

# NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF PARK CREEK

FEBRUARY 2019

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## Join the Circus and the World is Your Oyster!

by Jackie Devine



Have you ever thought about running away and joining the circus? The truth is, becoming a circus acrobat is not as easy as you think. But if you could accomplish it, your life would be changed by epic proportions.

"As a street kid growing up in a St. Louis inner-city Black neighborhood, never venturing from the two-block area where I lived, the only thing I knew about life was what I saw around 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."

*(Continued on Page 2)*

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*(Continued from Cover)*

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 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.

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.

Board Meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Cypress Point Recreation Center beginning at 6:00pm

## 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 bud-dies, to watch him sail through the air with the exclusive Tan-dem



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) po-lice 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 de-partment. 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.

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 Sen-iors to tour state of the art Mounted Patrol and Houston Po-lice



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## 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  
8350 Jones Road  
Houston, TX 77065



# PARK CREEK

## ★★For Immediate Release★★



Cy-Fair Republican Women February Meeting

CFRW will meet on Tuesday, February 12th from 10:30 AM to Noon.

Hearthstone Country Club, 7615 Ameswood, Houston, TX 77095

Meeting is \$3 – Meeting with Lunch at Noon is \$23.

See the website for details and RSVP to [www.cfrw.net](http://www.cfrw.net) by February 5th.

You can register and pay on the website also.

There is much to be done prior to the next election cycle. We look forward to many new faces and opportunities to promote our Republican candidates. We need you with us to get our ideals advanced locally, statewide and nationally. Give CFRW a try!

Nancy Roberts  
Publicity Chair  
Cy-Fair Republican Women  
[info@cfrw.net](mailto:info@cfrw.net)

## CYPRESS AREA FOOD PANTRY New Days And Times



Do you know of someone who has trouble putting food on the table? Maybe their employment was suddenly terminated; maybe it's a choice between medications or food; for whatever reason a family can find themselves in a situation where they need a little help.

Fountain of Life Church of God on Mueschke Road runs a food pantry twice a month from 3:30 pm to 5 pm. Please call 281-373-9337 for days of service. The only requirement is that the client should live in zip code 77433 and west of Skinner 77429.

Food donations and volunteers are also greatly appreciated.

# GO GREEN



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## TEAM NICHOLS

by Andrew Nichols



For those of you who have been following the progress of Team Nichols – made up of team members of eight adults and eight teens (teacher/pastor, Rob's co-worker, family friends, family members). Progress has been made, and momentum continues to build.

Andrew says: "This year, I was honored to be nominated as a candidate for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's 2019 Student of the Year Campaign."

The Student of the Year campaign is a seven-week fundraising competition to raise money to support LLS. The Mission of LLS is to find a cure for blood cancers and improve the quality of life of patients and their families through research, access to drugs, and advocacy.

Team Nichols, my fundraising team, and I have high expectations to raise \$35,000 with your help and support. We desire to make blood cancer a thing of the past!

(Continued on Page 7)

# KNOW YOUR RISK

Take this first step in protecting yourself against heart disease. Join the experts at Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital for:

- Free heart screenings, including cholesterol and blood pressure readings, to learn your 10-year risk for heart disease
- Talk with an expert about your results

**Free Heart Screening Event**  
**Thursday, Feb. 28 | 6-8 p.m.**

Houston Methodist Willowbrook Hospital  
18220 State Hwy. 249  
Conference Center, 1st Floor  
Houston, TX 77070

Light refreshments provided.

Visit [houstonmethodist.org/heart-event](https://houstonmethodist.org/heart-event) to reserve your spot.



# PARK CREEK

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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](mailto:mlgoins1@att.net).

We look forward to meeting you!

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I am passionate about this campaign because in August 2014, the day before I entered middle school, my mom was diagnosed with a rare form of Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (also known as ALL). Her cancer required 2½ years of aggressive treatment at MD Anderson. My mom's battle with Leukemia deeply affected our family and every aspect of our lives. The only reason my mother is in alive and in remission is due to medical research breakthroughs and her clinical trial drug Ponatinib that she will take every day for the rest of her life. This breakthrough drug has been possible due to the help of LLS funding research. This campaign will help raise funds to pursue more research and develop more ways to save lives like my mom. Best of all, it gives our family and support system a chance to use our unfortunate experience to impact others in a way that offers hope and one day finds a cure for blood cancers!

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is the world's largest voluntary health agency dedicated to blood cancer. The LLS mission: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world and provides free information and support services.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is a 501(c)(3) organization, and all monetary donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by tax laws. Andrew's Update:

Toy Drive update

- Number of toys donated: \$1522 Toys
- Amount of Gift cards donated: \$420.00
- Thank you to community

Coin Drive – Coins for Cancer

• Participating schools are Salyards Middle School and Ault Elementary

• Dates: Monday, January 28th – Friday, February 8th

Ways you can contact or help TeamNicholsLLS are listed below:

• Local business sponsorship, auction items, ad or buy table for Gala

- Andrew's LLS website link
- Facebook page for TeamNicholsLLS
- Andrew's email to contact
- QR code
- Gala information: Friday, March 1st at Junior League of Houston

## 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.

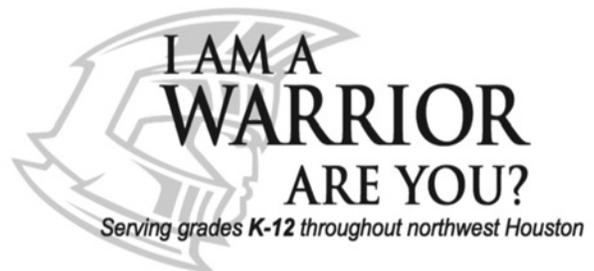
The team was founded 32 years ago by local Olympic gold medalist Fred Newhouse to foster the development of youth track & field in the northwest Houston area. In July, 2018 the Northwest Flyers

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](http://www.northwestflyers.org). For additional information about the team, email [linette.roach@sbcglobal.net](mailto:linette.roach@sbcglobal.net) and "Like" the club on Facebook.



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