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RANCH RECORD

News for the Residents of Blackhorse Ranch



A TEEN THAT MAKES EVERY MINUTE COUNT

by Jackie Devine

The call came in on October 12, Andrew Nichols left a message telling me that Bradley Hooten told him to reach out to me about helping him promote his upcoming Eagle Scout toy drive in the Gazette. Bradley was the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society (LLS) Student of the Year for 2018 that we featured in January. In just 6 weeks, Bradley's Team Triumph raised a grand total of \$65,757!

Just pondering the possibility of covering another LLS Student candidate who was also an Eagle Scout put me in high gear. Catching up with Andrew was easy; syncing our calendars was not. It turned out that the Bridgeland High School sophomore is deeply ensconced in school activities, scouts, and runs two very successful companies—Andrew's Artisan Cakes and Andrew's Artisan Pens.

Three weeks out, the day finally arrived. Susan (Andrew's mother), Andrew, and their two beautifully groomed poodles, Autumn and Winter, met me at the door. Stepping across the threshold and into their warm, inviting home, I knew at once I was going to enjoy the interview. Little did I suspect, I would be gifted two stories, each worth investing time and the necessary resources to produce major award-winning IMAX quality documentaries.

Jumping right in, I asked Andrew why he was chosen to become an LLS Student of the Year nominee.

"As a matter of fact," he said, as if it was commonplace for a 16-year-old to get high-end coverage from one of Houston's leading media outlets, "Channel 13 ran a story on Andrew's Artisan Cakes, and part of my interview was focused on Cakes for Cancer. It seems someone working at LLS picked up on my interest in creating cakes for cancer patients and nominated me as a contender."

In September, he received an e-mail from LLS saying that he had been nominated and wanted to know if he was interested in participating.

"After they contacted me, I had a lot to consider before accepting the offer. Not only was I concerned about my school activities and running my businesses, but I also wanted to become an Eagle

Scout by May. All I had left to do was my project and one merit badge. I wanted to make sure I had the time to dedicate to my Eagle Scout project.

"So, the first thing we did was ask for a meeting to find out whether it was even a possibility. We met at Starbucks and talked about the Eagle Scouts and bounced around a few ideas. Then, I spoke to my Boy Scout Leader. We discussed running a toy drive for my Eagle Scout project for kids with Leukemia or cancer.

"After researching the idea, we found that teens were the most forgotten age along with personal experiences and activities. They needed books, movies, and games for their age. It seems they get a lot of donations for younger kids age four through 12, but the older ones seem to fall between the cracks.

"It only took us a short while to come up with a plan. After we called a family caucus and agreed on the plan, we expanded that to friends and potential multi-generational team members. In the end, we decided that we could mobilize a team to help me with my Eagle Scout merit badge project, Toys for Teens Fighting Cancer Toy Drive and on the heels of that, launch the 7-week LLS campaign to raise money and awareness to fight blood cancers."

Next came the approval process. Andrew's idea had to be sanctioned at the troop level, committee level, and Sam Houston Council. The Andrew Nichols Eagle Scout Project (Troop 533) was approved in October.

Susan explained, "On August 20, 2014, I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Thanks to God and my support team, I am now in remission.

"When this came along our family's first thought was, we already had the platform and an extensive support system to hopefully do some real good with this campaign. Although Andrew is the highlight and the student, we can't neglect the fact that everybody he has on his team is not just people he knows but people who have cared for

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RANCH RECORD

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BRIDGELAND HS THEATRE PRESENTS 2 SHOWS IN DECEMBER:

Twelve Angry Jurors

December 7, 8 and 10 at 7 PM

December 8 at 2 PM

Bridgeland HS Auditorium

10707 Mason Rd., Cypress 77433

Tickets available at bridgelandhstheatre.org

Students and Senior Citizens \$8 online/\$10 at the door

General Admission \$10 online/\$12 at the door

-AND-

A Christmas Carol

December 14 and 15 at 6PM

Bridgeland HS Black Box Theatre

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Tickets available at bridgelandhstheatre.org

All tickets \$5



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us. For example, I had groups of people who had to come around the clock to give me drugs that would take two and three hours to administer. They had to get trained and would come three times a day for 3-hour stints to administer medication. Those are the type of people that are on the team.

"So, together we made the decision to be part of an initiative that can potentially find a cure and contribute to creating a world without blood cancer---and we threw our hat in the ring."

November 11th and 12th posters and collection boxes were delivered. The collection began November 26th and will run through December 21st.

You can help Andrew in his Eagle Scout Project benefiting Teen cancer patients at Texas Children's Hospital by dropping off your new and unwrapped toys to a designated location:

From the Vine Ministries
HSE Medical and Associates
Jersey Mike's (Fairfield location)
Texas Children's Urgent Care (Fairfield)
Steeplechase Pediatrics (North Cypress location)
Steeplechase Pediatrics (Skinner location)

For an updated list of drop off locations please visit Team Nichols Facebook page @TeamNicholsLLS

Items Needed for Teen Cancer Patients include:

Gift Cards (Hulu, Netflix, iTunes, etc.), Board Games (teen level), Xbox 360 Game Cartridges, DVD Movies (rated PG-13), Small Handheld Electronic Games, Lotions, Nail Polish, Beauty Items, Puzzles, Activities (Art Pads, Colored Pens/Pencils, Adult Type Coloring Books), Teen Books/Comics

Drop Off Sit Locations

- Cy-Ranch Senior Women
- Cy-Ranch FFA
- From the Vine Ministries
- HSE Medical
- Jersey Mikes (Fairfield)
- Texas Children's Urgent Care (Fairfield)
- Walgreens (Fairfield)
- Strong Vision Center (Fairfield)

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- Strong Vision Center (Skinner and Spring Cypress)
- Steeplechase Pediatric (North Cypress)
- Steeplechase Pediatric (Skinner and Spring Cypress)
- ReMax (Fairfield)
- Texas Children's Pediatric Center (Townlake)
- Good Shephard UMC Youth Office
- Gullick orthodontics
- Texas Children's Pediatrics (Fry Road)
- Texas Children's Pediatrics (Fallbrook Crossing)
- Texas Children's Pediatrics (Lakewood)

Contact: Andrew Nichols (713) 321-0170

Andrew.nichols@andrewsartisancakes.com

Facebook: @TeamNicholsLLS

Susan Nichols, Andrew's mother, is the reason Andrew is eager to join the campaign. He says LLS does more to advance science and support patients than any other cancer organization. The fact that she is a participant in one of their research efforts is the rea-son she is in remission today. You will learn more about Susan and her journey to recovery in the Gazette's January issue.

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RANCH RECORD

HOUSTON REPERTOIRE BALLET'S 20TH ANNUAL PERFORMANCE OF THE HOLIDAY CLASSIC THE NUTCRACKER

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE BY THE CYPRESS PHILHARMONIC FOR SELL-OUT PERFORMANCES ON DECEMBER 7, 8, & 9

WHO: Houston Repertoire Ballet (HRB), Houston's premier pre-professional ballet company, celebrates its 23rd season, beginning with its 20th annual performance series of The Nutcracker, featuring professional guest artists Elizabeth Keller as the Sugar Plum Fairy, Andrew Taft as the Cavalier, and Joe Modlin as Herr Drosselmeyer, with the Cypress Philharmonic directed by Glynneth Lanthier.

WHAT: The Nutcracker's brilliant blend of beautiful costumes, lavish sets, and fresh choreography creates a magical storybook world enjoyed by children and adults alike. With a cast of more than 100 HRB dancers and area children, and musical performance by the Cypress Philharmonic, HRB's masterful production is the highlight of the holidays!

WHEN/WHERE: Friday, December 7 at 7 pm – abbreviated Arts & Education performance perfect for young children – tickets for this performance only are \$12

Saturday, December 8 at 2 pm & 7 pm

Sunday, December 9 at 1 pm & 4:30 pm

Tomball High School Theatre

30330 Quinn Road
Tomball, Texas 77375

TICKETS: Cost is \$23 for adults, \$18 for students & seniors. For ticket information, call 281-940-HRB1 (4721) or visit www.hrbdance.org.

OUTREACH: HRB has received a generous grant from Texas Commission on the Arts, enabling HRB to expand its outreach mission to children currently attending three Title-1 schools. Up to 24 students from each campus will participate, free of charge (including class attire, costumes, and other supplies), in one-hour weekly ballet classes at their respective campuses, and will receive dance instruction in the "Nutcracker Experience." These children will have the opportunity to participate as dancers in three HRB Nutcracker Arts & Education school performances, for an audience of their peers comprising more than 1,500 Tomball ISD third graders.

HRB dancers are committed to sharing the arts with the community. Community engagement events include costumed

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appearances at various nursing homes, group events, and at Arts & Education performances. HRB brings three matinee performances to Tomball ISD third grade students, fulfilling the arts component of their curriculum. To request an outreach event for your organization, call 281-940-HRB1 (4721).

GUEST BIOS: Elizabeth Keller – Associate Artistic Director, Idaho Regional Ballet

Elizabeth was born in Dubai, UAE and started her ballet training at the Royal Academy of Dance in London. After moving back to the United States, she continued her training at Ballet Center of Houston under the direction of Victoria Vittum and Gilbert Rome. At age 15, she was invited to train at The Rock School of Pennsylvania Ballet on full scholarship. She danced with Pennsylvania Ballet for two seasons and was coached extensively by “Prima Ballerina Assoluta,” Violette Verdy. Elizabeth then joined Miami City Ballet under the direction of Edward Villella where she danced corps de ballet, soloist, and principal roles for 10 seasons. With MCB, Elizabeth danced works of choreographers, such as George Balanchine, John Cranko, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp, Paul Taylor, Anthony Tudor, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, Trey McIntyre, Marius Petipa, and August Bournonville, to name a few. She also danced with Miami Contemporary Dance Company and taught on the faculty at Miami City Ballet School. She was appointed Children’s Ballet Mistress for Balanchine’s “The Nutcracker” from 2009-2012. During the summers, Elizabeth taught at MCBS, Ballet Center of Houston and helped run and was on the faculty at the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) in Saratoga Springs, NY, under the direction of Damian Woetzel and Jennifer Ringer.

Elizabeth moved to Boise in 2012 to dance with Trey McIntyre Project and work with nationally renowned Trey McIntyre for two seasons. Elizabeth then joined Ballet Idaho as a Principal dancer. Ms. Keller has been trained in the “Dance for PD” method and has taught Dance for Parkinson’s classes all over the country. She started the first Dance for Parkinson’s classes in Idaho in 2014 and now has two classes in both Boise (Ballet Idaho) and in Eagle (at Eagle

Performing Arts Center). Ms. Keller currently teaches on faculty at both Eagle Performing Arts Center and Ballet Idaho.

Andrew Taft – Principal, Ballet Idaho

Andrew was born in Miami, Florida where he began his classical training at the age of nine with Ruth Wiesen at the Miami Conservatory. He also studied with Thomas Armour, Robert Pike, Nancy Raffa, and other professional guest artists. He trained in both Limon and Graham technique at the New World School of the Arts. His ballet training continued in New York City with private coaching by Johan Renvall and David Howard.

Andrew has danced leading roles with Michael Uthoff Dance Theatre, Miami Ballet, Francis Owen/Cox Dance, Ballet Hawaii, and Miami City Ballet. Notable roles include Franz in Coppelia, Soloist in Theme and Variations, Prince Charming in Cinderella, and The Bluebird in The Sleeping Beauty. In 2011, Andrew had the honor to perform for Michelle Obama and her daughters in Ballet Hawaii’s The Nutcracker. Andrew joined Ballet Idaho in the 2008 season and has been a principal since 2012. He has danced leading roles in Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet, The Nutcracker, Romeo and Juliet, Pulcinella, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Piano Concerto in G, Firebird, and many others.

Joseph Modlin

In 1993, Joseph Modlin, an Indiana native, began training in classical and modern dance performance at Ball State University and performed with Anderson Young Ballet Theatre, both under the direction of Ms. LouAnn Young. Joe moved to Houston in 1997, and began a performance and teaching career that has spanned 20 years, seven professional companies, and continues extending to flourish in the Houston community, as well as nationally. Joe has performed/worked with Hope Stone, Inc., Houston Repertoire Ballet, Chrysalis Dance Company, Houston Dance Theater, Allegro Ballet, Freneticore, and Woodlands Dance Company. He has been invited to work as a guest artist with independent choreographers and performance artists, such as Leslie Scates, Erin Reck, Amy Ell, Karen Stokes, Lindsey McGill, Toni Valle, and Sara Draper.

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RANCH RECORD

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ABOUT HRB: The Houston Repertoire Ballet (HRB) is a non-profit 501(c)(3), founded by Victoria Vittum and Gilbert Rome, both nationally acclaimed teachers and choreographers who served as its co-artistic directors. Today, Ms. Vittum oversees training and programming with an equal eye to serving the needs of the community. Since 1995, HRB has contributed to the cultural fabric of Harris and Montgomery Counties by providing excellent dance training to the area's young ballet stars and dance educators of tomorrow, while also presenting high-quality productions at affordable prices. The Nutcracker in December, and the Celebration of Dance in April introduce area children and their families to the world of classical and contemporary ballet. HRB closes its season in May with the Choreography Project, a free-admission program initiated to discover, mentor, and give artistic voice to our choreographers of tomorrow. Today, HRB is considered to be the premier pre-professional ballet company in the Houston region, and is recognized for sharing its gifts with the community and beyond. Many of HRB's dancers advance to professional ballet companies throughout the country. HRB graduates have danced with New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Miami City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Houston Ballet, and other prestigious companies.

MISSION: HRB's mission is dedicated to providing the finest classical ballet instruction, education, and performance experience to local gifted students, and to preparing them for a professional career in the world of dance. HRB is committed to serving the suburban Houston region with high-quality theatre productions that educate, engage, and entertain residents of all ages and perpetuate their appreciation of dance as an art form.

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