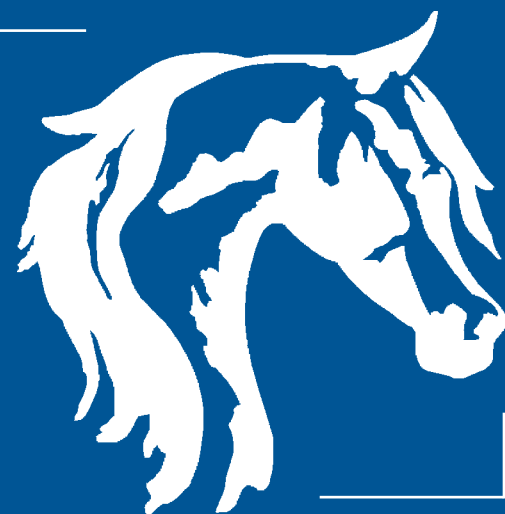


February 2019 • Volume 13, Issue 2

RANCH RECORD

News for the Residents of Blackhorse Ranch



Join The Circus And The World Is Your Oyster



me” commented Sidney Bateman, Hoop Diving and Chinese Poles acrobat.

“Left motherless at three; I was raised by my grandmother and never knew my dad. I had seven siblings and with little supervision, it was more or less every man for himself. I don’t know that I ever felt a real sense of family. To make matters worse, I was a hyper kid, craved attention, and frequently sought approval and acceptance from the gang. Looking back on it, you might say I grew up in a combat zone. The sound of gunshots, sirens blaring, and having friends and family members shot or killed were all regular occurrences.”

Toys, bikes, and athletic equipment were a scarce commodity for Sidney. For recreation, the kids in the Walnut Park community where he lived, would gather on vacant barren lots and have flip-offs competing against one another by flipping, spinning, and doing acrobatics.

“I joined Circus Harmony when I was eleven, even though I had one foot in the door of joining the gang. I honestly can’t tell you when I joined the gang,” he confessed. “My brothers and uncles were gang members. I thought that was in my future as well. But miraculously, Circus kept nudging me. For a time, I was pulled in both directions, Circus and the gang. I was always trying to balance out the two.”

For those that have never heard of St. Louis-based Circus Harmony, it is a social circus-based program that uses circus arts to motivate social

change. They do it by building character in individuals and building bridges between communities. Titles and labels are nonexistent. The only thing that matters is what they (the individual) bring to the ring.

From the beginning, learning to trust and be part of a team were hard lessons for Sidney to grasp. Working with others was a struggle. Having someone telling him what to do and dealing with accountability felt like insurmountable challenges. He suffered from bouts where he just gave up and dropped out.

“But, somehow, even though young and naïve, I began to develop a degree of trust and make sense of acrobatics. The sport became my magnet drawing me back into the program. Somehow, I recognized that my talent could take me somewhere. Circus classes became my escape from the harsh reality I was dealing with at home and in the neighborhood. Unknowingly, using circus arts with a definite intention, I began my journey.

“In my junior year of high school, I got into a huge gang fight at school and was expelled. Then my friend got shot and killed. That was my turning point. I knew I didn’t want to be another statistic.” Musing on the problems he faced, he said, “There had to be a different path for me.”

Shortly after committing to training more seriously, Sidney joined the Elite Troupe of Circus Harmony; a pre-professional program that was focusing on mastering specific circus disciplines. And, at the end of high school, Sidney decided to make a career out of the circus. Believing in his talent, the manager of Circus Harmony helped him to get to Montreal, Canada to audition for the National Circus School. To his surprise, Sidney got accepted in the College Program with a specialization in Hoop Diving.

École Nationale de Cirque (ENC) gave him a purpose and hope of international in scope. The ENC is a higher-education institution dedicated to the education and training of professional circus artists, as well as to research and innovation in circus arts and academic curriculum.

Sidney proudly emphasized, “Not only could I relate, but I was also willing to give it my all. I trained my butt off. I became a much better

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(Continued from Cover)

human being. After acceptance, I entered into a week-long acrobatic audition process that I've been told was harder to accomplish than getting into Harvard or Yale. On April 1, 2011, I got the news: "I HAD MADE IT." And that felt like I had arrived home because I knew that was the beginning of something amazing."

Studying at ENC for three years, Sidney was introduced to the world of contemporary circus. He even conquered the French language and became fluent in it. He successfully graduated in 2014 alongside his St. Louis friend Melvin Diggs (also a Circus Harmony alumnus) as a Hoop Diving duo.

For two and a half years, the pair took part in the creation and international tour of Cuisines & Confessions, a production of the Montreal-based circus company 7 Fingers. Other career highlights include a summer with the Chicago Midnight Circus, a fashion show for Hermès in Hong Kong, and a collection launch for Bench in Manila.

In 2017, Cirque du Soleil got in touch with Sidney and Melvin and invited them to join the cast of LUZIA on tour. Cirque du Soleil, headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, Canada is a Canadian entertainment company and the largest theatrical producer in the world.

(Continued on Page 3)



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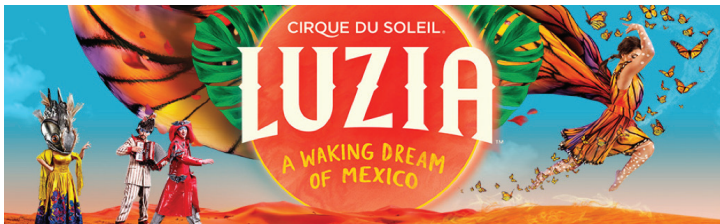
Reflecting, Sidney smiled, saying, "Now I am finally part of a family where I've found a place of love, accountability, and commitment."

Sidney is thrilled to have jumped into this adventure and to have been given the opportunity to share his passion with thousands of people every night through his two favorite circus disciplines: Hoop Diving & Chinese Poles.

Not only does he feel that his ultimate childhood dream has come true, but he has also found his life's purpose: to share his story with youth around the world and to help the "kids" who need help by inspiring them to work hard toward achieving their goals.

When you have the opportunity to see Cirque du Soleil's LUZIA at the Sam Houston Race Park, be sure to pay special attention when Sidney performs his Hoop Diving and Chinese Poles acrobatics.

LUZIA opened in Houston on January 10th, 2019 for a limited engagement through February 24th, 2019.



CFISD Chamber Choir Concert

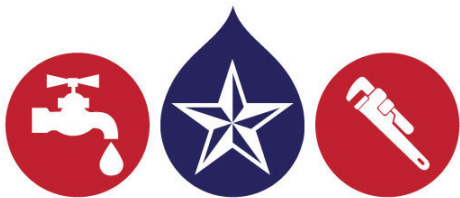
Featuring Cypress Ranch High School, Cypress Woods High School, Cy Fair High School, Langham Creek High School as well as other CFISD Choirs.

Date: 2/19/19 • Time: 7pm

**Location: The Foundry
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School Athletes Can Register for Club Track

Now in its 32nd year, the Northwest Flyers Track Club is accepting registrations for all middle and high school athletes for the spring and summer 2019 season. The team is sanctioned by USA Track & Field, and offers a full program of "track" events such as sprints, hurdles, middle distance, distance and relays, and "field" events such as long jump, triple jump, high jump, discus, shot put and javelin and pole vault. It is an excellent "off-season" program for young athletes who currently compete on their middle school or high school track teams.

The team was founded 32 years ago by local Olympic gold medalist Fred Newhouse to foster the development of youth track & field in the northwest Houston area. In July, 2018 the Northwest Flyers

had one of its most successful competitions ever at the Junior Olympics in Greensboro, NC.

In order to register, athletes must first attend one of the orientation sessions in March or April, 2019, which are listed on the team website at www.northwestflyers.org. For additional information about the team, email linette.roach@sbcglobal.net and \"Like\" the club on Facebook.



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94 Is Just A Number!



That is what Sam Riccaforte said the day he celebrated his 94th birthday and took the leap for the 4th time at Skydive Spaceland in Alvin, Texas.

He was surrounded by a bevy of family, friends and church members, including Jo Ann Lambert and Jackie Devine, coordinator of Fairfield Seniors of Cypress—his traveling buddies, to watch him sail through the air with the exclusive Tandem Progression and Skydiver Training Team, some of the most experienced skydivers in the industry.

Not one to sit still, Sam also coordinated the March trip for the Fairfield Seniors of Cypress. Sam arranged for the Seniors to tour state of the art Mounted Patrol and

Houston Police K-9 Facilities. The complex is located at Houston Police Department Mounted Patrol Facility, 5005 Little York Rd. Houston, Tx.

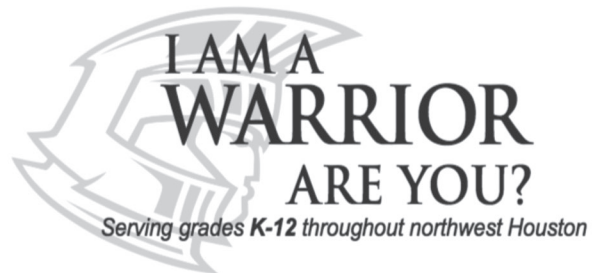
At present, there are thirty-eight (38) horses in their herd. These horses represent many different breeds, some of which are: Percheron; Belgium; Quarter Horse; Hanoverian; Tennessee Walker; Dutch Warmblood; Thoroughbred; and Spotted Saddle Horse. There are currently thirty-two (32) police mounts assigned to patrol duty. Each officer is issued one mount and is responsible for the care and wellbeing of the horse.

Originating in 1959, the Houston Police Department's K-9 Unit Program is one of the oldest Patrol Divisions on the department. There are currently thirty-nine teams in the K-9 unit which are assigned to various sections throughout the police department.

Let Sam be an inspiration to us all for staying active, involved and well connected in Cypress.



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RANCH RECORD

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Elisha Roberts Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution wants you!

Greetings from the ladies and young women of the Elisha Roberts Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution! Our motto is God, Home, and Country.

We are inviting any female, age 18 and over who can provide direct lineal descent from someone who either fought in or provided aid during the American Revolution.

We are a family-oriented, national organization that promotes patriotism, education, and historic preservation.

If this sounds like you, please join us at our next meeting on third Thursday of each month at the Cypress Historical Society Building behind Jurgens Hall (26026 Hempstead Road Cypress, Texas 77429). Our monthly meetings begin at 7 p.m.

For more information, contact Elisha Roberts Chapter Regent Mary Lynn Goins at mlgoins1@att.net.

We look forward to meeting you!

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