

FEBRUARY 2017

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2017**

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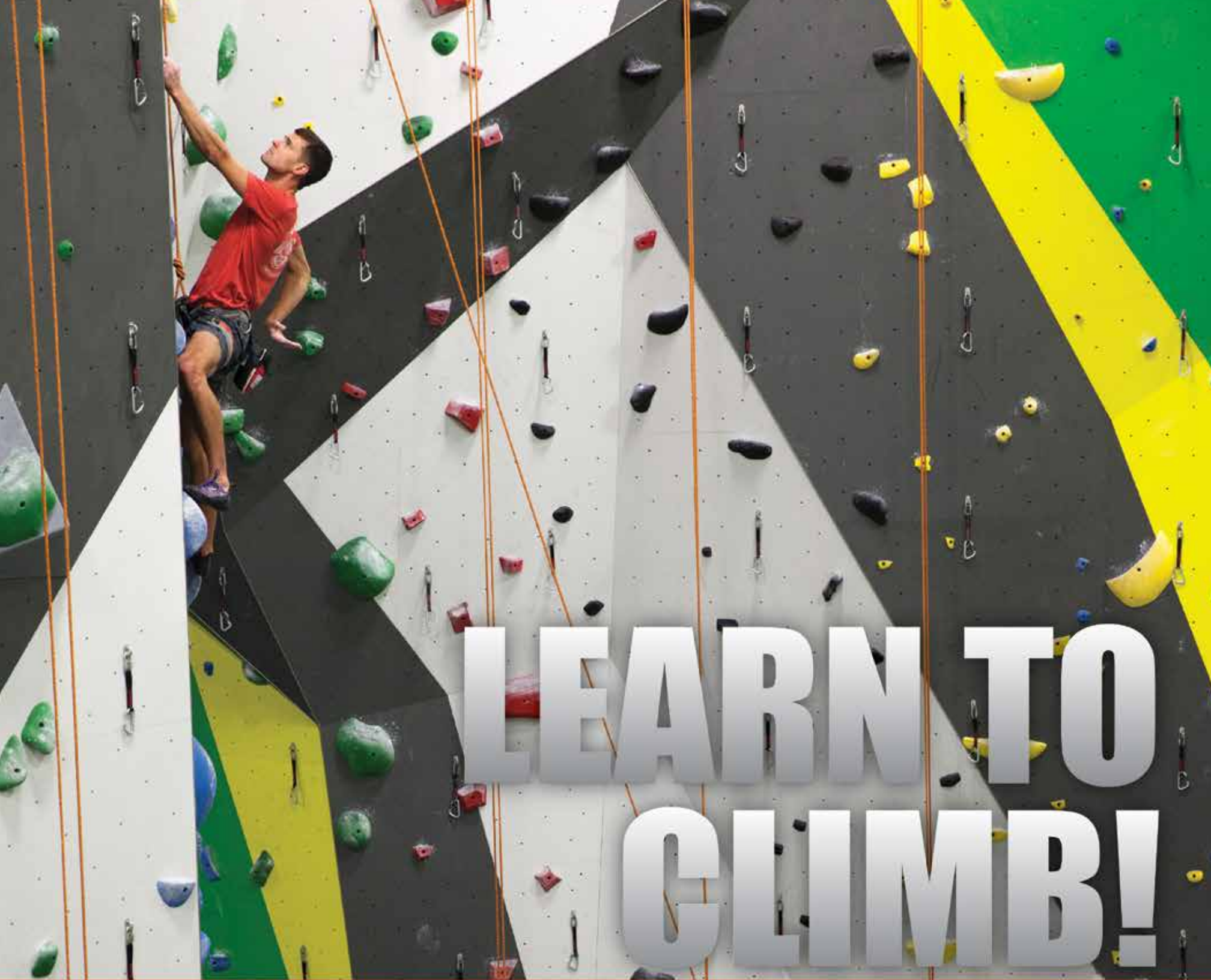


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ON THE COVER 16

Grammy Award Winning Singer/Songwriter Laura Story comes to Birmingham to lead worship and share her faith. See page 16.

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BRIARWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Superintendent: Dr. Barrett Mosbacker
 2204 Briarwood Way, 35243; K4-6th grade, 776-5800
 6255 Cahaba Valley Rd., 35242; 7th-12th grade
 776-5900, www.bcsk12.org
Grades: K4-12th
Est.: 1964 **Size/Ratio:** 1920, 20:1
Religious Affiliation: Presbyterian
Accreditation: SACS, Member of ACSI
Academic Achievements: According to ACSI, Briarwood has largest number of National Merit finalists among member schools. 99% attend two and four year colleges or universities.
Honors and Awards: SAT and ACT scores above state and national averages, previous state winner for the Robotics Team, winner of multiple State championships in athletics.
Fine Arts: Show Choir, Band, Drama, Visual Arts, Lion Guard, Choir
Athletics: Football, basketball, baseball, cross country, track, tennis, golf, volleyball, swimming, soccer, cheerleading, softball
Tuition: Available at www.bcsk12.org or call 776-5813.
Admission: Accepting applications year-round. Details on-line or contact Kelly Mooney, Dir. of Admissions, kmooney@bcsk12.org

BROOKLANE BAPTIST ACADEMY
Administrator: Ty Harter
 160 Brooklane Drive, Hueytown 35023
 497-0967, www.brooklanebaptist.academy
Grades: K3-12th
Est.: 1973
Religious Affiliation: Baptist
Accreditation: ACEA and AACB

Academic Achievements: Above average SAT scores
Athletics: Basketball, football, baseball, softball, cheerleading, volleyball, after school care
Tuition: \$2410-\$3400
Admission: Early registration until June 15; Now accepting the Ala. Opportunity Scholarship pending full interview.

COOSA VALLEY ACADEMY
Headmaster: Pamela Lovelady
 163 Park Street, Harpersville, 35078
 672-7326, plovelady@coosavalleyacademy.org
 www.coosavalleyacademy.org
Grades: K3-12th
Est.: 1970 **Size/Ratio:** 295, 15:1
Religious Affiliation: Nondenominational
Accreditation: SACS, AISA, CITA
Academic Achievements: AISA Blue Ribbon School
Honors & Awards: AISA state award winning art program, community service leaders
Fine Arts: Music, art
Athletics: Baseball, football, softball, basketball, cheerleading, dance, pep squad, volleyball, soccer, golf, fishing team. 14 state championships.
Tuition: \$325/mo for 1st child, add'l children discount
Admission: Test scores, transcripts, drug test 9-12. Accept applications yr round

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Director: Jay Adams
 24975 Hwy. 25, Columbiana, AL 35051
 669-7777, www.cornerstonechargers.com
Grades: K3 - 12th
Est.: 1997 **Size/Ratio:** 195, 1/15
Religious Affiliation: Christian

Accreditation: SACS/AISA
Academic Achievements: Students avg a 24.1 on the ACT
Athletics: Football, basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, cheerleading
Tuition: Need-based tuition available, see details online.
Admission: Accept applications yr.-round. Contact Eric Wilson or Debbie Collins, 669-7777.

CORNERSTONE SCHOOLS OF ALABAMA
President: Dr. Nita Carr
Principal: Veronica Wiggs (Elem)
 Jeremy Knowles (Middle & High)
 118 55th Street North, 35212 (Elem)
 959 Huffman Road, 35215 (HS)
 591-7600, info@csalabama.org
 www.EducateBirmingham.org
Grades: K4-12th
Est.: 1986 **Size/Ratio:** 504, 1:15
Religious Affiliation: None
Accreditation: SACS, ACSI, Intl. Baccalaureate Primary World School, International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme
Academic Achievements: First International Primary World School in Birmingham, Ala. and the second in the state. 19% increase in students ready in reading on the ACT Aspire from 2015-2016, 57% increase in students ready in math on ACT Aspire test. 100% of seniors enrolled in college or university.
Honors & Awards: National School of Distinction Merit from Beta Club, Recipient of the Samford University Frances Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership Character Award, International Baccalaureate status
Fine Arts: Choir, Music, Art, Dance, Drama, Band

Athletics: Basketball, Tennis, Cross Country, Track and Field, Volleyball, Soccer, Baseball, Cheerleading
Tuition: Sliding scale based on family income, 100% of students receive tuition assistance
Admission: Open enrollment began on Jan. 4. Call 591-7600 for details

EPHESUS ACADEMY
Principal: Dr. William E. Lusain
 829 McMillon Ave SW, Birmingham, 35211,
 786-2194, ephesusacademy@gmail.com.
 www.ephesusacademy.org
Grades: K5-9th
Est.: 1897 **Size/Ratio:** 70, 1:12
Religious Affiliation: Seventh Day Adventist
Accreditation: NASSP, NAESP, NCPSA, Accrediting Assoc. of SDA Schools, Colleges and Univ, NADCA
Academic Achievements: Christ-centered learning, environment sensitive to individual needs.
Honors & Awards: NAESP's American Citizenship Award & President's Education Award
Fine Arts: Choir, Music, Art, Drama, Piano
Special Courses: Bible, Computer & Science Labs, Math Bowl, Spelling Bee, Science Fair, Before & After Care, Community Service Programs
Tuition: \$3500-\$5000 per yr, varies by grade
Admission: Enrollment packet, academic records, immunization record. Accept applications yr. round.

EVANGEL CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
Principals: Dawn Hensley - K-5th grades,
 Melissa Bell - 6th -12th grades,
 423 Thompson Rd., Alabaster
 216-0149, rharrington@evangelclassical.org
 www.evangelclassical.org

Continued on page 8.

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School of the Arts

Grades: K5-12th
Est.: 2000 **Size/Ratio:** 360, 15:1
Religious Affiliation: Presbyterian Church of America
Accreditation: Assoc. of Classical Christian Schools
Academic Achievements: Avg of 82 in SESAT 10 Complete Battery, Avg ACT 28.4, 5 National Merit Finalists since 2012
Honors & Awards: Above average SAT scores. Duke Tip Winners, national Merit finalists, UAB Robotics competition finalists, Beta Club
Fine Arts: Piano, violin, drama, art, ballet, voice
Athletics: Tennis, gymnastics, boys baseball, basketball, football, girls softball, basketball, cheerleading, volleyball
Tuition: Varies by grade, \$5,530 - \$5,990
Admission: Student testing, parent interviews, Open Application Period begins in March.

GARDENDALE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Principal: John Parrish
School Dir.: Linda Wheeler
 1800 Decatur Hwy, 35071, 631-9465,
 lwheeler@gdalechristian.org, www.gdalechristian.org
Grades: K4-5th
Est.: 1981 **Size/Ratio:** 132, K-18:1, 1-5th-10:1
Religious Affiliation: Church of the Nazarene
Academic Achievements: High SAT scores, A Beka
Honors & Awards: ACEA state Fine Arts and Academic testing
Fine Arts: Choir, drama, music, art
Athletics: Basketball, cheerleading
Tuition: Varies by grade
Admission: Accepting applications year round

GLEN IRIS BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: LeGrand Lamb
 1137 10th Place South
 323-1516, www.gibs.school.com
Grades: K4-12th
Religious Affiliation: Baptist
Accreditation: ACEA, AACS member
 Academic Achievements: Stanford Achievement and

ACT scores in top 10% of nation. State and National awards for speech and music. A Beka and Bob Jones curriculum.
Fine Arts: Choir, band, private piano and violin instruction
Athletics: 2011-12 ACEA State Basketball Champs
Tuition: Very affordable
Admission: Call 323-1516 for details.

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Headmaster: Brian Willet
 853 Willow Oak Road, Hoover, 35226
 978-6001, loravifquain@smcs.org, www.smcs.org
Grades: K3-12
Est.: 1974 **Size/Ratio:** 265, 12:1
Religious Affiliation: Nondenominational
Accreditation: SACS, ACSI
Academic Achievements: ACSI Spelling Bee, Math Olympics, Mu Alpha Theta, Tri-M, National Honor Soc, Student Gov, 24 average on ACT, \$1.6 million in class of 2016 scholarships, 100% able to attend two or four year colleges or universities
Honors & Awards: National Merit Commended Scholars, Birmingham Youth Leadership Forum, Wendy's Heisman high school winner, AHSSA class 1A/2A cross country, indoor track and field state champions, 100% of graduates attend college
Fine Arts: Band/Marching & Concert, Choir, Music, Visual Arts, Theatre/Film Studies
Athletics: CC, Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Soccer, Track and Golf. BRIAA Youth Athletics in CC and Basketball
Tuition: \$6000-\$7000 annually
Admission: Application, testimony and interview, registration open now for 2017

HOOVER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Principal: Mark Grice
 2113 Old Rocky Ridge Road, Hoover, 35216,
 987-3376,
 hooverchristianschool@gmail.com,
 www.hooverchristianschool.com
 brakeworth22.adventistschoolconnect.org

Grades: K4-12th
Est.: 1949 **Size/Ratio:** 56, 9:1
Religious Affiliation: Seventh-day Adventist
Accreditation: MSA/CESS),(NCPSA), and North American Div. of Seventh-day Adventists
Fine Arts: Art and Music classes taught by certified Art and Music teachers
Tuition: varies by grade, \$424.40-\$498.60 per mo
Admission: Pre-admission testing may be required for students entering grades 3 and above. Open registration.

INTEGRITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Principal: Venandee L. Hennington 216 Roebuck Dr, 35215, 833-4416,
 secretary@integritychristianacademy.org
 www.integritybiblechurch.org
Grades: K2-6th
Religious Affiliation: Non-denominational
Academic Achievements: 95% above avg on SAT
Tuition: K-2 through K5- \$350
 1-6 grade- \$350, excludes aftercare
Admission: Elementary students required to take entrance exam, open registration begins March

JEFFERSON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

President: Bill Brown
 1500 Heritage Place Drive, Birmingham, 35210,
 956-9111, JCA@jcaweb.net, www.jcaweb.net
Grades: 6 weeks-12
Est.: 1970 **Size/Ratio:** 350, 14:1
Religious Affiliation: Church of Christ
Accreditation: SACS/Advanced ED, National Christian School Assoc
Academic Achievement: Technology Leader in Christian Education, 1:1 iPad, SAT and ACT above State and National Avg, Duke Tip Qualified Students, 1.7 Million in scholarships over last 2 years.
Athletics: AHSAA Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, CC, Golf, Softball, Volleyball. BRIAA Rec Youth Athletics in CC and Basketball.
Tuition: See website. Multiple child discount available.
Admission: Interview, testing, student in good stand-

ing with previous school with at least a "C" average previous 2 semesters.

JOHN CARROLL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

President: Fr. John McDonald
Principal: Charlie McGrath
 300 Lakeshore Pkwy, 35209, 940-2400, www.jcchs.org
Grades: 9-12
Est.: 1947 **Size/Ratio:** 620, 17:1
Religious Affiliation: Catholic
Accreditation: SACS
Fine Arts: Drama, band, chorus
Athletics: CC, track, basketball, baseball, volleyball, football, soccer, softball, lacrosse
Tuition: Catholic: \$7285, Non-Catholic: \$9285, financial aid available
Admission: Placement test

KINGWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Principal: Ruth Gray
Headmaster: Rev. Benny Cunningham
 1351 Royalty Drive, Alabaster, 35007, 663-3973
 rgray@kingwoodchristianschool.com
 www.kingwoodchristianschool.com
Grades: K-12
Est.: 1978 **Size/Ratio:** 375, 15:1
Religious Affiliation: Assembly of God
Accreditation: SACS, AISA
Academic Achievements: Duke Tip qualified, BETA Cub, Scholar Bowl, Red Cross Club
Fine Arts: Award winning chorus K-12, marching, concert and praise bands, Art K-12
Athletics: Volleyball, football, basketball, golf, tennis, track, baseball, softball, weight lifting
Honors & Awards: UAB, Samford, Huntingdon and Faulkner Honor Bands
Admission: Entrance testing and interview, generous financial aid

MCELWAIN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Principal: Lucy Bloodworth
 4445 Montevallo Road, 35213
 957-2628, lbloodworth@mcelwain.org

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Grades: K5-5th

Est.: 2007 **Ratio:** 10:1

Religious Affiliation: Baptist

Accreditation: AISA, SACS

Tuition: Available on-line or call 957-2628

Admission: Contact office for tour and admission requirements; Accept applications yr. round

MOUNTAIN VIEW BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: Larry Nicholson

5568 Chalkville Rd, 35235

854-2741, larrynicholson@gmail.com

Grades: K4-12th

Est.: 1983 **Size/Ratio:** 115, 1:12

Religious Affiliation: Baptist

Honors & Awards: Member of Alabama Christian Association and American Association of Christian Schools, AL Christian Education Assoc, awards for basketball, music, art and Bible.

Athletics: basketball, volleyball, cheerleading

Tuition: Varies by grade, \$255-\$305 per mo for 10 mo. After school care available.

Admission: Interview and handbook review. Registration date is Feb 1, 2017 forward

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY

Principal: Katie Zielinski

5510 Double Oak Lane, 35242

991-5963, olv@olvsch.com,

www.olvbirmingham.com

Grades: Preschool-8th grade

Est.: 1984 **Size/Ratio:** 294, 11:1

Religious Affiliation: Catholic

Accreditation: SACS

Academic Achievements: Duke TIP qualified students, Co and State Spelling Bee finalists, Geography Bee, Reg Science Fair, Science Olympiad

Honors & Awards: US Dept. of Ed. National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence 2 Time Recipient, Duke TIP, award winning Junior Troupe in prestigious International Thespian Society, American Heart Assoc. Fit-Friendly School, Science Olympiad Team in Top

3 in the State for 12 yrs. and 2015 members earned over \$500,000 in scholarships

Fine Arts: Performing and visual arts classes, 2 full drama productions each yr, Jr Thespian Troupe, debate, band, piano, voice, choir

Athletics: volleyball, basketball, soccer, track and field, football, baseball, CC. JCCMS sports sanctioned by AHSAA

Tuition: call 991-5963 or see website, multiple student discount, financial assistance available

Admission: Applications for new families begin in February.

OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mary Jane Dorn

1720 Oxmoor Road, Homewood, AL 35209

(205) 879-3237, office@olsschool.com,

www.olsschool.com

Grades: K3- 8

Est: 1896 **Size/Ratio:** 406, 15:1

Religious Affiliation: Catholic

Accreditation: SACS

Academic Achievements: Duke Tip state recognition, district and county spelling bee finalists; geography bee state finalists, Jr. National Honor Society Honors and Awards: Duke Tip national writing contest finalist, National Young Leaders attendees, Alabama State Council of the Arts category winner, Birmingham Catholic Diocese Writing Contest winners, Birmingham Catholic Diocese Art Show winners

Fine Arts: Art, music, choir

Athletics: Volleyball, basketball, and additional athletic opportunities through John Carroll Catholic Middle School Sports Program

Tuition: Varies by grade, financial assistance available

Admission: Online application, registration begins January 29th, 2017

PRINCE OF PEACE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Connie Angstadt

4650 Preserve Pkwy, Hoover, 35226

824-7886, cangstadt@popcatholic.org

www.popcatholic.net

Grades: Preschool-8

Est: 2000 **Size/Ratio:** 475, 16:1

Religious Affiliation: Catholic

Accreditation: NCEA, SACS

Academic Achievements: ACT Explore Test 8th grd score twice national avg, Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, the majority of students qualify for Duke Tip

Honors & Awards: Member of NCTM and ASCD, Best Private School in Hoover/Hoover Mag, Hoover Beautification Board Award

Fine Arts: Band, choir, after school music lessons, theatre, dance

Athletics: Soccer, volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, John Carroll Middle School Sports (AHSAA sanctioned)

Tuition: See website.

Admission: Applications accepted year round and available on school website. Call 824-7886 for an individual tour.

SAINT ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Stephanie Burke

751 Academy Dr, Bessemer, 35022

425-0045, principal@MySaintSchool.com

www.mysaintschool.com

Grades: K3-8

Est.: 1912 **Size/Ratio:** 180, 1:17

Religious Affiliation: Catholic

Accreditation: SACS

Academic Achievements: Core Knowledge School

Fine Arts: Music, art

Athletics: Soccer, basketball, volleyball, cross country

Tuition: Varies by grade, multiple child discount, financial assistance available

Admission: Open registration Feb 15, accept yr round if space.

SAINT ROSE ACADEMY

Principal: Sister Mary Elizabeth, O.P.

1401 South 22nd Street

933-0549, www.strosebhm.org

Grades: 3K-8

Est.: 1956 **Size/Ratio:** 210, 10:1

Religious Affiliation: Catholic

Accreditation: NCEA, SACS

Academic Achievements: Duke TIP Qualified Birmingham City Spelling Bee participants, National Geographic Bee state finalist

Honors & Awards: UAB Science Fair Finalists, Reg Diocesan Art Show finalists, Am. Inst. of Architects Art Awards finalists, President's Challenge Physical Fitness Award program, state handwriting finalist

Fine Arts: Art, music, drama club, forensics

Athletics: Basketball, volleyball, football

Tuition: Call for details, financial aid available

Admission: Interview and recommendations. Rolling admissions.

SOUTHMINSTER DAY SCHOOL

Principal: Jeanie Covin

1124 Montgomery Hwy, 35216

822-9531, sdsoffice@bellsouth.net

Grades: 4K-5th

Est.: 1967, **Size/Ratio:** 220, 12-1

Religious Affiliation: Presbyterian

Academic Achievement: High Test Scores

Fine Arts: Music, Art

Tuition: \$2750 K, \$3750 Grades 1-5 per year

Admission: Call for details. Registration Feb.

SUMITON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Principal: Cheryl J. Capps

155 Hosanna Dr, Sumiton, 35148

648-6643 ext. 101

chcapps@sumitonchristianschool.org

www.sumitonchristianschool.org

Grades: K3-12

Est.: 1976 **Size/Ratio:** 400, 1:15

Religious Affiliation: Church of God

Accreditation: SACS, AISA

Academic Achievements: Above avg SAT, ACT scores; 100% graduation rate; over \$1.2 million in scholarship offers

Honors & Awards: AISA Blue Ribbon School of

Continued on page 10



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Tuition: Varies by grade, multiple student discount, financial assistance program

Admission: Application and interview. Accept applications yr. round

TABERNAACLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Principal: Brian Schuler

2649 Decatur Hwy., Gardendale

631-9318, bschuler@tabernaclechristian.org

www.tabernaclechristian.org

Grades: K3-12

Est.: 1974 **Size/Ratio:** 370, 1:16

Religious Affiliation: Baptist

Academic Achievements: ACEA, AACS, score above state average on SAT10. 95% of seniors attend college.

Honors & Awards: Students consistently place in Conference Academics and Bible Competition

Fine Arts: Choir, drama, piano, photography, art, music

Athletics: Football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, cheerleading

Admission: Interview, SAT scores, good conduct & report card. Registration April 1st.

VICTORY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Administrator: Laurie Davenport

154 Victory Drive, Pell City, 35125

338-2901, Victorychristianschool.cc

Grades: K4-12

Est.: 1984 **Size/Ratio:** 370 and 15:1

Religious Affiliation: Non-denominational

Accreditation: SACS, AISA

Academic Achievements: Above average SAT and ACT scores. 99% attend college

Honors and Awards: 70% of 2016 graduates received tuition scholarships to colleges and universities. VCS graduates are in all the major universities in the area.

Athletics: Member of Alabama High School Athletic Assoc. Football, basketball, baseball, tennis, track, golf, volleyball, cheerleading, softball, fishing.

Tuition: 2016-17 \$3,250/year

Admission: Accepting applications year-round. Call 205-338-2901.

WESTBROOK CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Principal: Cynthia Greer

100 Westminster Drive, Rainbow City, 35906

256-442-7457, cgreer@westbrookchristian.org

www.westbrookchristian.org

Grades: 3K-12

Est.: 1971 **Size/Ratio:** 624, 8:1

Religious Affiliation: Christian

Accreditation: AdvancED (SACS)

Academic Achievements: 98% of Westbrook students go on to attend college; An average of 57% of graduating seniors receive scholarship offers; AP/Honors Curriculum

Honors & Awards: Consistent Recognition by the National Merit Corporation. Regional Bryant/Jordan Scholar/Athlete Winner, Gadsden Museum of Art Winners, Recognition by Alabama JUNA, State Winner for Lions' Club Poster Contest

Fine Arts: Concert Choir, Art, Photography, Film as Art, Drum Line, Dance Line

Athletics: AHSAA Football, Volleyball, Girls & Boys Basketball, Cross Country Track, Girls & Boys Golf, Girls & Boys Tennis, Girls Soccer, Baseball, Track

Tuition: Varies based on grade, \$2052-\$5412

Admission: Application/Interview/Admissions Testing. Registration open to public 4/12/17

Special Education Opportunities: Resource classes are available on a limited basis. The Discovery Program developed by the National Institute of Learning Disabilities is provided for qualified students at an additional cost.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL AT OAK MOUNTAIN

Head of School: Robbie Hinton

5080 Cahaba Valley Trace, 35242

205-995-9694, www.westminsterknights.org

Grades: K-12

Est.: 1999 **Size/Ratio:** 532, 16:1, 18:1

Religious Affiliation: Presbyterian

Accreditation: SACS

Academic Achievements: National Merit Finalists & Semi-Finalists

Fine Arts: Drama, Art, Lower School Choir

Athletics: Basketball, Soccer, CC, Track/Field, Tennis, Volleyball and Swimming

Tuition: \$7,567-\$10,030

Admission: Testing required. Call school for details.

WORSHIP LIFE ACADEMY

Principal: Julia Godfrey

507 18th St. W, Jasper, AL 35501

205-265-2900, julia@myworshiplife.com, www.worshiplifeacademy.com

Grades: 3-12

Est: 2014 **Size/Ratio:** 8, 1:10

Religious Affiliation: Independent/Non-Denominational

Accredited: No

Tuition: \$2400 yearly, \$200 monthly

Admission: Enrollment paperwork and interview, open registration for spring and summer 2017

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Guide information from school surveys, web searches and phone calls.



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Students as Published Authors

With creativity and determination, students at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School (OLS) in Homewood connect their skills of writing, editing, revising, and art to become published authors! They celebrate their great accomplishment with a special Ultimate Author Day (UAD) celebration each year, honoring their individual writing talents, and learning from numerous professionals who visit their school for the event.

In preparation for UAD, the students in grades K3 through eighth grade work on writing and illustrating their very own book or another form of written medium. Each grade is given a special classification or type of writing to use. The classes have their books published by a company that prints and produces a personal softbound book for the students to keep.

In the spring, the entire student body enjoys their gift of writing, as well as other types of language expressions during UAD. Similar to the structure of a professional seminar, the children attend breakout sessions that include workshops, sharing discussions, entertaining performances, and literature-based activities presented by experts and specialists at the school. As a part of the day's celebration, all of the student books are displayed for everyone to enjoy throughout the event. "UAD began nine years ago in an effort to increase the amount of time students at OLS spend on expressive writing, to



EWTN news anchor and best-selling author Raymond Arroyo visited Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School as a part of its Ultimate Author Day celebration last year.

improve the quality of their writing, and to begin writing with our students at a much younger age," said Cindy Westbrook, UAD Chairperson and Kindergarten teacher. "It is amazing how we have seen tremendous growth in all areas through this program!" she said.

OLS fosters the religious, academic, and social development of every student, K-3 through eighth grade, recognizing that knowledge enlightened by faith and realized through service is at the heart of Catholic education. To learn about the school and its Shadow Days call the office at (205) 879-3237.

— Mary Stephens Pugh, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School, www.olsschool.com

BRINGING OUT THE WINNER

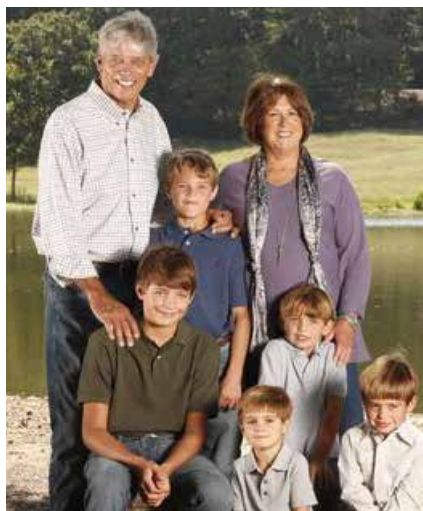
Building Great Memories

"Family: Today's little moments become tomorrow's precious memories." Author Unknown

Our children and their mates have given my wife Tee and I five awesome grandsons, ranging in age from 2 to 12 years old. Just the other night, we had all five of them at our home. We are so truly blessed!

One of their favorite games to play at our house is hide and seek. They think it is so much fun when "Memo" and "Poppy" chase them through the house. Although we both are so much slower than we used to be, it is still one of our most fun times together with our grandchildren. Sometimes we will turn out all of the lights and give the children who are "it" a flashlight. They are so funny creeping quietly through the dark house waiting for us to jump from our hiding places. We love to hear them squeal with excitement!

We sometimes get caught up in the misconception that the more money we spend, the more fun our children and grandchildren will have. This is simply not the case, and sometimes it is the direct opposite. A family game night at home is going to have a much bigger impact and make many more memories for your children than going out to eat and to a movie. Your bank account will thank you! Or try taking a hike with your kids, and see how much fun they have – and don't be surprised at how much you love it too!



John and Tee Croyle making memories with their grandchildren.

You don't have to spend a penny to make memories with your children and grandchildren. Start building a lifetime of memories today!

— John Croyle, Founder, Big Oak Ranch, Author, *Who You Are/Defying the Circumstances that Define Us, Bringing Out the Winner in Your Child, The Two Minute Drill to Manhood and Raising a Princess*, www.bigoak.org



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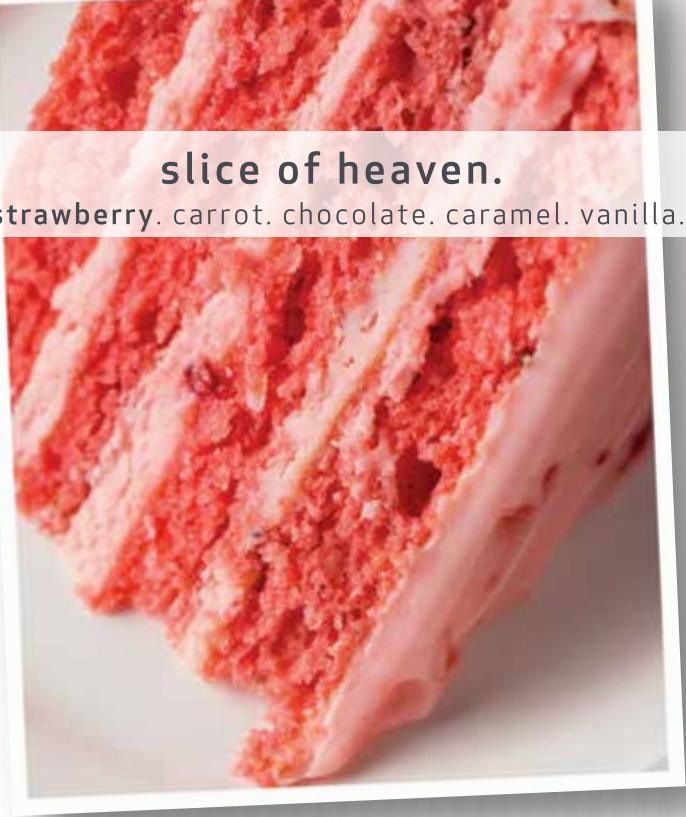
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A Night of Hope with David Ring



Hear nationally recognized speaker David Ring's victorious testimony March 2 in Birmingham. Learn more at www.sfalabama.org.

Few individuals have felt the crushing blows that have besieged David Ring since birth yet he has emerged victorious! Ring will be the featured speaker for an event hosted by Shepherd's Fold, Inc., a 501(c)3, Christ-centered, faith-based re-entry ministry for men and women being released from prison. The event will be held at The Church at Brook Hills on Thursday, March 2.

When Ring was born, he was deprived of oxygen for 18 minutes and was left with cerebral palsy in the aftermath. He became an orphan when he was 14 after both of his parents died of cancer. He was passed from family to family and had nowhere to call home. He endured constant physical pain and public ridicule. After Ring surrendered his heart and life to Jesus Christ, he learned self-respect and acceptance of his physical challenges. Ring quickly captures his audiences with his quick wit and warm personality and focuses on the need to conquer personal challenges and adversities. Director of Shepherd's Fold, Jack Hausen anticipates all who hear Ring's message will be inspired- especially the men and women served by the ministry. "They will be encouraged by this gentleman's focus on overcoming adversity with faith," explains Hausen. To be a part of this great evening and support Shepherd's Fold, see Calendar page 28 for details.

Romance, Drama & Beauty = Giselle

The Alabama Ballet brings to the stage this month what is known as the most significant Romantic ballet ever created- *Giselle*. It's a performance by our state's premier classical ballet company you don't want to miss!

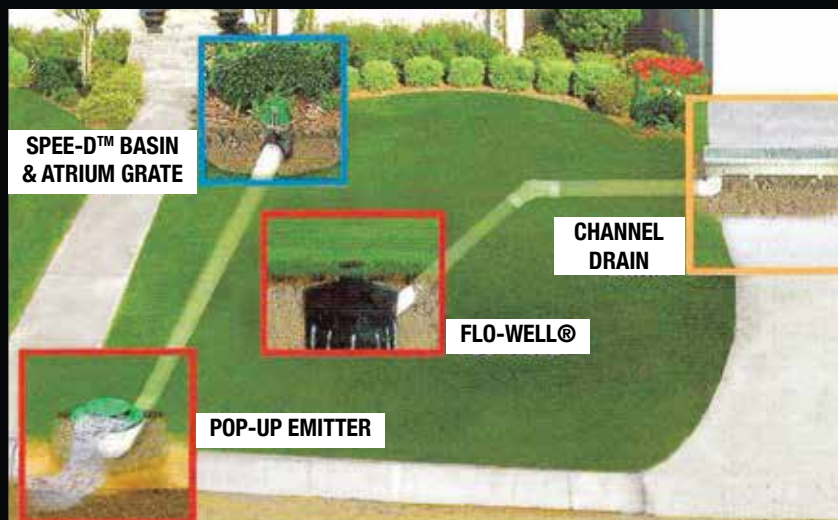
The ballet tells the story of an innocent girl who is misled into believing the words of a charming admirer. She dies a maid with a broken heart and joins the spirits of other maidens who are condemned to exist in the darkness of the forest. The ballet was created more than 100 years ago and is made up of two acts. According to artistic director Tracey Alvey, *Giselle* "is what you expect to see when you come to the ballet... It is a very touching love story about betrayal, love, trust, and rejection." Alvey recommends *Giselle* to both first-time viewers and seasoned attendees of the ballet. "I think this is a wonderful production to come and see because it's not a long production, it's very dramatic, it's beautiful, and the sets are stunning." The production, including intermission, is a total of two hours. Performances of *Giselle* will run from February 17 through February 19 at the Leslie S. Wright Fine Arts Center at Samford University. Tickets to *Giselle* cost \$25 to \$55 and can be purchased by calling 205-322-4300. For more information on The Alabama Ballet, visit alabamaballet.org.



The mission of the Alabama Ballet is to "change lives through dance by promoting and fostering the development of classical and contemporary ballet through high-quality performances, dance education, and community outreach." See the company perform *Giselle* February 17-19.

- Rachel Biddy

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Big Mama Shares 3 Tips for Strong Relationships in 2017

Melanie Shankle first began blogging to chronicle the memories of young motherhood without having to scrapbook. Ten years later, thebigmamablog.com has become a hub of commentary on pop culture, fashion and witty family stories with 300,000 readers visiting the site each month. Passionate about building strong friendships in a digital age, she offers the following suggestions for staying social in the coming year:



"Big Mama" author and blogger Melanie Shankle will be in Birmingham Feb. 23.

1 Find your people. "You have to put yourself out there. We can be so isolated and get to where we just stare at our screens all the time," Shankle says, but seeking out peers in similar life situations or with similar interests is key to feeling connected. If you don't have a peer group at work or church, try a book club, a community Bible study or running club instead.

2 Seek out friends of different ages. "God has really been faithful to put some older women in my life that have mentored me in how to be a better wife, how to be a better mother, how to pour into my community, how to give of myself," Shankle says. "There's so much we can learn from the people that are a few years ahead of us in life and even a few years behind."

3 Don't view your peers as your competitors. Shankle's most recent book, the memoir *Nobody's Cuter Than You*, focuses specifically on celebrating the beauty of female friendships. Shankle suggests, "What if we encouraged everybody to run their race and didn't feel threatened just because one person was called to one thing and another person was called to another?"

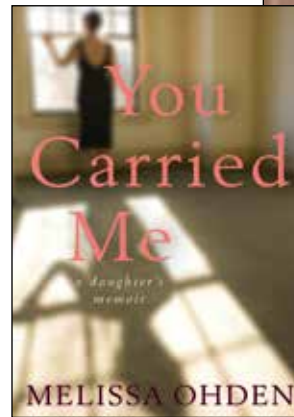
Based in San Antonio, Shankle will be in Vestavia on February 23 to speak at the Samford University Legacy League Scholarship Luncheon. See Calendar page 28 for details..

— Camille Smith Platt

BEST BOOKS

You Carried Me


Last year, on a sunny day in May, Melissa Ohden left her church thinking of a scripture she had heard at Mass that morning. Based on Romans 5:5, Paul asserts that "hope does not disappoint." In a world jaded by cynicism, strife, and despair, Paul's words may seem like wishful thinking. The promise of hope and change can easily slip into a surreal and stagnant reality, causing some to question the wisdom of Paul's belief in the power of faith and hope. But Paul knew better. He knew that God can do the impossible, that grace can change everything. If you're wondering whether the power of God's grace can still bring beauty from ashes, life from death, and peace to our secret storms, I invite you to read Melissa's story.



Author Melissa Ohden will be the featured speaker at the April 27 Sav-A-Life Vestavia Banquet at the Hyatt Regency/Wynfrey Hotel. For more details, visit www.savalife.org. Find her book at Sanctuary Christian Books, Alabaster.

Melissa was a teenager when she learned that she was the survivor of an attempted abortion. She began her life lying on a hospital bed, unwanted by a world which had conspired to end her life before she was even born. Now she is a mother and wife, a woman who loves and is loved, an agent of God's grace. Her story, *You Carried Me* (Plough Publishing, \$19.99), affirms that prayer, love, compassion, forgiveness, and faith are not mere abstractions disconnected from the real world. They are embedded in the Christian faith. As I read *You Carried Me*, I thought of the night Nicodemus sought out Jesus by night. Jesus told him that the kingdom of heaven necessitates being born again. I'm of the opinion that the rebirth Jesus is referring to is not a singular event, but a way of life, a series of transformative moments in which we are introduced over and over to the wonders of God's kingdom. Melissa Ohden was born in a toxic environment, but she found love with adoptive parents. She was born again. She fell in love and got married, then became a mother herself. She was born yet again and again. She found her biological mother and other missing family, and a new life was begun. Most importantly, she found the Christ who promises to make all things new and give us abundant life. Her first birth was travesty, but that is not what defines her. I know this because, just as Jesus promised, Melissa has been born again.

— Darrel Holcombe, Owner
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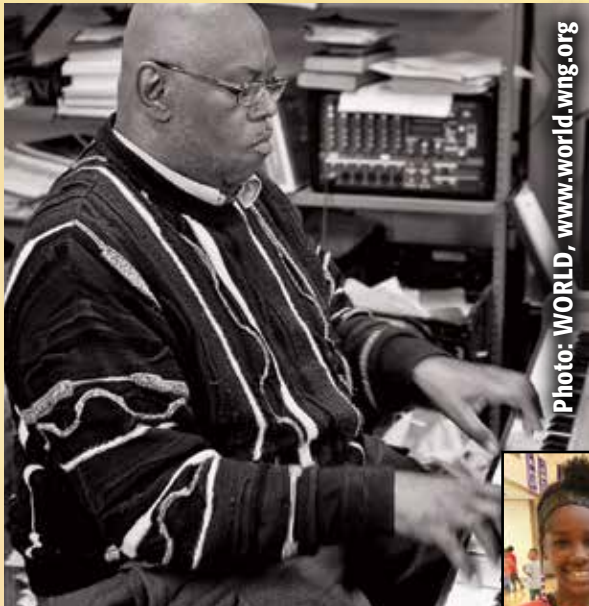
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Hope Award Winner: Music Man of Birmingham, Daniel Cason



Daniel Cason found himself unexpectedly on the cover of *WORLD* magazine, sharing his story of helping children in our community. The magazine chose Cason as its 2016 Southeast Region Hope Award Winner for “poverty-fighting programs that change lives by offering challenging, personal and spiritual help.” Here’s an excerpt from *WORLD* News Group Editor in Chief, Marvin Olasky’s observations of Cason’s life-changing work.

... The story of K.I.D.S. Christian Music Center and Community School of the Arts begins 112 years ago in Cleveland. There, Eleanor Rainey in 1904 donated funds to create a neighborhood center for the benefit of immigrants from Eastern Europe. Over the years local demographics changed, and the neighborhood became largely black. A half-century ago one of the new neighborhood children, 8-year-old Daniel Cason, raised his hand when asked if anyone wanted to act in a play to be put on at the Rainey Institute. Little Daniel had a role in the play, but one day he sat down at the Rainey piano and learned God had given him a gift that made possible a larger role: “I could play from day one, just by ear, immediately.” His first teacher, Jim Hawkins, “showed me how to put my hands in the middle of the piano and find middle C. He taught me how to read music. Immediately it clicked. I give all credit to God.”

The Rainey Institute, which began as a reading and lunch room for European boys and workmen, became 60 years later a haven for a young African-American then living in a single-parent home and suffering abuse. Daniel at age 11 started

teaching other children. At 13 he received a scholarship to a University of Southern California summer music program. In high school he played the piano one night for a traveling evangelist who invited him to stay with the show. Cason, sick of the abuse, left home, played at the minister’s old-time tent revival meetings, and eventually came to believe in Christ.

Succeeding years brought more study and travel, high-school music teaching, and service as a pianist and

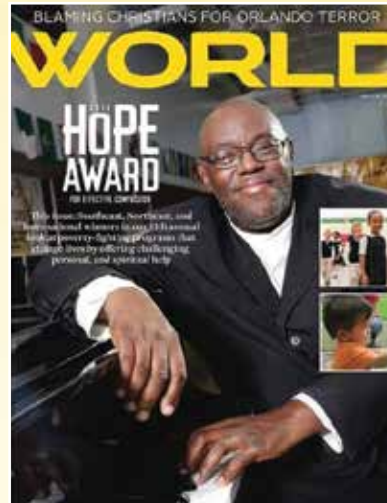


music workshop director across the United States and in Russia, England, Ireland, Italy, and Nigeria. Daniel and Gwendolyn Cason, married for 31 years, now have two grown children: Their son plays the drums; their daughter, the flute. On Sundays, Cason at age 59 is the organist at Briarwood

Presbyterian Church, a PCA stalwart, and that salary allows him to without additional pay pass on his knowledge of music to poor children ranging from kindergarten to college-age. His summer camp in particular makes K.I.D.S. this year’s Hope Award Southeast Region winner.

Brown patches of grass dotting gray cement: Another hot, disenchanted evening in inner-city Birmingham, but in parts of Cason’s building several volunteers were preparing bags of school supplies to give children. Others discussed who would be on duty to offer medical screenings, haircuts, and groceries to poor neighborhood residents. In one room with donated church pews and vertical blinds, 80 of Cason’s 200-plus summer students, ranging in age from kindergarten to high school, sat and stood for a half-concert, half-class.

The students’ demeanor and manners showed that Cason was teaching not only music skills but mental skills and life skills. No backward hats or pants on the floor. Children paid attention, did not yammer, and said “yes, ma’am.” As Cason explained, “We don’t even allow you to address an adult just ‘yes’ and ‘no’—there has to be a ‘ma’am’ or a ‘sir.’ I know that’s a Southern thing, but that’s just what we do. Children should not talk to an adult like they talk to each other. ... The things we hold dear are not always accepted among the masses, but we



still believe biblically there are words called respect and honor. My wife and I stand for that.” The kids on this summer night followed Cason’s injunctions: “Keep your hands to yourself and your spit in your mouth.” They beautifully sang hymns: “We believe in God the Father. We believe in Christ the Son. ... We believe in the blood that frees us. ... Holy, holy.”

During the school year, Cason and his ministry have Saturday programs that include training in vocal technique, choir, hand bells, piano, and the Orff Approach, a child-centered style of musical education. Cason has been able to place pianos in the homes of some children whose families could not afford them. (Condition: The child needs to work hard.)

On this summer night some of the older students and alumni explained what Cason’s work meant to them. Coreen Dixon said: “This is my fifth year. When I first came here, I thought it wasn’t really cool to praise God. ... When you come here, you have people who love God the same as you do. If you give God praise, nobody should be ashamed.” Destiny Collins, now attending Seton Hall University, said she was in the program for about 12 years and learned perseverance: She still loves music and plans to major in creative writing.

The evening culminated with Cason handing out scholarship checks for \$200 to \$500. Later, he talked about what he saw as significant in his work: “They’re so gifted. ... The music helps them develop mental and motor skills. ... I reward good behavior and I punish bad behavior.” Beyond the music, he summarized his two major objectives: “That they’ll finish high school. They will come to know Christ.”

-Excerpt reprinted with permission from WORLD magazine, July 9, 2016, www.world.wng.org



Daniel Cason Ministries, 538 7th Street North, Birmingham. Call 205-365-1800 to be a part of this Life Changing Ministry. Learn more at www.danielcason.org.

WORSHIP

WITH

Laura Story



Photo: Kristin Barlowe

Laura Story won a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Christian Music Song, "Blessings" in 2012 and a Dove Award for Inspirational Song of the Year, "O Love Of God" in 2015. She is a native of Spartanburg, S.C. where she sang in the church choir as a child and played bass and keyboard as a teen for the band Silers Bald.

GRAMMY award-winning artist Laura Story launched into the spotlight in 2011 when her single, "Blessings", spent 28 consecutive weeks as the No. 1 hit on Billboard's Contemporary Christian chart. Story's husband Martin's brain tumor diagnosis inspired her to write the song, and it resonated with an audience that admired her candidness about adversity. Martin had survived treatment and surgery—but not without significant damage to his brain. What Story thought would be a detour in her husband's health ended up the "new normal."

Preparing to release a new album on March 3 and perform in Birmingham at Shades Mountain Baptist Church on March 9, Story celebrates the milestones she once wasn't sure her family would reach 6 years ago. While still impacted by vision problems, short-term memory loss and a suppressed immune system, husband Martin has been able to work part time as a baseball coach. The couple also have three children—a four-year-old daughter and twin

two-year-old sons. The Senior Worship Leader at Perimeter Church in Atlanta since 2005, Story says strong relationships in the church and the pursuit of a deeper understanding of worship have strengthened her as a mother, a wife and a songwriter in recent years.

"I was just with a group looking at Psalms 73, which talks about as believers the perspective change we experience as we come into the presence of God. And not just the presence of God—it talks about the sanctuary of God, referring more to corporate worship," she says. "It's a perspective change that happens when we meet in God's presence with God's people. That has been a lifesaver for me because when I do have those low moments, [I know] that if I belong to the Lord then I'm not walking through this alone. I have both His presence guiding me and comforting me as well as His people surrounding me and pointing me toward Him."



Laura Story and her husband Martin Elvington live in Atlanta, Ga. with their three children Benjamin Cary (2), Griffin James (2), and Josie (4).

Story published a detailed account of finding deeper intimacy with Jesus amidst her fight for her husband's health in the book *When God Doesn't Fix It* in 2015, and last year she began classes for a doctorate degree in worship at The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies. Focusing on how God's people have worshipped Him throughout the ages and what God's Word says about how He should be worshipped today, Story says what she is learning is helping her grow in her ability to coach her younger fans on being intentional about how they come together before the Lord. "The Lord continues to open up doors for me to be equipping this next generation. I don't want to tell [them] this is how you worship, because I feel like God's doing a new thing there," she says, "but I do think there are good biblical principles I can instill in these young'uns then step back and see what God might do through them."



Photo Credit: Scott Lowden

Hear Laura Story sing songs from her new project *Open Hands* and old favorites, March 9 at Shades Mountain Baptist. See Calendar page 28 for more details. Her new project is available for purchase at Sanctuary Christian Books and Gifts in Alabaster beginning March 3.

let me not respond with clenched fists as if I know best. It's not just saying, 'Hey you're great God,' but saying, 'Because you are great, I want to give my life to you. Because you are trustworthy, I'm going to trust you with this hard thing.' We buy into that myth that greater peace comes when we have greater control. But the Bible actually teaches that greater peace comes when we get to a point of letting go."

Join Story in worshipping God through song March 9 at 7 p.m. at Shades Mountain Baptist in Hoover. The concert will benefit the Samford University Legacy League, which provides scholarships for students with significant financial need and challenging circumstances. For tickets, call 205-726-3853 or visit www.samforduniversity.com/legacyleague.

— Camille Smith Platt

Biblical principles of worship, Story explains, include prizing the reverence of God and making sure a worship service becomes a meeting place between God and His people, "where they get to hear the voice of God through the sermon, through the truths, and then they get to respond to Him through prayer and song and celebrate the things that He's done." She calls leading worship a "weighty responsibility," a job not to be taken lightly or handed off to any person with musical inclinations.

At home, Story says teaching her children truths about God's presence and expectations has been a blessing of its own. "As much as we strive to be good parents, we [will] fail, but [we point] them to the God who never will fail," she says. "That's what my parents did for me, and that's what I'm trying to do for my kids." Besides giving her children chances to catch her living out her faith or reading her Bible, Story makes home an atmosphere of grace and repentance. "I think about a time I lost my patience: my daughter was being unbelievably disobedient, and I totally lashed out at her. I went to her and said I need to ask for your forgiveness. I yelled at you, and I want to be more patient. Now it's your turn. So she apologized to me for being disrespectful, and I said let's pray together and ask God to make both of us more patient and more respectful." Story admits, "It's kind of a new concept for me--parenting like that--but gosh there's so much about parenting that I'm learning, and more than anything I am just staying on my knees asking Him to show me the mom He wants me to be."

Story's new album, *Open Hands*, is a product of seeing worship not just as the words she sings but the very posture of her heart. "True worship is more than adoration; it's coming before a faithful, trustworthy Father with open hands. Whatever comes,

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LEGAL MATTERS

presented by: Bradford & Holliman, Estate Planning

Developing a Comprehensive Plan for your Estate Goals?

There are many layers to creating a proper estate plan. A good plan covers much more than simply having a Last Will and Testament. A comprehensive plan will address many areas such as:

- **What are the senior's goals?**
- **What are the family dynamics? How can conflicts be reduced or avoided?**
- **What has occurred in prior estate plans? Have prior gifts been made that need to be taken into consideration?**
- **Are there taxation issues?**
- **Should there be protection features in the plan to make sure the surviving spouse has access to the deceased spouse's funds but cannot leave the funds to a new spouse or someone that would be different from the deceased spouse's choice?**
- **Are there any minor children?**
- **Does an adult child have creditor issues or lawsuits pending, including a possible divorce?**
- **Does a child have a disability?**

In addition to these questions, seniors must also ask themselves:

- **Do I want to avoid my estate going through probate court by using a trust? If so, how does a trust work?**
- **Do I want the distribution of my estate to be fast and inexpensive while still addressing complicated family dynamics and wishes? If so, how can this be accomplished?**
- **If I become disabled, who will make important decisions for me?**



- **If my children need someone to manage their inheritance, who will it be?**

Furthermore, even the most sophisticated estate plan is worthless if the senior spends all of the assets to pay for long term care. Seniors must also consider:

- **What are my options for long term care and how can I pay for it?**
- **What can my spouse keep if I go to a nursing home?**
- **What can I give to my children and grandchildren if I go to a nursing home?**
- **What are my options to stretch my assets and protect assets?**

A good estate plan will consider these issues and take action based on the client's wishes and needs.

Ask your elder law attorney for a detailed analysis or report, an Elder care Action Plan, that addresses these situations so a thorough plan can be developed.

— Melanie B. Bradford, Partner, Bradford & Holliman, LLC,

Practice focuses on estate planning, elder law and special needs trust.
2491 Pelham Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124,
205-663-0281,

www.bradfordholliman.com

This article is for educational purposes
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Read more from Bradford & Holliman at
www.BirminghamChristian.com. Click on News/Family/Legal Matters

LEGAL MATTERS

presented by: Frank S. Buck P.C., Personal Injury

How to Handle a Wreck with an 18-Wheeler



Due to the hectic demands of modern life, we are always on the road. Daily interstate travel is commonplace, bringing many drivers in frequent contact with larger vehicles like 18-wheelers, or semi-trailer trucks.

Many truckers work lengthy hours, driving long distances hauling cargo, resulting in fatigue and distracted driving, both of which can lead to severe car wrecks. In addition, truckers often face strict delivery deadlines, causing some to disregard speed limits. Still, most drivers do not realize how different a car wreck involving an 18-wheeler is from one involving two average vehicles.

For one, 18-wheeler trucks can weigh up to 80,000 lbs., which makes any collision with them far more serious. In fact, a low-speed collision with a loaded 18-wheeler can cause far more damage than a high-speed impact with a regular vehicle. Plus, one in every eight automotive wreck fatalities involves a large truck like an 18-wheeler. Because of this, there is an entire subset of laws applicable to drivers of commercial vehicles like 18-wheelers that do not

apply to average automobile drivers. Trucking companies must carry more stringent insurance than most ordinary drivers have, and there are insurance companies that specialize in 18-wheeler coverage that can be difficult for most people to deal with on their own.

If you are in a wreck with an 18-wheeler, it is important to call an attorney immediately so that he or she can begin the process of getting records, such as black box data, from the trucking company. You can rest assured the trucking company will begin investigating the wreck right away. The company will have a team of experts and lawyers on the case to protect itself, so time is of the essence. It is also important to document the wreck to memorialize what the road and weather conditions were like as well as what time of day the wreck occurred. Pictures of your vehicle at the collision scene are always helpful to an attorney looking to recreate what occurred. An attorney can also investigate the background of the trucking company as well as the driver. It is important to have someone who will fight for you after an 18-wheeler collision.

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Read more from Frank Buck at
www.BirminghamChristian.com. Click on News/Family/Legal Matters

KINGDOM KIDS Impacts the World



Now, in its tenth year, a local church event has raised nearly half a million dollars for missions! The first Kingdom Kids Consignment Sale was held at Gardendale Mt. Vernon United Methodist in the spring of 2008 and had around 100 sellers. Today, each sale boasts over 400 sellers and is hosted by more than 200 volunteers. The next bi-annual sale will be Wednesday, February 22 through Saturday February 25. The sale offers



gently-used clothing, shoes, toys, games, electronics, furniture, baby items, costumes, pageant dresses, and much more.

Total sales raised over the first nine years reached \$1.38 million. Of those sales, 30 percent went directly toward local, national, and international missions. "We have been able to send and support over 300 individuals through the dollars raised from this sale, and we have carried the love of Christ and the Gospel message locally and around the world," explains Jim Jeffreys, Director of Missions at Gardendale Mt. Vernon. Kingdom Kids profits have assisted in paying for 15 international mission trips, including trips to Kenya, Togo, Peru, Mexico, Honduras, Brazil and Guatemala. Profits have also paid for four youth mission trips, including trips to New Orleans and North Carolina.



The next Kingdom Kid's Consignment Sale is Feb 22-25 at Gardendale Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church, 805 Crest Drive, 35071. Many items will be 50 percent off on Saturday, February 25.

The sale has also made possible nine Royal Family Kids Camps, a yearly summer camp program for Birmingham area foster children. Unsold clothing has also been donated to local school children, North Jefferson Women's Center, Hannah Home, The Lovelady Center and King's Ranch. For more details on the sale go to www.kingdomkidsconsignment.com or visit them on Facebook at Kingdom Kids Consignment Sale.

— Rachel Biddy

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— Scott Moulton

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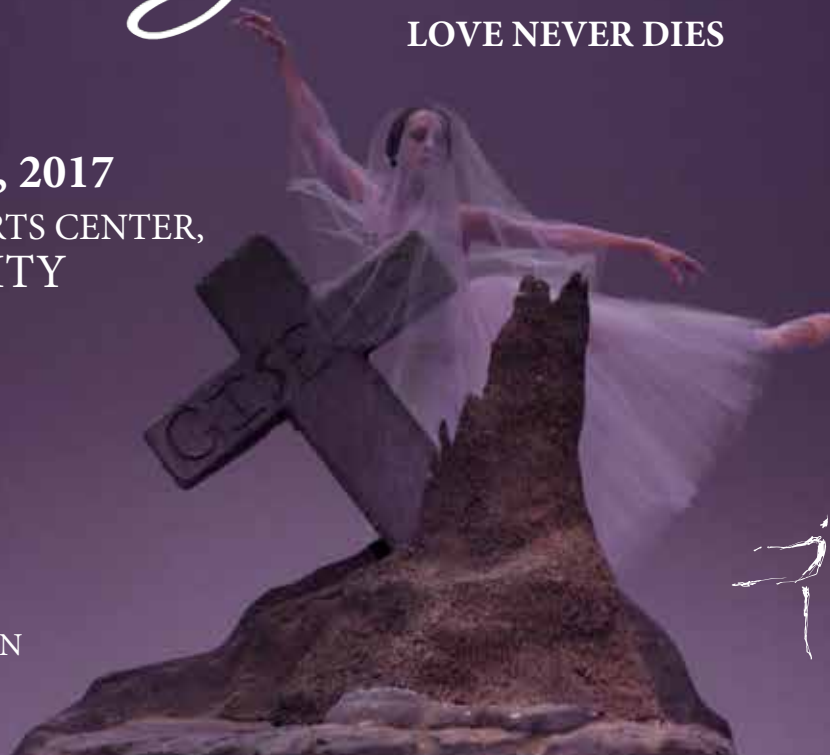
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SPECIAL FEATURE

Delve Into God's Word

Looking for a great opportunity to delve into and be inspired by God's Word? Consider signing up for a Winter/Spring course through Beeson Divinity School. With the theme of "Being Different & Making a Difference in a very Different World," Beeson's Lay Academy of Theology at Samford University is offering non-credit evening classes and other study opportunities led by Beeson faculty.

Six courses are being offered including "The Jesus Story: From Genesis to Revelation" taught by Dr. Douglas Webster, professor of pastoral theology and preaching. "Everybody has a story, but only one story redeems our story," explains Webster who adds that the purpose of the course is to explore the story of Jesus from Genesis to Revelation. The class will pay attention to how the apostles interpreted the Old Testament and how they brought the story of Jesus into focus. The aim of the class is to apply the best practices of Biblical theology in order to strengthen a person's Christian walk and witness. The course is offered on six Thursday after-

noons from 1 to 3 p.m., beginning on March 2.

"Who is Jesus Christ" will also be offered and taught by Dr. Piotr Malysz, a professor of church history and doctrine. According to Malysz, the course "will investigate the identity of Jesus Christ- his death, resurrection, and ascension, as presented in the Old and New Testaments." It will also examine how early Christians understood the Savior and how they sought to do justice to His person and work. The course aims to answer the questions that Jesus asked His followers, "Who do you say that I am?," and who is Jesus Christ for us today? The course is offered on six Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m. beginning on March 1. For more information on these and other classes call (205)-726-2731. The cost of each Lay Academy course is \$89 if registered before February 22 and \$155 after that date. To register visit www.beesondivinity.com/layacademy.

— Rachel Biddy



Webster Douglas Malysz Piotr

ENCOURAGING WORD

6 Ways Jesus Meets Our Needs

In Luke 4:18 Jesus says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised." This is a key verse that Jesus used to lay the foundation to His ministry and to describe His mission.

1 Jesus came to address the needs of mankind that only He could satisfy. He came to proclaim this good news to the poor- those whose needs are not met. If your needs are not met, you are operating from a deficit and life is out of balance. There is something missing and unfulfilled.

2 Jesus came to heal the broken. Only Christ can heal a broken heart and put a shattered life back together.

3 Jesus offers hope to those in bondage. He came to proclaim release to the captives. "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

4 Jesus extends sight to the blind. He is referring to spiritual sight and enlightenment. Jesus, the "light of the world," provides direction and sight to a world in darkness.

5 Jesus offers spiritual comfort to those who are bruised; the downtrodden, destitute and disadvantaged.

6 Jesus concludes in Luke 4:19 by saying his mission is "to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." Through Christ we can be blessed and receive God's favor.

Be encouraged because Jesus can provide balance to our lives. He ministers to those who are broken; in bondage; spiritually blind; and those who are bruised. Jesus' desire is that we receive the blessing that God offers.

— Tony Cooper, Celebrating 26 Years of Service as Exec. Director, Jimmie Hale Mission, www.jimmiehalemission.com



MONEY MATTERS

presented by: Vision Financial Group

Building on Your Foundation

Setting Investment Goals. Before you invest your money, spend some time considering and setting your personal goals. For example, do you want to retire early? Do you need to pay for a child's college education? Would you like to buy or build a new house? In addition to these, there are several other considerations that can help you and your financial professional develop an appropriate plan.

Think about your time horizon. One of the first questions you should ask yourself in setting your investment goals is "When will I need the money?" Will it be in 3 years or

30? Your time horizon for each of your financial goals will have a significant impact on your investment strategy. The general rule is: The longer your time horizon, the riskier (and potentially more lucrative) investments you may be able to make. Many financial professionals believe that with a longer time horizon, you can ride out fluctuations in your investments for the potential of greater long-term returns. On the other hand, if your time horizon is very short, you may want to concentrate your investments in less risky vehicles because you may not have enough time to recoup losses should they occur.

Understand your risk tolerance. How do you feel about the potential of losing your hard-earned money? Many investors would forgo the possibility of a large gain if they knew there was also the possibility of a large loss. Other investors are more willing to take on greater risk to try to achieve a higher return. You can't completely avoid risk when it comes to investing, but it's possible to manage it. Almost universally, when financial professionals or the

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media talk about investment risk, their focus is on price volatility. Advisors label as aggressive or risky an investment whose price has been prone to dramatic ups and downs in the past, or that involves substantial uncertainty and unpredictability. Assets whose prices historically have experienced a narrower range of peaks and valleys are considered more conservative.

Remember your liquidity needs. Liquidity refers to how quickly you can convert investments into cash. Your need for liquidity will affect the types of investments you might choose to meet your goals. For example, if you have an emergency fund, you're in good health, and your job is secure, you may be willing to hold some less liquid investments that may have higher potential for gain. However, if you have two children going to college soon, you probably don't want all of their tuition money invested in less liquid assets. Also, having some relatively liquid investments may help protect you from having to sell others when their prices are down.

— S. Joey Elmore, Vision Financial Group, Inc.
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Don't Give Up!

5 Tips to Meet Your Fitness Goals

Staying motivated along your fitness journey can be tough after the initial excitement of joining a gym and getting started begins to fade. At the Greater Birmingham YMCA, we completely understand what you may be going through. Perhaps you started out with a plan to come to the Y five days a week, then it dropped to three, and now you're struggling to find the urge to make it to that group exercise class once a week. Don't give up! Here are a few ways to stay encouraged as you work to meet your fitness goal.

1. Make it Fun. Not everyone enjoys riding a stationary bike or an elliptical machine. Find an activity or a sport you enjoy and make it part of your routine. At the Y, for instance, you can play basketball, volleyball, wallyball, racquetball, and tennis, just to name a few. Also, with over 500 group exercise classes taught weekly at the Y, there is a class that will suit your ability and interest.

2. Set Smaller Goals. Maybe your goal is to lose a certain amount of pounds or to one day run a half-marathon. While those are fantastic aims, they won't happen overnight. It can be easy to get discouraged if the numbers on the scale aren't going down or the distances aren't going up as fast as you'd like. While you're working on those larger goals, set smaller ones along the way to help you stay driven. For instance, instead of focusing on losing pounds, focus



on being active for at least 10-15 minutes every day.

3. Keep Your Music List Up To Date. While there may be nothing worse than working out in silence, a close second might be working out to the same songs over and over. Create a list of high-energy songs that can help you get your blood pumping and remember to change out some of the tunes and/or shuffle the order regularly.

4. Keep Your Workout Clothes & Gear In View. We all have competing interests in life - families, work, church, etc. - so it can be easy to forget to work in a few minutes of activity each day. Place your favorite fitness outfit on your dresser at night or a pair of dumbbells on the bathroom vanity to give you a visual cue to remember to make your health and wellness a priority.

5. Workout with a friend. A fitness buddy is one of the best ways to stay encouraged along your path to better health. It helps you stay accountable and motivated, and you benefit by participating in two-person exercises and friendly competition. You can also save 20 percent off your membership dues at the YMCA of Greater Birmingham as well. Learn how online at ymcabham.org.

— YMCA of Greater Birmingham, www.ymcabham.org



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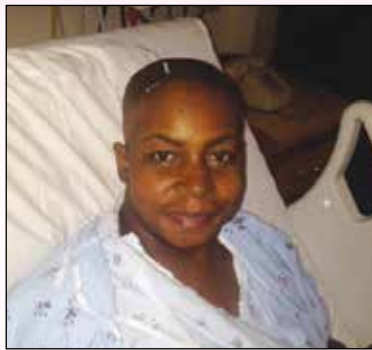
Birmingham Stroke Survivor Says Have Faith in Heart Program Saved Her Life

It seems small – an educational event, a magnet, a flyer. Yet, these seemingly small things are what Torria William-Samples says saved her life.

In 2014, Torria attended an American Heart Association Have Faith in Heart event at her church, Faith Chapel. She never knew the impact it would have on her. “Our church all wears red to raise awareness for the #1 killer of women – heart disease, and AHA puts this big event together for us. I think it’s so important to educate through the church, and it impacted a lot of lives – especially mine,” Torria said.

Just weeks after the Have Faith in Heart event, Torria left dinner with her family and headed home. Minutes later Torria’s sister Natasha Marbury got an alarming call. “Torria said she felt like she was having a stroke. I said ‘I just saw you; you were fine. You couldn’t be having a stroke because you’re way too coherent.’ Torria insisted I call 911. Then her voice faded, and there wasn’t anything after that point,” Natasha said.

Natasha immediately called 911. The ambulance rushed Torria to the hospital, where doctors told Torria’s family that she had suffered an aneurysm and massive stroke in her late 30’s. “As they were telling us she’s in a coma now,



Torria Williams Samples after her stroke.



The American Heart Association of Central Alabama recognized Torria William-Sample as the 2016 Power to End Stroke survivor honoree.

support that kept her strong. “God spared my life, and I’m so grateful for that. The American Heart Association was there for me and my family every step of the way, and I don’t know what I would have done without them,” Torria said.

Torria says as she recovered, she kept thinking back to the moments before she made the lifesaving call to her sister. She says somewhere deep inside her brain, she was able to recognize the symptoms of stroke thanks to Have Faith in Heart. Torria says Faith Chapel is now committed to do Have Faith in Heart programs each year. Torria encourages all faith organizations to get involved. To learn more about how your organization can participate in the Have Faith in Heart program, visit Heart.org/CentralAlabama.

I’m thinking about her daughters, my nieces. I kept asking myself, ‘How am I going to tell these girls that their mom is not going to make it?’” Natasha said.

Torria spent two days in a coma. Torria underwent brain surgery, finally bringing her out of the coma. She woke up with no memory, not able to move. Torria says it was her faith, family, and the American Heart Association’s

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Learn more of the Christ centered ministry of today’s Brother Bryan Mission - and read about other changed lives at - bbmission.com

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ARE WE THERE YET?

Festival of Tulips: American Village

This spring kicks off the inaugural American Village Festival of Tulips March 1st through April 15th. This beautiful spring experience is perfect for clubs, church groups, and families. The Festival is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m. The decision to create the Tulip Festival occurred because of the abundance of space on the 183 acre American Village campus. Melanie Poole, Communication Officer for The American Village explains, "We're blessed with beautiful green spaces, and we felt like a tulip field would compliment our campus." The field of over 70,000 tulips creates a scenic backdrop for photos. Admission to the Village includes entrance into the field and visitors are encouraged to pay a low price to pick their own tulips to take home with them. During the Festival, the Village giftshop will also have special merchandise including flower vases, picture frames, garden aprons, t-shirts and caps.

During the week, regular admission of \$10 for adults and \$9 for seniors and youth, includes The Liberty Experience, the American Village's signature public program that features a tour of the National Veterans Shrine and Register of Honor, a visit to the Oval Office, and exploration of The Randall Museum. Additional activities vary from day to day. On Saturday and Sunday, admission is \$5 and includes a limited tour of The Village. Visit www.americanvillage.org for exact opening and closing dates of the Tulip Festival based on bloom time. Contact Jodie Wasyluka at (205) 665-3535 ext. 1045 about group discounts.

— Rachel Biddy

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See website for spring Open House Dates



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from Deer Season to Turkey Season

Deer Season Ends... February brings the end to yet another deer season and hopefully everybody had a bountiful one! When you pick up your meat from the processor, if you run out of room in the freezer or have more meat than you can use, share your harvest. There are plenty of people right here at home that could use the meat, because they are not hunters or maybe things are just tough at the moment and the extra food would be helpful. As hunters and Christians it is important that we keep an eye out for one another, help those in need, and use every opportunity to share what God has given us.



Also, consider using the next couple of weeks as a time to clean up the hunting camp and preserve the beauty God has given us. Clean out your shooting houses, take down your stands and leave no trace behind. Not only will it make returning next season that much nicer and easier, but it will also set a good example for the younger generations of hunters, teaching them how to respect the land that provides for us.

Turkey Season Begins... Spring turkey season will be here before you know



it (March 15) and now is the time to prepare. In addition to planning where to hunt and scouting, you should take an inventory of your turkey gear and get supplies early. The longer you wait the harder it will be to find your go to ammo and warmer weather camo. Get your guns out and go ahead and sight them in. If you don't have time, just come by and see us at Mark's Outdoors and let us get you ready to slay that giant gobbler.



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FEBRUARY 2017 Calendar

February 2,4,18,22,25

Samford Basketball- Home games, Kids 12 and under get in Free! Purchase tickets at www.samfordsports.com/tickets or call 726-DOGS.

February 3-5

Davis Cup Tie- 8:00am-5:00pm, Be a part of history as Birmingham welcomes the Davis Cup. The best-of-five match series will be played at the Legacy Arena at the BJCC, Purchase tickets online at www.usta.com/daviscup.

February 7

A Singular Jesus in a Pluralistic Culture- Free presentation by one of the top Evangelical scholars in the world, Dr. Ben Witherington III. The event is part of Beeson Divinity School's Biblical Studies Lecture Series, 6pm, Hodges Chapel, Samford University. Presented by Tactical Faith, a non-profit group, that uses donations to bridge the gap between apologetics/theology training and local churches, www.tacticalfaith.com.

February 9-11, 16-18

Client Advocate Counselor Training- Hosted by Sav-A-Life Shelby at Valleydale Church, Thurs and Fri 6-9pm, Sat 9-12:30pm. Dinner and brunch provided. Learn to share your faith without fear, love beyond your capacity, biblical foundations for life, and intro to biblical lay counseling. To reserve your seat contact stephanied@savalifeshelby.org or call 205-664-1667.

February 10-12

Married Couples Romance Weekend- Hosted by Deer Run Retreat near Franklin, Tenn. Includes speaker sessions, relationship building activities, romantic dinner, and more. For more details and to register, 888-794-2918, www.deerrun.camp/events.

February 11

Free Financial Conference- Hosted by the Worship Center Christian Church, 100 Derby Pkwy, 35210. Register at www.theworshipcentercc.org. Keynote speaker De'Andre Salter.

February 15

How to Send your Child to College without Going Bankrupt- 6:00-7:00pm. This seminar will equip you with the key points in how to pay for college without going bankrupt, RSVP at www.churchrsvp.com, 205-868-9297.

February 22-25

Kingdom Kid's Spring Consignment Sale- Profits support missions. Features gently used children's clothing, shoes, furniture, baby gear, toys, and more. Includes teen and tween sizes. Gardendale Mt Vernon United Methodist, 805 Crest Dr, 35071. For more information, visit www.kingdomkidsconsignment.com.

February 23

Samford Legacy League's Scholarship Luncheon- Featuring *New York Times* bestselling author Melanie Shankle, 11:30am at a country club in Vestavia. For reservations, visit www.samford.edu/legacyleague. Call 726-2247 with questions.

February 24-26

You're a Good Man Charlie Brown- A Sylacauga Community Playhouse Production, 2 West 8th Street. Purchase ticket at www.scplayhouse.com, 256-369-3003 or email info@scplayhouse.com.



February 24

White Rose Ball- A fabulous night for fathers and daughters, Birmingham's Purity Ball, 6-11pm The Club of Birmingham. Includes seated dinner, speaker and ceremony, live dance band. \$55 per person/\$110 per couple, semi-formal or formal attire. Call Jody Obrien 205-542-1378, www.whiteroseball.com

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March 11

Wings to Soar- 11am and 1pm free event at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Decatur featuring owls, hawks, and American Bald Eagle, www.friendsofwheelerrefuge.org, 256-350-6639.

Coming in MARCH

March 2

A Night of Hope with David Ring- Nationally recognized speaker David Ring shares his testimony at evening benefitting Shepherd's Fold, Inc., prison re-entry ministry. For tickets (\$75 each, \$500 table of 8) call 205-780-6211 or e-mail Dedra@sfalabama.org. 6:30pm dinner, 7pm speaker.

March 3-5

Cottontails Village Arts, Crafts and Gifts Show- Over 500 booths, advance tickets only \$5, BJCC. For tickets call 836-7173.

March 3-5

Cinderella- Performed by the Birmingham Ballet at the BJCC Theatre, www.birminghamballet.com

March 3-5

Together at the Springs - Marriage event at Shocco Springs Conference Center, Talladega featuring Dale & Jena Forehand of Stained Glass Ministries. Includes power packed worship and dynamic marriage speakers. Begins Friday night and ends Saturday afternoon, 256-761-1100, www.togetheratthesprings.com.

March 9

Laura Story- Concert/Worship 7pm Shades Mountain Baptist Church. Tickets \$15-\$30. \$75 VIP ticket includes a reception and photo with Story before the concert, 205-726-3853, www.samforduniversity.com/legacyleague.

FIND EVEN MORE FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS at



www.WDJConline.com

FOR EVEN MORE EVENTS visit our online calendar at BIRMINGHAMCHRISTIAN.COM

SPECIAL FEATURE

ONE: A Marriage Calling

Marriage is hard, isn't it? Navigating through all the seasons of change can be very difficult; especially when you and your spouse perceive, respond and react to them very differently. Wouldn't it be great if there was a simple formula to follow that would make your marriage the most fulfilling relationship you could ever experience next to your relationship with God?

The truth is there is no formula. Instead, it is a coming together, a locking of arms to navigate through all the seasons of change. Jesus knew how important that would be. So much so, that He prayed, "Father, make them ONE, so the world will know that You sent Me." Wow. Jesus could have prayed anything for His Bride: "help them agree; make them alike; help her to stop nagging; help him to not be so passive", and yet, Jesus prayed for us to be ONE.

Why would He pray such a prayer? Because oneness is expressed through a common love. Our oneness proves to the world the love of God the Father



to send Jesus to die for the world. What a love God the Father and God the Son have for us! Paul even said that our marriages represent Jesus the Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride. What an honor to get to represent that loving relationship!

ONE. It's more than a number; it's a calling that God has for every marriage. When couples discover the "one" element to their marriage, it unleashes the unity, the closeness and the passion they long for. If you want to know how to develop this kind of oneness in your marriage, join us for Together at the Springs, March 3-5, 2017. At this Shocco Springs weekend getaway, you will discover some of God's richest blessings and promises for your marriage. To find out more, visit www.togetheratthesprings.org.

— Dale and Jena Forehand



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www.vision-financialgroup.com

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