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UNIVERSITY PARK *Life*



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Publisher's Note



Fall has officially arrived in Texas... or at least we're calling it fall! While we may still be waiting for cooler temperatures, October brings plenty of festive events, fun, and reasons to celebrate.

October is also **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**, a cause that has become especially meaningful to me. As I continue my own journey, I'm reminded of the importance of awareness, early detection, and community support. I'll be walking in the **Komen More Than Pink Walk on October 17** with our University Park Fighters team. Thank you to everyone who continues to support and cheer us on!

Inside this month's issue, enjoy stories featuring the **Kahn family's adventures**, an inspiring event with **Danielle Parton**, our **Kinder Kids—the newest members of kindergarten**, **Meet Your Mayor**, and **The Art of Hosting**, with ideas for entertaining and making your holiday gatherings memorable.

So grab your favorite fall treat, embrace the Halloween spirit, and enjoy another issue filled with the people, stories, and events that make University Park such a special place.

Happy October!

Robin Lynne,
Publisher

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Mayor Randy Biddle

Getting to Know University Park’s New Mayor

For Randy Biddle, serving as mayor of University Park is a natural extension of a long-standing commitment to the community he has called home for decades. After growing up in Highland Park, Biddle moved to University Park following law school and has been part of the community ever since. Today, he and his wife, Barbara, are raising their family here—along with their two sons, Ben and Hank, daughters-in-law Megan and Sharon, and five grandchildren, Charlie, Harry, William, Hal and Lindsay. Long before becoming mayor, Biddle built a history of community

involvement, serving on numerous committees, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. That experience ultimately inspired him to run for mayor, giving him the opportunity to continue serving University Park and working alongside the City’s outstanding staff. Biddle’s professional background has also shaped his approach to leadership. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from The University of Texas at Austin and a law degree from South Texas College of Law. After beginning his career as

an assistant district attorney for Dallas County, he moved into civil litigation. His community service has included leadership with the Salesmanship Club of Dallas and service on the board of directors of the Dallas County Park Cities Municipal Utility District. Together, these experiences provided Biddle with a strong foundation in leadership, collaboration and public service.

Away from City Hall, Biddle enjoys spending time with his family and working on a small ranch the family owns.

As he looks toward the future, Biddle has several priorities for University Park. Addressing parking challenges in Snider Plaza and the Miracle Mile, minimizing persistent stormwater flooding and retaining the city’s exceptional police officers, firefighters and staff are among his key goals.

He is also looking at the bigger picture, with a focus on long-term financial sustainability, replacing aging water and sewer infrastructure, continuing Centennial Master Plan initiatives and addressing issues related to DART.

For Biddle, what makes University Park truly special is its rare combination of safety, a close-knit community and a small-town atmosphere—all located in the heart of a major metropolitan area.

As he begins his term, Biddle recognizes that challenges lie ahead, including increased state involvement in municipal operations. His message, however, is straightforward: University Park will approach those challenges thoughtfully and respond to them to the best of its ability.





**FROM
BANGKOK
TO THE
PARK CITIES**
*The Kahn Family
Finds Community
Close to Home*

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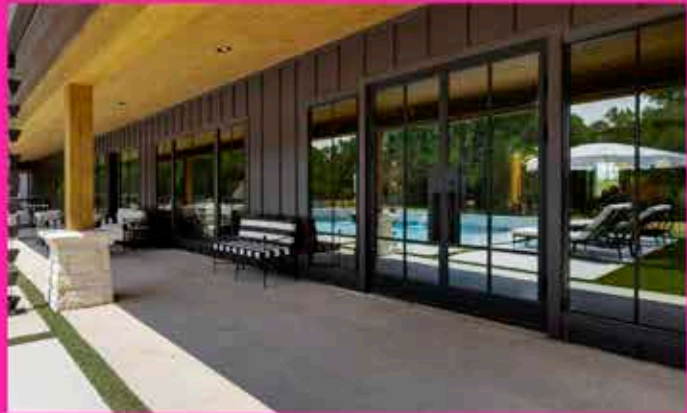
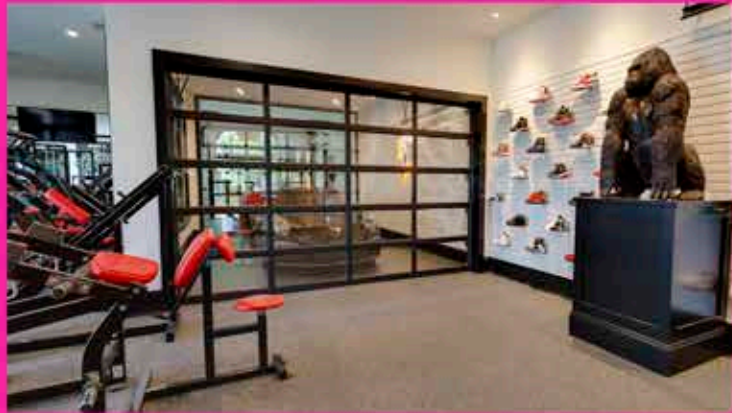
For Ben and Preaw Kahn, home is more than a place—it's a community filled with family, friendships, traditions and plenty of activity. The Kahns have called Hyer Street home for the past eight years, raising their children, Poe, 9, and Joy, 7, in the heart of the Park Cities. Ben, a gastroenterologist with Texas Digestive Disease Consultants, grew up in Lubbock and later attended Rice University before moving to Dallas for medical school at UT Southwestern. Preaw was born and raised in Bangkok, Thailand, earning both her undergraduate and master's degrees there before moving to Dallas in 2014.

The family's days are filled with activities. Poe plays soccer with the HP Scots club team and enjoys flag football, while Joy loves walking to her HP gymnastics, doing ballet, and swimming. The Kahns also enjoy plenty of time outdoors. Ben loves running along Armstrong Parkway with fellow Bradfield dads, sometimes accompanied by Poe and his friends riding their bikes nearby. Preaw recently started playing Mahjong with other Bradfield moms and enjoys casual pickleball, yoga and Pilates. She recently discovered needlepoint, a hobby she enjoys sharing with Joy.

Community involvement has become especially meaningful to Preaw. She regularly volunteers at Bradfield, including helping in the cafeteria—a role her children affectionately call being a "lunch lady." She is also active with the Bradfield PTA and enjoys opportunities to share her Thai heritage through local cultural events. One highlight has been Highland Park ISD's annual CultureFest. After serving as a Thailand table host the previous year, Preaw became a Performance co-chair for this year's event, which brought together more than 1,100 attendees, 24 country tables and 13 cultural performances. Her

children even took the stage after months of practice. For Preaw, seeing her children confidently share their heritage while celebrating the cultures of others was especially meaningful. The family often travels to Thailand to visit Preaw's parents and sister. She describes the experience as feeling like "Thanksgiving and Christmas in the middle of summer." One memorable trip included friends from Dallas and a visit to an elephant sanctuary in Chiang Mai, where the family learned about rescued elephants and watched them roam freely. At home, the Kahns enjoy board games, movie nights, LEGOs, video games and crafts. They love the neighborhood's walkability, nearby parks, local businesses and, especially, the sense of connection among neighbors. For the Kahns, University Park offers the best of both worlds: the warmth of a small, family-friendly town with the energy and conveniences of Dallas just beyond their doorstep.





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- A. If one of your toys could come to life, which one would you choose—and why?
- B. What would your superpower be—and why?
- C. What would you do if you had four arms?

Get ready for some seriously creative answers!



BRODY ALEXANDER

Parents: Monica & Matthew Alexander

- A. Blaze the Monster Machine to play games and ride in Blaze and zoom around the neighborhood!
- B. Would want ice as a super power to freeze cars so they are icy and blast ice in the air so then it snows.
- C. I would swim fast in the ocean with the fish like an octopus!



WILLIAM KEEGAN

Parent: Shea Keegan

- A. Batman motorcycle because he’s fast and can help save the city.
- B. Laser eyes
- C. Be a soccer goalie and block all of the goals!



ANTIONETTE MANAKIDES

Parents: Angela and Thomas Manakides

- A. My kitty cat stuffy because she’s so cute and cozy.
- B. I would be able to shoot out lava and ice with my hands and fly, because I want to cook and melt things from the air.
- C. I would climb up trees and buildings.



ERIC DREYFUSS

Parent: Joanna Dreyfuss

- A. Transformers because it could be a race car first but then a robot in order to defeat stuff
- B. Teleport because then I could get to places super fast
- C. Build 2 Legos at one time



KNOX GESUALDI

Parent: Nick Gesualdi

- A. My fire truck because it has a fun water gun to shoot.
- B. Throw balls that are electric and venom too to kill bad guys.
- C. Make two peanut butter and jellies in two seconds.



EVE MAZUR

Parent: Orly Mazur

- A. My Teeniepingso so I can catch them and then we can play together!
- B. To be a queen with a magic wand, so I can make no bad guys allowed anywhere and boss everyone around.
- C. Dance with them!



CALLEN MORRIS

Parents: Jason and Morgan Morris

- A. My whole army set so they can attack the monsters under my bed.
- B. I would use it against bad guys, easy peasy!
- C. I would grab up all the bad guys to keep the world safe -(we are very obsessed with villains at the moment!)

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The Art of Hosting: How to Curate Joyful Gatherings with Culinary Expertise

Vivian Morgan, owner of Culinary Art Catering, knows that a memorable gathering is about much more than what's on the menu. With years of experience in catering and events, she has learned that the best celebrations are thoughtfully planned around the people attending—and designed so the host can enjoy them, too.

Whether you're planning a wedding, milestone celebration, corporate event, mitzvah or intimate gathering, Morgan believes the goal is the same: create an experience that feels welcoming, intentional and effortless for guests.

Here are a few of her tips for hosting a gathering people will remember:

START WITH THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

Before choosing the menu, think about your guests. Who is attending? What time of day is the event? How long will it last? Most importantly, how do you want people to feel?

"Successful entertaining isn't about doing more," says Morgan. "It's about understanding the purpose of the event, knowing your guests and making thoughtful choices."

PLAN THE FLOW, NOT JUST THE FOOD

Even the most beautiful menu can fall flat if guests are waiting in long lines, searching for seating or waiting too long for a drink. Consider guest movement, seating, timing and bar service. A little planning behind the scenes can make the entire event feel seamless.

KEEP THE MENU THOUGHTFUL

More choices don't necessarily mean a better experience. Morgan recommends a balanced selection of familiar favorites along with one or two more interesting options.

Dietary needs should also be considered from the beginning. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, kosher-style and

allergy-conscious choices can be incorporated naturally so every guest feels included—not like an afterthought.

SPEND WHERE IT MATTERS

A larger budget doesn't automatically create a better event. Discuss your budget openly with your caterer early in the planning process. An experienced team can help you determine where to invest and where to simplify, whether that means prioritizing quality ingredients, presentation, service or a special personal touch.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE DETAILS

Food may bring people together, but atmosphere shapes the experience. Lighting, music, service and personal touches can elevate an event without adding unnecessary expense. A signature drink or a late-night snack with a story behind it can make a celebration feel uniquely yours.

LET THE PROFESSIONALS HANDLE THE DETAILS

Morgan's biggest piece of advice? Once you've chosen the right team, trust them. A full-service caterer should manage the food, service, timing, setup and cleanup so you aren't checking the ice or wondering when dinner will be ready.

"You should be able to welcome your guests, enjoy the celebration and be fully present," says Morgan. "That's part of what you're paying for."

Culinary Art Catering serves the Dallas-Fort Worth area and offers events at Nuvo Room, VouV Meeting & Event Space and Reflections Venue & Gardens.

For Morgan, the true art of hosting is **creating a gathering that feels personal and joyful while allowing the host to be a guest at their own celebration.**

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in mind, including IPEMA- and ASTM-certified options for playground applications. Turf can also be used for indoor and outdoor sports fields and customized with logos and lettering.

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Meredith McBee and Leslie Ficke Photo Courtesy of Clayton Dabney

Director. She previously served for 10 years on the organization’s Board of Directors, including as Chairman of the Board from 2008 to 2009.

During her nine years as Executive Director, Ficke helped raise more than \$11 million and served more than 3,100 families. Under her leadership, the organization’s signature annual events, including the Love Luncheon, Mahjong for a Purpose, Fishin’ Tournament and Dabney Fall Golf Outing, each reached record fundraising highs.

“Clayton Dabney has been such an important part of my life, and it has been an incredible privilege to work alongside this community in support of the children and families we serve,” Ficke said. “I could not feel more confident passing the torch to Meredith. Her heart for others, her experience and her ability to bring people together make her exactly the kind of leader I hoped would take Clayton Dabney into its next chapter.”

McBee brings decades of community leadership, fundraising and nonprofit board experience to the role. A longtime Dallas volunteer and community leader, she has held leadership positions with organizations including Camp Honey Creek for Girls, Highland Park Centennial and La Fiesta de las Seis Banderas, helping lead major fundraising initiatives, events and strategic efforts. She also brings an existing connection to Clayton Dabney, having served as Vendor Chair for the organization’s 2026 annual Love Luncheon.

“Stepping into this role is both an honor and a responsibility I hold very close to my heart,” McBee said. “Leslie’s leadership has made an extraordinary impact on Clayton Dabney for Kids with Cancer, and I am grateful to inherit the strong foundation she and so many others have built. I am excited to listen, learn and work alongside our staff, volunteers, supporters and community partners as we carry this mission forward and find new ways to serve even more children and families.”

As part of the transition, Ficke will work closely with McBee to ensure continuity for the organization, its families, volunteers and supporters.

the country with children in the final stages of terminal cancer. Inspired by the life of Clayton Dabney, who passed away from cancer at just six years old, the organization helps families focus on what matters most during their child’s final days by fulfilling last wishes, providing financial support and creating opportunities for everlasting memories.

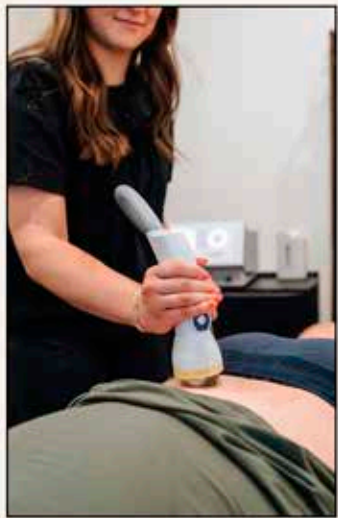
Ficke’s connection to Clayton Dabney began long before she became Executive

CLAYTON DABNEY FOR KIDS WITH CANCER ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

CARLY TURNER, BRYNN BAGOT PUBLIC RELATIONS

Clayton Dabney for Kids with Cancer announced a leadership transition, as longtime Executive Director **Leslie Ficke** prepares to step down after nine years in the role, welcoming **Meredith McBee** as the organization’s next Executive Director.

The transition comes as Clayton Dabney celebrates more than 30 years of providing anonymous assistance to financially struggling families across



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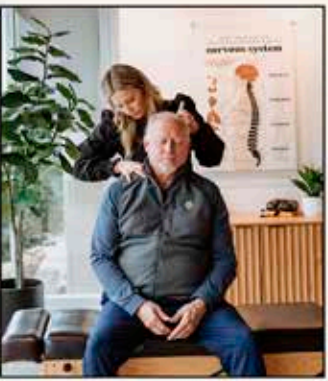
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Scilla - A Fresh Taste of Seafood and European Flair

JESSICA HOFFMANN

Occupying new space off Douglas near Preston Center, Duro Hospitality brings Scilla. Scilla leans into seafood and European-style fare with signature dishes like its paella. We knew from the outset we would get that for the table. It is not easy to come by in Dallas, and so it was a must. And it didn't disappoint.

We shared everything family-style, but you don't have to. We also shared a salad, the carrots, which are rave-worthy, the branzino, and the rigatoni alla zozzona. My favorite of the evening was the crudo trio. It rivaled any of the top sushi spots in town.



The Sicilian Lemon, an olive oil and lemon tart, is one of the most beautiful desserts I have seen. We also sampled the tiramisu and the Spumoni Tart. The Spumoni was gifted to us and was the table's overall favorite, though I preferred the lighter lemon.

The space is gorgeous, as you would expect, sporting two dining areas on either side of the central bar where you enter. The bar has about 16 oversized pink stools. The good news is you will be comfortable, but I fear the seating will fill up fast, and with slightly smaller stools, they may be able to get a few more people in at the bar. It is one of the few places on the west side of Preston for happy hour, so I believe it will be busy with the many bankers and other professionals who can walk over.

It also appeared that they were putting the final touches on a large patio area that will be great in the fall and spring. I've already booked that for my next visit!



Jessica Hoffmann is a University Park resident. You can follow her on Facebook and Instagram @ParkCitiesFoodLover.



Danielle Parton Shines At Bubbles & Brainpower



Rosangela Zurawel, a resident of University Park, is a REALTOR®, designer, mother/wife, and party crasher extraordinaire. If you'd like your "party crashed" and covered by us, contact her at (469) 236-6819 or rosangelazurawel@gmail.com.

A little sparkle, a lot of ambition and one unforgettable guest made for a remarkable evening at the Frontiers of Flight Museum on August 20. I had the pleasure of attending Après Flight Club's "Bubbles & Brainpower", where guests enjoyed wine, bubbles and elegant hors d'oeuvres before hearing from American Airlines pilot, military veteran and Shine Girl Distillery founder Danielle Parton. At the heart of the



Danielle Parton commanded the room with her effortless elegance, captivating guests with her remarkable story and her magnetic personality

evening was Après Flight Club's mission to empower the next generation of girls through Aerospace STEM education. Danielle shared her extraordinary journey from working at Hooters to flying C-130 and C-5 aircraft around the world and in combat, becoming an Aircraft Commander and eventually joining American Airlines. She also spoke about creating Shine Girl Distillery from a treasured Parton family moonshine recipe and succeeding in male dominated careers without sacrificing her femininity or sense of self. The entire room was captivated by her resilience, beauty, elegance, wonderful personality and incredible sense of humor. She was genuine, magnetic and deeply inspiring. I cannot remember the last time I felt so moved or admired someone so much while listening to her speak. By the end, I was nearly speechless, not only because of everything she has accomplished, but because of the remarkable woman she is. The evening took place just five days before the passing of Danielle's beloved aunt, the unforgettable Dolly Parton, who will be loved and missed forever. In Danielle, I could see the same warmth, beauty, humor and unmistakable sparkle that made Dolly so beloved. Danielle's story is far too extraordinary to capture in just a few paragraphs, and I cannot wait to share more of her inspiring journey with our readers in a special feature coming soon.



Nadij Rafaty, Kelly Flowers and Danielle Parton



Danielle Parton and Cameron Hernholm, the Museum Chief Advancement Officer



Rosangela Zurawel and Danielle Parton



Jessica Flores, Cameron Hernholm and Yasmin Jones



Camille Liebbe and Erin England



The audience was fascinated as Danielle Parton shared the extraordinary story of her life at "Bubbles & Brainpower"



Debbie Murray, Kunthea Mam-Douglas, Dr. Carla Russo, Regina Bruce and Camille Liebbe



Anna Blair and Adriana Ocampo



Abigail Erickson Torres, President & CEO of Frontier of Flight Museum

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Shop, Dine & Help Save Lives

The Family Place’s 34th annual Partners Card returns October 23–November 1, offering special savings while providing safety and critical support for survivors of family violence.

Did you know that, on average, 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the U.S.?

Dallas-based family violence agency The Family Place is gearing up for the 34th year of its popular Partners Card fundraiser led by co-chairs **Meredith Counce, Courtney Kerr Noonan, and Alex Snodgrass.**

The agency’s premier 10-day charity shopping and dining event will take place from **Friday, October 23 – Sunday, November 1.** Shoppers can purchase a Partners Card this year for \$100. Cardholders are entitled to a 20% discount at retailers and a 10% discount at restaurants during the 10-day period.

A purchase of one \$100 Partners Card provides one night of safety for a victim of family violence at The Family Place. Furthermore, 100% of a Partners Card purchase goes directly to support The Family Place programs and services for victims of family violence.

Last year’s Partners Card raised more than \$1.37 million, which equates to 16,200 nights of shelter and safety for survivors of domestic violence. Each year, The Family Place provides over 40,000 nights of emergency shelter.

Visit www.partnerscard.org for more information and a full list of stores and restaurants where you can save money and save lives!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Stay connected with what’s happening around University Park. From community celebrations and family-friendly activities to local fundraisers and seasonal events, there’s always something to look forward to.

Have an upcoming event you’d like to share? We’d love to help spread the word! Email your event details to upcontent@n2co.com for consideration in an upcoming issue.

2026 KOMEN RACE FOR THE CURE - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX

Supports breast cancer research, patient care, and community outreach.

Sign up or donate: info-komen.org/goto/upfighters



ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH

To celebrate Arbor Day, the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, with the assistance of elementary school children from the Highland Park Independent School District, plant a tree in one of the City’s parks.

More information: uptexas.org/378/Special-Events



DALLAS HISTORY MAKERS AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE - NOVEMBER 19TH

The Dallas Historical Society has announced the Dallas History Makers Awards for Excellence honorees for 2026. They will be presented their awards at the **November 19th luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel.**

Tickets, sponsorships and underwriting: www.dallashistory.org/support/dallashistorymakers



17TH ANNUAL HOPE PARTY - FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH

This event will serve as a culminating celebration of Grant Halliburton Foundation’s 20th anniversary year while raising critical funds for its mental health education and resources for North Texas youth and their families.

Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are available now at GrantHalliburton.org/hopeparty.



HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING AT SNIDER PLAZA - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH

Residents from throughout the area gather to celebrate the coming holiday season. This year’s tree lighting will return to Snider Plaza. The festivities, featuring live holiday carols and dances take place on the main stage. More information: uptexas.org/378/Special-Events



ELENA'S CHILDREN'S PARK TREE LIGHTING - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

For many years, residents from across the Park Cities have gathered at Elena’s Children’s Park to remember children who are no longer with us. The gathering features short remarks, holiday carols, and the lighting of a holiday tree.

More information: uptexas.org/378/Special-Events





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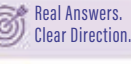
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