a cocktail reception for supporters to celebrate its work for women and girls across the state. Hosted by Kay Kelley Arnold, the evening featured delectable hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and plenty of conversations about the organization's past, present and future.



1. Becky Flynn, Kay Kelley Arnold, Anna Beth Gorman
2. Cathy Owen, Mimi Hurst, Stacy Hurst
3. Carolyn Witherspoon, Sherry Walker
4. Rebecca Pittillo, Alison Melson
5. Pat McClelland, Mary Wohlleb, Cindy Conger
6. Nancy DeLamar, Jan Pilkington
7. Amy Rossi, Dorothy Hall
8. Skye Martin, Toni Lindsey, Meagan Fudge





UA LITTLE ROCK CHANCELLOR'S CIRCLE RECEPTION

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock hosted its Chancellor's Circle reception on the UALR campus with friends, patrons and faculty. The Chancellor's Circle profoundly impacts students, faculty and programs by providing need-based financial assistance, research opportunities for students and faculty, and enhanced technological resources.

1. Derek Boyce, Sherri Damerow, Kristi Smith, Jerry Damerow, Ginger Daril
2. Dr. Dean Kumpuris, Elaine Eubank, Alfred Williams
3. Regina Stewart Hampton, Bettye Tappin
4. Kathy and Tony Pahls
5. Krista Brandt, Bryan Day



Pelvic or abdominal pain



Bloating



Feeling full quickly



Fatigue



Needing to urinate urgently or often



Constipation or menstrual changes



Pain during intercourse



Upset stomach or heartburn

KNOW THE SIGNS

We Can Fight Ovarian Cancer Together

September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, a time to support current patients and educate others on ovarian cancer.

LEARN THE SYMPTOMS AND
LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

YOUR PAP SMEAR DOES NOT
DETECT OVARIAN CANCER

VISIT [ARKANSASOVARIANCANCER.ORG](https://arkansasovariancancer.org)
FOR MORE INFORMATION

ART DEPARTMENT: BRI PETERSON

Art Department, the popular artist series hosted by Thea Foundation, returned to the Argenta gallery to highlight the colorful work of Bri Peterson. Peterson's "Stay Gold" exhibit featured mixed-media art with tastes of nostalgia and pop culture references.

1. Kristen Farmin, Bri Peterson, Katelyn Cartwright
2. Nick Leopoulos, Ava Leopoulos, Ashley Leopoulos, Annie Lindsey
3. Mary and Quang Nguyen
4. Natalie Polston, Brittany Gerke, Jessie Green
5. Kay Jaco, Lori Ritchie
6. Bryant Phelan, Jim Adamson
7. Aurora Rigual, Cailey Faucett, Mallory Harness
8. Harrison Maddox, Sara Fulton-Koerbling
9. Jeromey Patterson, Robyn Blaylock



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DISCOVER TRUST TREE

Hip music, girl power and lots of color were on display at the annual Discover Trust Tree event. Attendees gathered at the Museum of Discovery once again to enjoy performances by talented campers, hands-on exhibits, a dance party and heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks, all to raise funds for Trust Tree's programs and operations, as well as scholarships and instruments for the nonprofit's art, music and leadership camps.

1. Adam Wilkerson, Jordan Wolf, Sarah Stricklin
2. Janet Moore-Lindstrom, Kim McClendon
3. Cameron and Greer Bowden
4. Deana and Dave Fry
5. Susan Elder, Ruthie Hokins, Susan and Robin Borné

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BRUNCHFEST

The Centers' young professional group, Emerging Leaders, hosted its annual BrunchFest event at The Hall. Breakfast and brunch dishes from more than 30 local restaurants were served along with mimosas, bloody marys, music and merchandise. Proceeds raised from the foodie event went directly toward supporting summer activities and recreational supplies for children and teens who live at The Centers.



1. Morgan Wadley, Jamie Higgins, Brittani Hill
2. Mary Claire Imbro, Amanda McColey
3. Corbin Chapmon, Emily Barrios
4. Jacob Harper, Mac Hurtado
5. Engrid Wallace, Shakeylla Allen
6. Phillip Alson, Linda Flowers
7. Nicole and Scott Acin
8. Melissa Hendricks, Robert Noirot
9. Tim Fox, Josie Schanke



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DELTA TRIENNIAL MEMBER PREVIEW

The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts hosted a member preview reception for the opening of the highly anticipated "Delta Triennial" exhibition. Museum supporters got to experience the exhibit before it officially opened to the public, while judges announced the winning pieces. The evening of art was followed by refreshments, hors d'oeuvres and live music in the Cultural Living Room.



1. Dr. Victoria Ramirez, Spencer Jansen
2. Kara Lenfestey, Lisa Nordmeyer
3. M.J. Orellano, Charlene Julian, Dr. Daniel Orellano
4. Renee and Scott Rittlemeyer
5. Sarah-Catherine Gutierrez, Kelly Steliga
6. Gabrielle Edwards, Malina Tabor
7. Dr. Robbie and Jay Bradford, Larry Graham and Cindy Steele
8. Grady and Ann McCoy, Marion Kahn and Judge Vic Fleming



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Bennett's Seafood
Purple Banana
BubbaLu's
Beech Street Bistro

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Anderson's
Juanita's
Polar Freeze

FOOD-THEMED EVENT

Arkansas Pie Festival
Mayhaw Festival
Mt. Nebo Chicken Fry
Slovak Oyster Supper
Soup Sunday

PROPRIETOR OF THE YEAR

Aaron Bradshaw
Rob Nelson
Mark Abernathy
James Woods
George and Katherine Eldridge

Congratulations to all of the finalists from your friends at Ben E. Keith Foods!

SERVING UP SOLUTIONS

Once again, attendees gathered at the Albert Pike Masonic Center for the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance's 17th annual Serving Up Solutions. Chaired by Lance and Stacey Hines, the one-of-a-kind event featured members of the Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus as waiters for the night, plus delectable dishes, raffles, wine pulls and an auction. Proceeds from the evening supported programs like cooking classes, grocery store tours and grants for hunger relief organizations across Arkansas.

1. Lance and Stacey Hynes
2. Rep. Denise Jones Ennett, Cherika Holley
3. Mary McGowan, Molly McNulty, Betsy Culp
4. Kathy Webb, Chris Caldwell





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we **AR** lighting the way

When Tom Heau of Hot Springs Village was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and needed a bone marrow transplant, his wife Deb said she could see the light in his eyes dim. But Tom perked up when he found out the international leader in the treatment of his cancer was just down the road at the world-renowned Myeloma Center at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences **Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.**

Today, Tom is five years cancer-free.

The 27th Gala for Life, the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute's largest fundraiser, benefits the **bone marrow transplant program** - the only transplant program in the state treating cancer patients like Tom.

*"From the welcome desk to **Dr. Thanendrarajan** to the nursing staff to the lab people, they treated me like I was the most important person in the universe. I always felt like I was getting the best treatment anyone could ask for."*

Tom and Deb Heau

As a hobby, Tom makes Trees of Hope with cancer ribbons and presents them to family and friends. Each tree's design is inspired by the intended recipient, or a message of hope he wants to share and made with wire and Arkansas crystals.

GALA FOR LIFE

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