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Budget conscious shoppers find affordable deals during economic crisis • page 3



## Field of Dreams

Minor league veteran keeps his eyes on the target of playing in majors • page 14

# Red Dirt Journal

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A Norman-based nonprofit offers housing to high school students who have found themselves without a place to live

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# 'Morning after' pill stirs debate

## Younger teenagers will soon have easier accessibility to contraception

SARAH PIPPENGER  
Red Dirt Journal

Young women soon will have access to another method to prevent pregnancy when Plan B emergency contraception becomes available to 17-year-olds without a prescription.

Currently, if a woman is under 18, she cannot receive the drug over the counter at a pharmacy.

A federal court issued an order in March 2009 directing the Food and Drug Administration to make the contraceptive available to 17-year-olds without a prescription, according to the FDA Web site.

Plan B is commonly known as the "morning after" pill because it will almost always prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours of having unprotected sexual intercourse, and is usually effective if taken within 120 hours (five days), according to the Planned Parenthood Web site.

The Centers for Disease Control reported that in 2006, the latest year for which numbers are available, Oklahoma had the sixth highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation. Of every 1,000 births in the state, almost 60 are to teen mothers, according to Alternative Tulsa's Web site.

Also known by its technical name levonorgestrel, Plan B is another tool to reduce that rate, which rose in 2005 and 2006 after dropping for more than a decade. This contraceptive consists of two pills. One pill is taken as soon as possible after intercourse, and the second is taken 12 hours later.

"Plan B is used when a regular form of birth control fails, for example, if a condom rips or a woman forgets to take the pill, or if no birth control is used at all," said Ann Benson, advanced registered nurse practitioner of maternal and child health with the Oklahoma Health Department.

Terry Dennison, director of Education Services at Planned Parenthood, said Plan B is a good backup method.

"People are human. They make mistakes," Dennison said. He noted that in some situations, the woman cannot control whether protection is used.

"This is a great product for victims of sexual violence," Dennison said.

Not all medical professionals approve of Plan B.

Alison Stow, nurse manager at Eden Clinic in Norman, said she believes Plan B can give teens a false sense of security.

Eden Clinic is a faith-based pro-life clinic



photo provided

**NEW PLAN:** The Food and Drug Administration received an order in March 2009 requiring that Plan B contraceptive be made available to 17 year olds.

for women that provides services including pregnancy tests, sexually transmitted disease testing, prenatal classes, and counseling.

"Birth control prevents ovulation, can kill the sperm, and makes the uterus hostile to implantation of the egg," Stow said. Based on these properties, contraceptives are viewed as abortifacient, or abortion causing, products at Eden Clinic.

"I wish pregnancy were the worst thing that could happen to a teenage girl," Stow said, noting the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases. "We have clients who learn they have the beginnings of cervical cancer, which is far more dangerous for 17-year-olds than for 24-year-olds."

Plan B emergency contraceptives are heightened doses of regular birth control pills, Benson said. She said the dynamics of the drug make it an excellent last resort in birth control.

"Plan B works by preventing the ovaries from releasing eggs," Benson said. "If the egg has already been released, it disables the egg from implanting on the mucus of the uterine wall."

Only one in 100 women will become pregnant if Plan B is used within 72 hours, according to Planned Parenthood. The chance of pregnancy increases when the time extends to 120 hours.

Plan B often is confused with a pill that does cause abortion.

Amber Lemen, a recent graduate of Bartlesville High School, knows that pregnancy-prevention methods can fail, but said she would not use Plan B because she considers it an abortion pill. Lemen was 17 when she conceived her daughter, now 3 weeks old. At the time, Lemen was taking birth control pills and using a condom.

"The morning-after pill works after the act of having sex," Lemen said. "You have already created the baby, and Plan B stops the baby from developing. To me, that is abortion."

Benson said she reassures women that the properties of Plan B will not terminate an existing pregnancy and may even decrease the chance of a miscarriage.

"Often women think Plan B is the abortifacient pill, RU-486," Benson said. "If the woman is pregnant, Plan B will not end the pregnancy."

"Women who have had multiple miscarriages are typically given extra progesterone to prepare the uterine wall for implantation of the egg. Plan B is progesterone. So if a pregnancy exists, it will not end the pregnancy, but rather it may actually support it."

Plan B is expensive, costing between \$20 and \$70, Dennison said.

For many women, the better option may be to get Plan B, usually for free, from their local health department, Benson said.

"We'd rather they come to the health department to get Plan B," Benson said. In addition to providing Plan B, the clinics can offer better forms of birth control.

"Birth control is absolutely essential for sexually active teens," Benson said.

Lemen, now 18, agrees.

"Sure, sex is fun, and you will feel singled if you don't do it, but don't be pressured into it," she said. "If you're not ready for a baby, take birth control pills."

Benson said most Oklahoma schools don't offer enough information about human sexuality and the availability of contraceptives.

"Many teens learn about the health department through word of mouth," she said.

Girls don't have to have parental consent to get birth control from the health department, she said. The service is confidential.

The state Health Department runs 68 clinics across the state, all of which offer Plan B.

Until manufacturers receive FDA approval for a label change, however, the drug will only be available at pharmacies without a prescription to women 18 and older. Nevertheless, Plan B is scheduled to be available to 17-year-olds in the coming weeks.



photo by photo by Jenna Isotigh

**THRIFTY FASHION:** Aniseh Hashmi uses her eye for fashion to shop for blouses. Hashmi will look for clothing others have cast off and transform them into something she would wear.

# Business booms at Goodwill

## Despite economic downturn, store sees sales spike in Oklahoma City locale

**SUMMAYAH ANWAR**  
Red Dirt Journal

An ailing stock market has resulted in a booming business for some thrift stores.

Jon Ainsworth, manager of the Goodwill store in downtown Oklahoma City, said the company has seen a spike in sales during the past year.

"We've seen an increase of 35 to 40 percent even though we've closed two stores," he said. At some stores Ainsworth said he sees a variety of cars in the parking lot, sometimes BMWs and Lexus.

People from different social classes are heading to the shops, some because of low prices and others because it's trendy.

Anisah Hashmi, a junior at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Penn., said she shops at thrift stores to add a unique touch to her wardrobe.

"Regular stores have generic clothing," said Hashmi, who lives in Edmond. "Since

middle school I have wanted a different, colorful closet. I buy cheap clothes at thrift stores and alter them the way I like them."

Hashmi, 19, said she loves the jewelry, dresses and skirts she comes across at thrift stores.

She also shops at consignment stores, but said they are more expensive and have a smaller variety.

"Go to thrift stores instead. You'll find more retro things there and it's cheaper."

That's exactly what people have been doing.

Jennifer Bradford, director of communications for Goodwill in central Oklahoma, said she, too, has noticed more people in the stores.

"There has definitely been an increase in the percentage of shoppers," Bradford said. "A lot more people are looking for bargain deals on clothes and knick knacks for their homes."

Goodwill has been around in Oklahoma

### DID YOU KNOW

#### Shop online

Thrifty shoppers can also find good deals from the Goodwill without leaving their homes.

#### [www.shopgoodwill.com](http://www.shopgoodwill.com)

- Goodwill stores from around the country sell a variety of collectibles, art, antiques and clothing on the nonprofit's auction Web site.

*Source: Goodwill Industries International*

Every Oklahoma City area Goodwill store relies on donations brought to the store or to attended donation centers. The donated items are sorted into bins by category, such as plastics, metal, clothing and purses.

Revenues from the stores fund Goodwill's training program for people who face workplace disadvantages.

"We use the money from our sales to help disabled people get back into the work force," Bradford said. "We will employ some of the people at our stores if there are openings."

Ainsworth said thrift stores offer many great deals. "Customers can find fixed cheap prices for items, like jeans are always \$3.99 and shirts are \$2.99."

He said tag sales are a popular day of the week for Goodwill customers. It's a way to reduce prices for items that have been on the shelves too long. When donations come into the store, they are sorted, then tagged by color. Items that are damaged or stained are immediately set aside for salvage.

Price tags provide a color code for when items were placed on the racks.

since 1936, with three regions throughout the state: in the Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Lawton areas. Each Goodwill region is autonomous, whether in the same state or country. There are a few stores in countries such as Ireland and England.

"We do have a website: [shopgoodwill.com](http://shopgoodwill.com)," Bradford said. "It is associated with the Goodwill in California. They get a lot of high-end donations that are available to people all over. You do have to pay shipping though."

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photo by Jenna Tsotigh

**WIDE SELECTION:** Scoping out the houseware aisle, customer Coleta McMillan uses her free time to make a quick buy at the Goodwill in Oklahoma City.



photo by Jenna Tsotigh

**CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE:** Employee Jennifer Bradford explains the process the store uses to ensure the customers have a good experience.

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“According to our calendar, after four to six weeks any item tagged with that certain color will be sold for a dollar. It happens once a week, a different color every week. Customers love it,” Ainsworth said.

“Since tag days are in high demand by customers, I will sometimes let the tag sales go on for a few days.

“When the sale is over, the items tagged with that color will be removed from the racks and placed in a bin as salvage.”

Since Goodwill has many regular customers, the thrift stores have to clear their shelves every few weeks to make room for new shipments. A customer doesn’t want to see the same shirt in the same rack for long, Bradford said.

“If an item hasn’t sold in over a month, chances are it just isn’t going to sell,” he said. “So we have to get rid of it.”

Unsold clothes are removed from the racks and bundled for recycling. Goodwill doesn’t lose money even with recycled items, Ainsworth said. Companies will buy the items by the bale. Each bale weighs half a ton, or about 1,100 pounds.

“Not only do we recycle clothing, but also cardboard and computers,” Bradford said. “Recently we made a deal with Dell where they will buy computers that people give us.

“Dell already has contracts with companies who will recycle and dispose of computers properly.”

Bradford said she hopes people will take advantage of this opportunity to help keep the Earth green.

“The donations don’t go to waste, even if they are salvage,” Bradford said. “We use the money from our sales as well as from the recycling to help disabled people. That is our goal.”

Lately there has been an increase in donations, as well as sales, she said. “We like donations because that is what drives our sales,” Bradford said. She described the typical Goodwill customer as a 30- to 40-year-old woman who is the head of her household.

They go to thrift stores for the good buys, Ainsworth said.

“Lots of business women are looking for a bargain on suits, dresses, dress pants and shoes,” he said.

Everyone is trying to make ends meet.

“We have many daily shoppers who are a part of the Goodwill family,” Ainsworth said. “They are friendly folks who bring cookies to share with everyone. There are probably about 10 people like that per store.”

# Shoppers seek deals, surprises

## Thrift stores offer low costs, green-friendly clothing and trend-setting fashions

JENNA TSOTIGH  
Red Dirt Journal

They all have a reason for thrift store shopping: to save money, to save the planet or to save themselves from cookie-cutter clothing.

Anna Wong Lowe, 30, shops to save money.

“Although I was one to shop at a thrift store for low cost, the majority of my friends in college went to thrift stores for the vintage vibe,” said Lowe, who will complete her doctorate at the University of Oklahoma this fall.

Originally from San Francisco, Lowe grew up in a lower middle class family and couldn’t afford to buy clothes from department stores.

“Shopping at thrift stores always allowed me to get what I wanted for a reasonable price,” she said.

Having made many purchases at thrift stores and garage sales for 14 years, Lowe said she has evolved from bargain shopping for financial reasons to shopping for the fun of it.

Some of Lowe’s thrifty finds include a knee-length suede coat made by Espirit that set her back \$10. Her turquoise necklace cost \$25, although she said the retail value would be \$250.

Erika Barker, 17, a thrift-store regular in Norman said she is committed to the philosophy of reusing and recycling.

“There are various aspects of my life in which I try to be useful rather than wasteful,” Barker said. “I just decided to add another thing to my list by my clothes.”

It wasn’t until her sophomore year in high school that Barker started advocating for the Earth through her clothing.

“I originally became drawn into the thrift store setting because the clothing was recycled, and I’m a big believer in being resourceful,” Barker said. “The price and the unique styles are just another plus.”

For Nikki Bradley, 15, each thrift store encounter is an adventure to be had. “When you first walk in to a thrift store, it can be a little intimidating because there’s so much to look at,” said Bradley, a resident of Moore. “But if you take your time and look at everything, most times you’ll be surprised.

“It’s also pretty neat because whether we know it or not, each individual piece of clothing has a story behind it, almost like you get to be someone else for a little while.”

Another avid thrift-store shopper is Anisah Hashmi, 19, of Edmond. She said she shops at thrift stores primarily due to her love for fashion.

“I started shopping at thrift stores because I was tired of generic clothing,” Hashmi said. “That’s when I chose to start expressing myself by buying clothes that I felt had potential. Then, I would take them home and alter them to fit my own personal style.”



photo by Dylan Tymes

**HARD TIMES:**

Jane Anoatubby, 16, from Norman, is an employee at Homeland grocery store at 1724 W. Lindsey St. Anoatubby said it can be difficult to find a job during the summer.

# Teens face tougher job market

## As the U.S. copes with the recession, youths battle for employment

**ELYSSA MANN**  
Red Dirt Journal

While many adults are struggling to find and keep jobs in the midst of an economic recession, teens are also finding it more difficult to secure employment.

Tiffany Lugrand, 18, from Norman, has been on the job hunt for two months now.

"It's been every day," Lugrand said of how often she applies for a job. "I'll Google search jobs in Norman within five to seven miles."

Lugrand said she has applied at places such as Target, Embassy Suites and at the YMCA, but hasn't had the opportunity to interview for the positions.

"They're looking for people who are older," she said. "Because most people think that teens are not capable of accomplishing the job."

Joseph McLaughlin, a senior research associate from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, Mass., said it is becoming increasingly difficult for teens to find jobs because managers and business owners are looking for older workers.

"Employers like to hold onto more experienced workers," McLaughlin said. "They are more likely to be hired because they have years of experience and are more responsible. This affects their future ability to get jobs."

In a study prepared in 2008 by McLaughlin and other researchers at Northeastern University, it was found that only 30 percent of today's teens are actually employed. This is a record low since the program began collecting data in 1948 and employment rates are expected to drop even lower for summer 2009.

Now that the recession affects them too, McLaughlin said many teens are making their summer jobs more long-term.

"Most of the kids we have working here are pretty good kids," said Brace Hitchcock, assistant manager of the Homeland grocery store at 1724 W. Lindsey St. in Norman. "And then you have a few that come in and they work for a couple of weeks, and don't

really care for it, not real responsible, or don't last very long."

Many teens are now staying put at their current jobs, for fear of not being able to find employment elsewhere.

"I think I'd have to try really hard because of the economy and all," Julie Chagouri, a 19-year-old from Norman who works for La Baguette at 924 W. Main St. said about trying to find another job.

Hitchcock said his teen employees have also been holding on to their positions longer.

"Most of the kids that are here now working have been here for most of the school year, whereas usually in the past you go by semester," Hitchcock said. "Now it seems they are lasting a bit longer."

Jane Anoatubby, 16, of Norman, has held on to her job for nine months.

"It's pretty stable, I know what hours I'm going to get," said Anoatubby, a cashier at Homeland. "It's a union job so it stays pretty consistent."

But because of the failing economy, more teenagers are being forced to pay unexpected bills. From helping their parents with grocery bills and other payments to paying for things such as transportation and cell phones, the need for teen jobs continues to

rise.

"I need a car, and I'm helping my parents pay for some things right now," said Grace Valliere, an employee at Rusty's Frozen Custard at 2296 W. Main St. in Norman.

Retaining a job is even more important to teens like Anoatubby who support themselves.

"I need to be more careful with my money for the future," she said. "Because I live on my own, money's kind of tight."

For those who remain unemployed, McLaughlin said programs to help teens from lower-income families are being created using stimulus money. These programs will help many teens find jobs in their communities, as well as jobs specifically created by the stimulus packages created by the government earlier this year.

In the meantime, teens like Lugrand are still searching.

"I have to find a job to work for the summer and next school year," she said. "It is better to look two months before because toward the end of June it is very hard to find jobs."

— Jaylen Brewer, Jordan Cook and Dylan Tymes contributed to this story

# Tornado spurs safety concerns

## School campers had difficulties finding shelter during summer twister

LILLIE RONEY

Red Dirt Journal

Chaos erupted in the high-rise Couch dormitory at the University of Oklahoma when about 500 people, including youngsters and adults, rushed for cover after a late-night tornado touched down in Norman, Okla., June 12.

“As far as I know, everyone did what they were supposed to, and we didn’t have any problems,” Elisa Smith, coordinator at the Cate Center, told Red Dirt Journal reporters five days later on behalf of the Housing & Food Services department.

According to participants in the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism program staying on the 11th floor in Couch, that was not the case in the half-hour after the tornado touched down at 10:30 p.m. No damage was reported on campus.

Couch residents, who were attending several summer camps, were instructed to go to designated shelter areas — the basement or the center — core elevator lobbies on floors two through six. But few seemed aware of those locations.

“I was in the shower when I heard the

sirens,” said Jordan Cook, 17, of Moore, Okla., and an OIDJ participant. “I ignored them at first since we live in Tornado Alley. When my counselor came in and started yelling at me, I jumped out and ran down there. But when we got in the basement, the tornado had already passed us.”

Dave Andra, a 22-year meteorologist, said at the National Weather Center in Norman that a tornado warning was issued at 10:24 p.m. and that the small twister touched down six minutes later, which he described as unusually fast.

Warning sirens did not sound in Norman until 10:40 and 10:50 p.m., according to Deputy Fire Chief Jim Bailey, who said those city sirens trigger alarms on campus. On the intercom in Couch, four loud, distinct sounds were broadcast, followed by a voice alerting residents to move to designated areas.

In a blog about the trek from the 11th floor to the basement, OIDJ participant Hillary Nickels wrote: “A few girls came rushing out of the showers. The walk downstairs went rather smoothly, until we hit the sixth floor, where it became mass chaos.

“People were everywhere. Nobody knew where the ‘designated area’ was, so the basement became packed. On the very narrow and congested stairwells, we weren’t sure that we could move closer to the basement.”

Bill Elsen, an OIDJ faculty member, said that as he and a female OIDJ counselor reached the fifth floor, traffic down the stairs was at a standstill.

As they tried to enter the third-floor elevator lobby from the stairs, he said a football camp counselor barred the doorway, yelling, “No girls, no girls,” while a coach ushered players back to their rooms.

Elsen returned to the crowded stairwell in which people were moving in both directions, he said.

In a meeting June 17 with OIDJ reporters, H&FS Facilities Coordinator Sandy Terry said the basement has no set occupancy, adding “there has never been a problem” with the basement becoming too full.

At that meeting, an H&FS spokesman said that Pam Sullivan, summer camp coordinator, distributed Housing & Food informational packets to camp sponsors instructing them on many items, including severe weather precautions.

“We encourage that all of the camp counselors share that information with their group,” H&FS spokeswoman Lauren Royston told the reporters the next day.

“It’s part of their agreement with the university. They are responsible for disseminating the information to their group and making sure that all rules and procedures are adhered to.”

Royston said severe-weather information is posted in each elevator lobby. A spot check of Couch by reporters found many signs pertaining to fire emergencies, during which residents are to evacuate outdoors, but only one regarding designated tornado shelter areas. It was hanging on the basement wall.

“We got lucky,” said Monica Flippin-Wynn, assistant to Professor Ray Chavez, OIDJ director. “Next year, we will make sure that safety information is dispersed to all of the counselors so the students will never have to wonder what to do in an incident like this one.

“However, housing has to understand that when people are nervous and trying to get everyone to a safe place, they aren’t going to stop to pick up a packet of paper and look through it. There need to be some permanent signs and lights explaining what to do — like the fire evacuation signs and lights.”

Housing & Food Services officials welcome e-mail questions and comments regarding safety and security at [hfsafety@ou.edu](mailto:hfsafety@ou.edu), Royston said.

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photo by Kare Adams

**REFLECTING:** Jane Anoatubby talks about the four months she spent at Bridges, a housing program in Norman for teens without homes or families who wish to continue high school. Anoatubby said Bridges helped her get on her feet and take care of herself.

# Homeless teens turn to Bridges

## Norman nonprofit offers housing to area teenagers without a home

**JORDAN HENDRICKS**  
Red Dirt Journal

Nearly a year ago Jane Anoatubby's mother kicked her out of her home.

She was 15 years old, jobless, still in high school and now, without shelter. After a stint living at a friend's house, she turned to a place that would help her through tough times to a more stable life.

She turned to Bridges.

A 22-apartment community located near Norman (Okla.) North High School, Bridges can house 22 students at a time. Formerly known as Independent Living Services for Youth, Bridges is a non-profit organization funded by the United Way, grants and donations.

Program participants range from freshmen in high school to college students, and like many of their peers, they attend Norman high schools or local universities. But unlike their peers, these teens live independently from parents or legal guardians.

Anoatubby lived with her parents until shortly after her 14th birthday, when she thought that "things weren't really right."

"I wanted to leave," she said. "I wasn't really ready for it, but it got to the point where it was unbearable. I have two younger brothers, and our parents basically didn't take care of us. It lasted for about a year, but in the end, I got kicked out."

And for many teens in Norman, this situation isn't unfamiliar. According to a recent report by the City of Norman, about two out of every five of Norman's 600 homeless persons are under the age of 18.

Executive Director of Bridges, Debra Krittenbrink, said there are a number of reasons students would leave their home.

"For some of our students, when they turn 18, their parents just say, 'You're on your own,' but the kids still want to finish high school," she said. "Sometimes the parents

### FAST FACTS

#### What is Bridges?

Bridges is a nonprofit organization that helps high school and college students who are living on their own work toward graduation.

#### Help build Bridges

- Bridges relies on support from people in the community to provide its students with services and supplies. To find out how to help, visit <http://bridgesnorman.org>.

Source: Bridges

themselves are homeless and understand that their kids are better off here. We also have students whose parents kick them out after they find out that they're gay."

Whatever the reason the students reside at Bridges, they might be independent, but they are not alone.

They receive financial assistance for school expenses, medical and dental bills,

baby needs, clothing, furniture, food and even college expenses. They are also supervised and counseled by staff members, including a full-time social worker.

Anoatubby said the staff can be mentors and friends.

"When you live there, they are more than just your case workers," she said. "They're almost like Mom and Dad if you really want them to be. They'll be whatever you really need them to be."

The program also offers a career coach for high school seniors, who mentors the students and provides them with job shadowing opportunities, a college action plan, and emotional support throughout the process.

Since its implementation in 2006, 78 percent of career-coached students went on to higher education, and half of the remaining students found work after high school.

Bridges' requirements include employment, paying sliding-scale rent based on income, maintaining passing grades and attendance, abiding by an 11 p.m. curfew, and being the only resident of their individual

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apartment.

Twenty-year-old Stony Melton graduated from Norman High School after living in the Bridges facility for two years after he was forced to move out of his aunt's house.

"It was hard sometimes," he said. "I had to do all of my homework and couldn't really skip out on anything. I worked pretty much full time from 5 to 10 every day of the week. I made minimum wage, which was \$5.85 at the time, and had to pay rent at \$150 per month."

And although he ultimately had to leave Bridges because he quit his job, Melton looks back upon his experiences nostalgically.

"For about a year it was really all of the same people, so we all became really good friends. We actually put together our own Christmas dinner one time. Everyone made some food and brought it to my house. I still go back and visit sometimes. It's not like there are any hard feelings. They love me there," he said with a chuckle.

Melton now rents his own apartment, works at Pita Pit on Campus Corner and believes that he owes much of his success to Bridges.

"I know now how to get an apartment. I know how to get a job. It makes you learn to do everything on time, like paying your bills," he said.

Anoatubby feels the same.

She stayed at Bridges for four months, but she had to use her bicycle to get to school - a 40-minute ride. But in her time there, she believes that she regrouped and was better prepared for adulthood.

"They taught me a lot of the small things that I needed to know that I didn't really even think about, like getting health care, making sure all of your needs are met. That's the hardest part about being so young on your own," she said.

Today, Anoatubby works at Homeland and lives in an apartment with her boyfriend. Despite her difficult past, she maintains a positive outlook.

"I don't blame my parents for putting me in this situation. I really think it was the best bet for me," she said. "No one could have taken better care of me than I have taken care of myself."

And this is exactly the type of attitude that Krittenbrink hopes to instill in Bridges students.

"I feel so lucky. I learn so much more from them than they learn from me," Krittenbrink said. "A lot of them have awful stories, but that's not what they dwell on. They dwell on where they're going from here. That's an amazing lesson for anyone to learn."

# Youths tackle challenges

## With emancipation comes added responsibilities for teens on their own

ASPEN LAYMAN  
Red Dirt Journal

Two out of five homeless individuals are under the age of 18, according to the City of Norman annual homeless count. Some are runaways and some are recently emancipated and struggling to find work. Stony Multon and Lee Nguyen are examples of teens who have risen above the odds and made it on their own.

Emancipated at age 17, Multon's legal process only took about a month.

"I guess I got lucky," Multon said. "For everyone else it takes about three or four months. We had a couple of interviews, and that was about it until we had to sign the papers."

He said the hardest part was paying the bills and "having to pay everything and not having much extra money left over."

Emancipation cost him about \$150 because he could do without an attorney since his legal guardian was consenting.

Multon knows he made the right decision, and even has a better relationship with his family than before he went through the emancipation process.

"They respect me more now," he said of his aunt, his previous legal guardian.

Paying bills, keeping steady work, and managing a house are not things the average teenager has as priorities, but Multon didn't mind the extra responsibility.

Currently working at the Pita Pit on Campus Corner, Multon recalls his thoughts during his first few months of freedom, "I thought, 'This is a lot harder than I thought it would be.'"

"It made me a stronger person. I know how to do everything now," he said.

However, many teens don't have the resources to turn their lives around legally so some just run away.

Eighteen-year-old Lee Nguyen has been living on his own since his eighth grade year. Lee is one of hundreds of Oklahoma teens who put their adolescent years on fast-forward and face the harsh realities of the adult world.

"My mom wanted me to stay at first. I didn't want to because of family issues with my dad," Nguyen said. "At that point I wanted it all to stop and my dad was fine with just getting me out."

Although moving in with his older brother, Trung, seemed to be the right decision,



photo by Kare Adams

**LOOKING BACK:** Finding a supportive living environment was his goal when he moved into a Bridges apartment, said Stony Multon, who became independent from his family at 17.

Lee was living virtually alone. "(Trung) spent a lot of time at his girlfriend's house in Oklahoma City," Nguyen said.

Nguyen knew he needed to stay positive in order to achieve his goals.

"I learned to be a lot more responsible and particular about things like knowing what I want in life and where I want to go."

Lee is currently living in Moore, Okla., and has high hopes of attending the University of Denver and to one day own his own restaurant.

In 2008, the state of Oklahoma received 65 reports of missing children that were filed as runaway cases. Running away involves many risks, several of which lead to the Juvenile Justice System.

"If a report is filed and the individual is found, they will be taken through the (Juvenile Justice) system," said Jennifer Newell, officer of Community Relations.

She said this is not for the intent of getting the runaway into trouble but to keep tabs on the teen.

"We want to make sure they won't run away again," Newell said. "We want to see what conflict caused the situation. We try to find out if there really is a serious problem with the living environment or if it is

simply a matter of a rebellious teen."

Teens brought to the police station are referred for counseling to help them cope with their situations in a more constructive manner. Counseling is arranged through the Juvenile Intervention Center and is provided by Crossroads Youth Foundation.

Some factors could prevent a teen from leaving a destructive environment.

A lack of resources is one. "Often a child has no place to go," said Carol Behrens, a licensed clinical social worker.

A number of psychological issues can affect a teen that must remain in a troubled home. Their social behavior could change dramatically, sometimes enough to harm their physical and mental health.

"Kids become so stressed that they can't sleep. Their appetite changes and they can't concentrate," Behrens said. Learning to communicate more effectively is a big step in making sure that minimal damage is suffered. Since more Oklahoma teens are becoming homeless, treating them is also becoming a more prominent issue.

"I try to help them focus. What are their goals? What happened to them?" she said. "Finding a safe place to live where they can count on somebody is the key thing."



# Americans lack civic knowledge

## Educators say ignorance imperils democratic process, citizens' liberties

EMILY HOPKINS  
Red Dirt Journal

Though the U.S. government is ruled by and for the people, experts in civics education say the public is frighteningly unaware of how the process truly works.

Only 24 percent of college graduates know that the First Amendment prohibits an official U.S. religion and only 49 percent of Americans can identify the executive, legislative and judicial as the three branches of government, according to the 2008 Intercollegiate Studies Institute civics literacy survey.

"What you don't know really can hurt you," said Mary Jo Baker, a retired social studies teacher from Edmond Memorial High School. "Sometimes people just don't realize the power that is right there at their fingertips and that we're living through a time when they can actually exercise that power."

Baker and other educators blame the lack of sufficient civics education on the 2001 passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Critics say the federal legislation forced schools to focus on fact memorization for standardized tests in math, reading and science instead of teaching social studies in an engaging fashion.

Several organizations, including one founded by actor Richard Dreyfuss, are working to re-establish the importance of civics education in schools.

"The expertise needed to understand Western Enlightenment and civil liberties isn't something we're born with. We have to teach it or it will go away for future generations," Dreyfuss said in a November 2006 interview on the TV show "Real Time with Bill Maher."

Proponents of civics education have their work cut out for them. According to several studies, we the people know more about popular television shows than about the principles that support U.S. democratic ideology.

A 2006 survey found that 41 percent of Americans could name two of the three judges on "American Idol" but only 8 percent could name at least three of their First Amendment freedoms.

One-fourth of Americans could name all three judges and more than one-fifth could name all five members of the fictional cartoon family on "The Simpsons," the McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum

### NEWS QUIZ

## Civics 101

Thousands of immigrants pass the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Naturalization Test each year. Those immigrants taking the test must answer 10 out of 100 possible civics question. If an immigrant is 65 years old or older and has lived in the U.S. for more than 20 years, they must answer 10 out of 20 questions. Here are those 20 questions:

- What is one right or freedom from The First Amendment?
- Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.
- What is the economic system in the United States?
- Why is Martin Luther King Jr. an important figure in U.S. history?
- Name one branch or part of the government.
- What is the capital of the United States?
- What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?
- Where is the Statue of Liberty?
- Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators now?
- Why does the flag have 50 stars?
- In what month do we vote for the president?
- When do we celebrate Independence Day?
- What is the name of the current U.S. president?
- What is the capital of your state?
- What are the two major political parties in the United States?
- What is one responsibility that is only for U.S. citizens?
- How old do citizens have to be to vote for the president?
- When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?
- Who was the first U.S. president?
- What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?

Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



found.

In contrast, the museum discovered that just one in 1,000 people, or one-tenth of 1 percent, could name all five First Amendment freedoms.

"Civics, and the First Amendment in particular, covers basic rights that protect us and that all citizens need to be aware of. If we don't have basic rights like freedom of the press and freedom of speech, then we don't have a true democracy," said Rita Geiger, a frequent lecturer on the First Amendment.

Geiger, a retired director of social studies

and foreign languages for Norman Public Schools, is one such person who points the finger at No Child Left Behind for the decline of civics being taught in school.

"Because of its sole focus on reading and math, the Act is a greatly significant factor in the lack of meaningful civics education programs. The situation is not all gloom and doom, but the repeal of the Act would certainly bring about a revised focus on civics," she said.

If a subject isn't covered by the tests required by the Act, then it typically isn't being properly taught, Geiger said. The

result is that students regard civics as being monotonous and useful only for passing an end-of-instruction test rather than for becoming the informed and competent citizens they should be.

Baker said she always thought students would know more about civics before taking her Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. government and politics course.

"But that certainly wasn't always the case," the recently retired social studies teacher said. "I expected them to be more politically astute, but the fact of the matter is that at entry level, between half and a third of the kids didn't have a working knowledge of civics."

Students aren't typically required to know civics for standardized tests. Roughly 3.8 million students combined take the SAT and ACT each year, yet neither asks a single question about social studies.

Nationwide, about 42,000 students take the AP government and politics exam each year. According to College Board, the nonprofit organization that administers the test, the average score is a grade of 2.1 on a five-point scale. Most universities, including the University of Oklahoma, only accept scores of three or higher.

As Baker sees it, the nature of democracy calls for the peoples' active voice in government, but that's impossible if people don't know how government works.

The Dreyfuss Initiative, a non-profit corporation, was formed by the actor in 2006 to "revive, elevate and enhance the teaching of civics in the United States of America." One goal of the initiative is to create and distribute materials and curriculum to teach civics, or political power, as Dreyfuss prefers to call it.

"This is the greatest system of governance ever created. It's the only one that requires some involvement of the civic body," Dreyfuss said on "Huckabee" shortly before the November presidential election.

"It is the best answer to the question of how people can live together in some sense of decency, freedom, opportunity and mobility. There's never been a better answer than the United States," Dreyfuss said. "We don't know that anymore. We don't teach it to our children. The rest of the world does (know it). That's why they want to come here."

However, some current Oklahoma high school students do recognize the need for civics to play a bigger role in the educational system.

"If you don't know your rights, anybody can just push you around," said Jordan Hendricks, an Edmond North High School senior and participant in the 2009 Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism.

"Whether or not someone comprehends civics can truly be the difference between freedom and manipulation," she said.

# Horses teach riders to walk

## Riding center helps adults, children with disabilities work on mobility

ASHLEY MONTGOMERY  
Red Dirt Journal

Darcy Harrison had difficulty walking before she began learning to ride a horse in February.

Now, the tiny 5-year-old girl runs with ease and is even learning sign language. Her mother, Kathy Harrison, credits Darcy's success to the dedication of the volunteers at the Coffee Creek Riding Center for Therapeutic Horsemanship in Edmond, Okla.

Coffee Creek is one of 700 such centers for the handicapped in the United States. It annually provides free therapeutic riding to about 155 "children and adults with a wide range of disabilities," according to the center's Web site.

Although donations have decreased in recent months, instructor Linda Cloud isn't worried. "We just pray," she said.

Class sizes are limited, and there's a waiting list. But Melissa Faulkner says the wait was worth it for her son, Owen.

Owen's first lesson two weeks ago did not go well.

"At first, I had to hold him, and he'd scream and cry. But now, he looks forward to riding the horses," Faulkner said.

Some of the children, like Owen, get over their screaming and crying as they continue through the program, and some do not. Becky Lidia said she sometimes has to go into a room so her 5-year-old son, Chaney, won't see her from the riding arena.

As the children ride, parents are encouraged to wave and shout their names in support.

"The parents must have a lot of strength and patience to work with these children, and I'll give them a high five for that one," said Lucille Fancy. She and her daughter, Joy Milligan, founded the center in 1977.

Fancy said children progress in their own way.

"It is an individual thing," she said. "It really gives the kids a wonderful feeling of just being there."

At age 89, Fancy still teaches riding lessons at the center. She grew up on the 80 acres at Coffee Creek Road and Broadway where the center is located.

Classes are taught year-round, following the same schedule as local schools. Summer classes are in the morning. During the school year, classes start at 11:30 a.m. and continue through the day.

The center is funded by unsolicited gifts



photo by Shontel Mousseau

**CALMING INFLUENCE:** A Coffee Creek participant, Ali, calms his horse before his ride.



photo by Shontel Mousseau

**BEHIND THE SCENES:** Volunteers at Coffee Creek schedule the day's rides.

and donations from organizations, businesses and individuals. It accepts designated donations through the United Way and applies for grants to pay for food, toys and other items.

Katelyn Fultz is thankful that Coffee Creek offers free therapeutic riding to children such as her daughter.

"I was happy that they provide an environment for children with disabilities," Fultz said. "In other situations, I'm pretty much always turned away. But here, we are

welcomed with open arms."

During a recent class, parents credited the center for making their children's lives better.

Linda Cloud, an 11-year instructor at Coffee Creek, saw one of her daughters benefit from therapeutic riding at the center. She graduated from college with a GPA of 3.7 and runs her own non-profit for children with disabilities.

"Sending her to Coffee Creek made a huge difference," Cloud said.



photo by Shontel Mousseau

**HAPPY TRAILS:** Program participant Chaney, 5, looks forward to riding the horses, his mother, Becky Lidia, said.



**MOUNT UP:** Volunteers and instructors begin the therapeutic rides in the riding center.

photo by Shontel Mousseau



**GEAR UP:** Riders become familiar with all the gear at Coffee Creek Riding Center.

photo by Shontel Mousseau



photo by Shontel Mousseau

**OPEN SPACES:** Horses at the Coffee Creek Riding Center graze on the 80-acre ranch when the day is done.



**RESTING UP:** Coffee Creek volunteer, Hannah, walks a horse to the pasture after its daily ride.

photo by Shontel Mousseau



photo by Jasmine Davis

**VIRTUAL WORLD:**

Kerry Lowery watches his avatar, Sojurn Rossini, as he prepares to play a concert on Second Life.

# Call him Mr. Lowery or Rossini

## Student plays concerts in real life and in 3D world of 'Second Life'

**KARLEA MARTIN**  
Red Dirt Journal

Kerry Lowery, meet Sojurn Rossini. Oh, wait, you already have.

Lowery, 33, is a University of Oklahoma senior studying Broadcasting & Electronic Media. He is also Rossini, a musician who earns money in the virtual world of Second Life.

"Everything that happens in the real world can basically happen in the virtual world," Lowery explained in an interview before inviting student reporters to his "office," which is actually the larger of two bedrooms in his rented home in Norman.

There, Lowery becomes Rossini, his avatar, a cartoon-like image in the 3D world of Second Life where users use voice and text on the Internet to chat and interact socially. Second Life is a way, he said, for people who have trouble socializing "to become extroverted."

In his 10-by-12-foot bedroom, Lowery sat, guitar in hand, before two flat-screen monitors, one larger than the other, sitting side by side on a table. He navigated the virtual world with a cursor that slid from one screen to the other as he eyed two chat boxes on the big screen and a tiny box nearby measuring sound levels.

A powerful computer, which he built by hand, hummed at his left.

Lowery was prepping for his 4 p.m. musical performance, one of his eight weekly shows, that would take him into Second Life as Rossini. On the big screen, his avatar strode into a club that Lowery said had been created by a friend. At a touch of Lowery's mouse, Rossini whirled 360 degrees.

In concert, Lowery said, Rossini attracts other avatars, people who fill the club seats as they sign into Second Life and join the crowd.

At each venue where his avatar plays, Lowery earns virtual dollars that translate to real-world currency. His screen also depicts a jar into which his audience can deposit tips. Lowery said about 50 people play music in Second Life for a living.

The only restrictions in his Second Life world, he said, are that "you have to be 18 and no gambling (is allowed)." Linden Labs, the San Francisco-based maker of Second

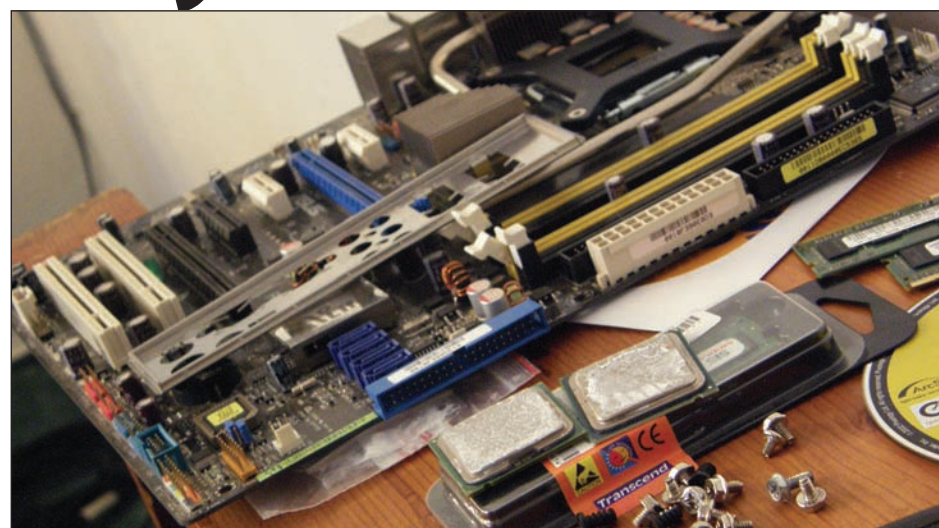


photo by Jasmine Davis

**ELECTRONIC WHIZ:** To power his Second Life concerts, Lowery builds his own computers.

Life, also advertises its Teen Second Life program for ages 13-17.

Lowery said that he has played on Second Life for about two years and that about 500 people make music there. Perhaps 200 of them do so more than once a week, he added.

His avatar's first name was inspired, he said, by Sojourner Truth, a former slave

who became a women's rights activist in 19th century. "I wanted to be original, so I misspelled the first name," Lowery said. The surname was assigned by Linden Labs.

Lowery also explained a real-life concern. His grade in a recent OU photography class was a B.

"Ruined my 4.0," he said. "But I deserved it."



photo by Will Massie

**GOING BIG:** While many teenagers and young adults train without the use of steroids, some turn to the drug to increase their strength and size.

# Seeking a silent edge

## Steroids scandals fail to deter usage among students looking to bulk up

WILL MASSIE AND KAYLA JACKSON  
Red Dirt Journal

From some of the biggest names in professional sports all the way to middle school students, performance-enhancing anabolic steroids are reshaping the way athletes look and the way the games are played.

While the transformation from skin and bones to bulk and brawn across the U.S. is hard to quantify statistically, steroids are the talk of the campus as younger and younger users look for a silent edge, whether it's to earn a scholarship or impress their peers.

"You see big guys in the gym and they become your idols. So you take steroids, and within a few weeks they want to be your friends, and girls are looking at you more,"

said OU Senior Dustin Eastin, a University of Oklahoma student and a workout warrior.

And, according to Mr. Michael Bembem, a professor of health and exercise science and exercise physiology at the University of Oklahoma, "steroids are slowly trickling down even in to middle schools these days."

Although the negative consequences are sometimes severe, the positive effects often are dramatic.

"That's the number one problem with steroids: they work," Mike Roberts, a physical trainer working on his doctorate at OU, said. "They cause huge increases in power output and forced development."

As an example, the recent "Steroid Era" in baseball produced home runs in record numbers. While scorn has been heaped on the likes of Manny Ramirez, Roger Clemens and Barry Bond for their alleged connection to steroids, it also may have reinforced the belief that the risk is worth the reward.

Professional athletes aren't the only consumers of anabolic steroids, a synthetic derivative of testosterone that artificially enhances the growth of muscles with increased physical activity and in some cases

### DID YOU KNOW

#### Steroids abuse

Steroids are often in the news but rarely do people know how steroids users take the drug.

- Steroids users take the drug orally, inject it into their muscles or rub it on their skin.
- Steroids users often take the drug in two or more ways, called "stacking."
- Steroids users take the drug in cycles of 6 to 12 weeks, a process called "pyramiding."

Source: National Drug Intelligence Center

may improve strength up to 200 percent.

"I think pressure is causing high school athletes to use steroids because they want to be highly recruited," said OU student Jasmine Hartman, 19.

Despite increased testing for steroids used at the high school level, it remains difficult to quantify how many high school students

are turning to anabolic steroids.

According to a 2002 study by The Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation, about 2.5 percent of all seniors in high school had used steroids.

To stem the use, a number of athletic organizations have adopted stringent testing procedures.

In Texas, the University Interscholastic League, a sports governing body, implemented a statewide random testing program affecting student-athletes in grades 9 through 12, regardless of sport, gender or participation.

Minnesota, Michigan and Texas are among the states where lawmakers also are considering new laws and policies regarding steroid use.

With law enforcement cracking down on steroids, production of the drug has started up in small homemade labs with the raw substances often imported via the black market, experts say.

Despite efforts to quell their usage, illegal steroids may be easier to obtain than marijuana.

"Anabolic steroids like HGH are easy. People get them from the internet, doctors, and even from Mexico," said OU student Lynn Barnett.

Steroids also pose some physical side effects, such as hormone imbalances and reduced sperm count, and can lead to an emotional dependency.

Someone taking steroids might see a change in their body within the first couple of weeks, particularly if they have an addictive personality, said Dr. Seethal Madhavarapu, a specialist in primary care sports medicine at the Oklahoma Sports & Orthopedics Institute in Moore, Okla.

"If kids knew the consequences of steroids they would be able to make a more educated decision about their choices," said David White, an OU football coach.

White also says steroids are a form of cheating that makes the playing field uneven.

"Anything giving you a secret edge over your opponent is cheating, and I think steroids fit that category," White said.

There are alternatives to building muscle mass and increasing performance without the negative side effects, medical experts say. One of them is to take creatine, which is becoming a popular muscle gain supplement.

"It helps build up energy stores in your muscle," Madhavarapu said. "It gives your muscle more energy and decreases recovery time after work out. People do worry about becoming dehydrated. I have not seen any study yet that has said it will absolutely happen."

Steroids don't always improve physical performance, Madhavarapu warned. "From the studies I've seen, there have been no studies showing that HGH actually changes performance," he said.

When asked if steroids should ever be used for non-medical reasons, he replied: "As far as just for performance and athletics, no, there is no reason to use them."



**BOYHOOD DREAM:** Royce Huffman and his son Trace sit in the RedHawks dugout after batting practice.

photo by Jordann Wiltfong

# Keeping the dream alive

## 10-season stint fails to discourage first baseman's goal to play in majors

**KYLE THEDERAHN**  
Red Dirt Journal

Veteran minor leaguer Royce Huffman has more than 4,300 professional at-bats but is still waiting to step to the plate for the first time in the Major Leagues.

"It's easy for me to be positive," said Huffman, a first baseman for the Oklahoma City RedHawks. "How many guys get to play professional baseball for a living? You never want to think negative. If you don't believe that you're good enough to be a Major Leaguer then you shouldn't be here."

At 32, Huffman is in rare company as

one of 10 Pacific Coast League players age 30 and older who haven't been to the "big show."

In 10 seasons, Huffman has played more than 1,190 games for eight minor league teams and four organizations, and has an impressive .294 career batting average.

This is Huffman's first season with the Texas Rangers organization and the opportunity has fueled his desire.

"I've always been influenced by fans," Huffman said. "They drive me to compete and continue to get better. Oklahoma City fans are extremely passionate, and I do whatever I can to encourage them. And they do what they can to encourage me."

Huffman played baseball at Texas Christian University and was drafted by the Houston Astros in the 12th round of the 1999 amateur entry draft.

"I was excited about being drafted, especially since I was going to a local team," Huffman said. "As a Houston boy, being able to play for the Astros was an amazing

thing."

From 1999 to 2006, Huffman made stops in rookie ball at Martinsville, Va., in Class A at Kissimmee, Fla., Class AA at Round Rock, Texas, and Class AAA in New Orleans.

He was signed by San Diego in 2007 and played at the Padres' Triple-A affiliate, the Portland Beavers, where he hit .261 with 31 doubles.

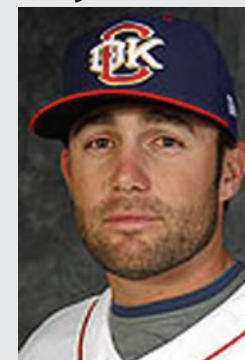
In 2008, he played for the Charlotte Knights of the International League, the Triple-A affiliate of the Chicago White Sox, where he hit .259 and led the team with 26 doubles.

The Rangers kept his dream alive by signing him before the start of this season.

"I'm glad to be here because in Charlotte I wasn't an everyday player, and that was something I wasn't used to. When I did play, I tried to do too much," Huffman said. "Now that I'm here, I know that if I go 0-4, I'll have four more chances the next day to get it done."

### BIO IN BRIEF

## Royce Huffman



**Birthday:** Jan. 11, 1977  
**College:** Texas Christian University  
**Position:** First base  
**Bats:** Right  
**Throws:** Right

# Announcer tackles three sports

## Sports broadcaster gives play-by-play for horse racing, hockey, baseball

JORDANN WILTFONG  
Red Dirt Journal

Jim Byers is a voice for many seasons.

In his unconventional way, he has made himself known as a play-by-play announcer at the horse track, the ballpark, and the hockey rink.

The unusual combination reflects Byers' wide range of sports knowledge and his knack for preparation.

"You have to keep your head in the game," said Byers, who now broadcasts games for the Oklahoma City RedHawks and Oklahoma City Blazers. "I never really had a problem mixing up the lingo, they're separate enough. But learning how to do each sport has its own tricks."

Byers says races at the track "unfold like innings" and that hockey is "a 60-minute mistake" because the game is just nothing but mistakes being made.

Baseball, he says, is the toughest sport to do well. The challenge involves "keeping up with the pace, the schedule, the grind of doing it every single day and keeping your interest level up and keeping the broadcast moving along and interesting."

Byers became interested in broadcasting his senior year at San Diego State University and took the first professional announcing job that came along, which was at the horse track.

"These jobs are rare enough that if you can get a play-by-play job doing something, even if it's not your absolute specialty, take it," Byers said.

Byers' race track announcing experience includes stints at Hollywood Park in Los Angeles and at Remington Park in Oklahoma City.

While he was announcing at Remington Park, Byers volunteered to do play-by-play during the middle innings the first year Oklahoma City started playing at Bricktown in 1999. It allowed radio listeners to become familiar with him and helped him get his foot in the door.

"I worked for 11 years at Remington Park, broadcasting horse races," Byers said. "I had a pretty good background in broadcasting and was able to come over [to baseball]."

The next season, the main RedHawks' play-by-play radio announcer left and Byers got the job. He said he was lucky to be hired because most baseball play-by-play announcers have to work their way up the system. Since then, he has been covering nearly every game, home and away.



photo by Will Massie

"Baseball is different than all the other sports, it's a whole different world," Byers said. "In other sports, the action is pulling you along, you're just up there trying to keep track. In baseball you're really pushing and driving the broadcast. You always have to keep your eyes on the field."

Unlike many commentators, Byers doesn't possess a "signature call," but he still knows how to capture the moment.

"I just try to be factual, as dramatic as possible, without being too dramatic, and just concentrate on what's happening," he said. "I learned from [John Brooks, long-time Blazers' announcer,] a lot about how

passionate a broadcaster can be about his team without stepping into being a complete homer."

Byers said it is important to care about the players on the team and the product that is being put on the field. "You have to have respect for your league but you can present the games, knowing that your fans are listening mainly for what they can hear about their team," he said.

For some, going from sport to sport might get confusing, but Byers has found a way to make the transition as smooth as possible. He says that how well you prepare for the game will determine how well you

broadcast the game. "The better and more experienced you get, the smoother you get," he said.

On an average game day, he and his partner, Adam Marco, spend at least one hour preparing for the game. Byers said preparation also helps commentators keep up with the schedule, the pace of the game and the daily grind.

He said that in everything "you're exposed to a lot of potential errors" so it is important to be prepared.

"Everything's better when you win," Byers said. "But when the team is losing, try to find the positives."

### TALKING SPORTS:

Jim Byers, a play-by-play announcer at a horse track, a ballpark and a hockey rink, says he has no trouble moving from sport to sport: "I never really had a problem mixing up the lingo, they're separate enough. But learning how to do each sport has its own tricks."

## Participant profiles



### KARE ADAMS

Being adopted is something that sets Kare Adams apart. She was born to a Caucasian mother and African American father, who is reportedly from Jamaica. Adams never knew her biological father but her mixed heritage has opened her eyes to different cultures. She will be a senior at Norman High School, in Norman, Okla., where she hopes to be the photo editor of her yearbook staff. Adams will continue being involved in the global awareness club which explores different cultures through food, history and experience. If she could visit any place, Adams said she would go to Jamaica in a heartbeat. "I love reggae music and the tropical environment," she said. Adams is interested in writing and hopes to continue it in college, either at OU or the University of California, Los Angeles.

— By Summayah Anwar

### SUMMAYAH ANWAR

Summayah Anwar is like most other 17-year-old girls. She likes to read, scrap book and decorate cakes, and she enjoys driving around town. What sets her apart from most American teenagers is her religion. "It's not hard being Muslim unless you make it hard. You just can't worry about what everybody thinks," she said. With an optimistic outlook on life, she tries not to focus on some of the discrimination that takes place. Instead of dwelling on other people's negative comments and judgments, she simply tells herself that people are misinformed about her culture or already have judged her based on her appearance. After graduation from Episcopalian Casady Private School, she will be attending college at the University of Oklahoma and plans to study journalism.

— By Kare Adams



### JAYLEN BREWER

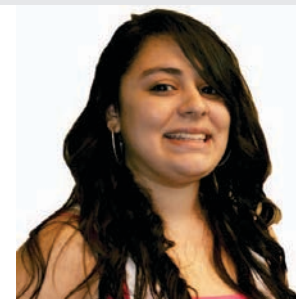
Jaylen Brewer, from Pine Ridge, S.D., is a quiet yet outgoing person. Though these are contradictory traits, they define her. This soon-to-be junior is involved in basketball and golf at Pine Ridge High School and lives and breathes sports. "I can watch ESPN all day," Brewer said. Her love for basketball also sparks her love for the Los Angeles Lakers and her favorite player on the team is Kobe Bryant. When Brewer graduates from high school, she wants to attend South Dakota State University to become a registered nurse. Brewer also loves reading. Brewer enjoys reading books by S.E. Hinton and the Twilight saga by Stephenie Meyer. "I like Hinton because she gives you an idea of how it was in the past," Brewer said.

— By Alexandria Brown

### ALEXANDRIA BROWN

Alexandria "Lexi" Brown, 16, is outgoing and loves art. She is a senior at MacArthur High School, which is located in Lawton, Okla. Lexi is involved in student council, yearbook, and her school newspaper. After high school she plans on attending the University of Texas and staying involved in writing. Brown considers her family and God the most important things to her. "They are always there for me, that's how I was raised," said Brown. This former Mariachi band member has a passion for music. She can also play the guitar. While Brown loves all music, she especially likes rock and Spanish and her favorite band is Camila. She one day hopes to travel the world and help others. In her spare time she enjoys family get-togethers.

— By Jaylen Brewer



### JORDAN COOK

Jordan Cook describes herself as a "spontaneous" 17-year-old who will be a senior at Southmoore High School in Moore, Okla. She has lived in Oklahoma City since moving from Hampton, Va., four years ago. Jordan plays volleyball, runs track and is girls basketball manager. She participates in Link Crew, a high school transition program; the Fellowship of Christian Athletes; yearbook and newspaper; the Student Council; and Honors Society. Cook enjoys scrapbooking, texting and traveling, has an obsession with coffee and recycled clothing, and hopes to write a novel about teenage suicide. Her biggest fear is that her friends will forget her after high school and "a fear of the unknown," Cook said. She hopes to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and major in journalism.

— By Jasmine Davis

### JASMINE DAVIS

When spotting Jasmine Davis you are bound to notice her cell phone in hand. She is never without it. One of four children, 16-year-old Davis is native to Oklahoma and will be a junior this fall at Santa Fe South Charter School in Oklahoma City. She is involved with leadership, newspaper, yearbook, volleyball and soccer. Her mother is the drive behind most of her decisions because she encourages Davis to take on many interests. Outside of high school, Davis is an active blogger and a Ballet Folklorico dancer, which is a Mexican dance where ruffled dresses are worn. She performs at various events and celebrations. Although Davis remains indecisive about her college choice, she applied for the OIJD workshop because she plans to pursue journalism. If she could be any superhero, Davis would pick Cat Woman because she can get away with many things.

— By Jordan Cook



### CARMEN FORMAN

Carmen Malysa Forman is a 17-year-old Norman native who doesn't love the "Twilight" book series. She prefers Joseph Heller's "Catch-22" because it has interesting characters and a great story line. "It kept me laughing," she says. Forman chooses not to follow the usual teen trends. She shops at thrift stores and plays classic rock on her Zune. She has traveled to Hawaii and Alaska. She says the most important aspect of her life is her Jewish faith. In the fall, she will be a senior at Norman (Okla.) North High School and editor in chief of the school newspaper. She wants to earn a journalism degree at the University of Missouri.

— By Da'Rae Friday



## Participant profiles



### DA'RAE FRIDAY

Da'Rae Friday is a Broken Arrow (Okla.) High School junior who credits African American reporter Soledad O'Brien for her love of journalism. This CNN special correspondent is Friday's favorite journalist, her inspiration and idol. Her hopes to pursue a career in broadcast journalism match her outgoing and colorful personality. When she's not preoccupied with her duties as the "controversial columnist" for her school's newspaper, Friday enjoys experimenting with clothes at her job as an associate at JCPenney. She gets personally offended when people call her crazy and lives by the motto "I'm not crazy, I'm unique." The Declaration of Independence holds great meaning for her. She believes in the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and believes that no one can take those away.

— By Carmen Forman

### JORDAN HENDRICKS

Jordan Hendricks is no rookie to journalism. You may find her writing at school, in closets and on airplanes. The 16-year-old writes for various newspapers, magazines and just fun. Hendricks attends Edmond North High School in Edmond, Okla., where she will be a senior this fall. Her hunger for news started in middle school and continues today with her position as a page editor in the Edmond high schools' newspaper called The Ruff Draft. Hendricks participates in the National Honor Society, the Spanish Club and is the Key Club president. Hendricks plays piano, acoustic guitar and speaks Spanish fluently.

— By Jordan Cook



### NITA HOOTCH

Wuanita "Nita" Hootch, an 18-year-old from Anchorage, Alaska, is a journalism veteran. She began four years ago as a member of the Media Educational Development Institute of Alaska, a program training students in multimedia production. "I love doing broadcast because I get to edit and produce the videos after getting a great face-to-face interview with new and interesting people," she said. Hootch plans to attend the University of Alaska, Anchorage, to pursue a career as a broadcast journalist. As a full-blood Yup'ik Eskimo, Hootch participates in native sports competitions, including the Native Youth Olympics and the World Eskimo Indian Olympics.

— By Emily Hopkins

### EMILY HOPKINS

Edmond North High senior Emily Hopkins developed a love for writing when she was a child and has been writing ever since. After taking a journalism class as a freshman in her Edmond, Okla, high school, Hopkins joined her school newspaper's staff and learned to write and edit stories and design pages. During her junior year, Hopkins was the paper's editor-in-chief. Hopkins applied to the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism to hone her journalism skills and produce news stories for television, the Web and print while at the workshop. Hopkins plans to attend the University of Oklahoma where she will double major in journalism and psychology.

— By Nita Hootch



### KAYLA JACKSON

Kayla Jackson, a 16-year-old senior at Bartlesville, (Okla.) High School, is one girl you will never see warming a bench. She loves writing short stories and reads a book a day to hone her writing skills. She also loves being with her friends doing what she does best: playing basketball. "I love sports - basketball is my passion." Even after being diagnosed with Crohn's disease, her drive for excellence never faltered. Jackson relies on family values and her basketball team to help her through tough times. "My team really stuck by me," she said. She aspires to attend Duke University as a journalism/broadcasting major and eventually land a job as a sports analyst for ESPN. With this combination of journalism and sports, she feels she is well on her way to making her dreams a reality.

— By Aspen Layman

### ASPEN LAYMAN

A lot of teenagers spend Friday nights at the mall watching a movie with friends. But Aspen Layman is more likely to be found in karate school, her family's gathering place. A junior at Southmoore High School in Moore, Okla., Layman has studied martial arts for five years and now instructs other students, ages 6 to 16. Layman also devotes a lot of time to her school newspaper as editor of the Sabercat Legend, where she demonstrates a passion for taking ordinary stories and captivating her peers with her creative writing. Layman's lifelong attachment to the University of Oklahoma - she's been watching the OU football team play since she was 2 - is expected to play a big role in her future. "We had season tickets to every home game," said Layman, who plans to attend OU and major in journalism or psychology.

— By Kayla Jackson



### ELYSSA MANN

On Jan. 2, 1992, Elyssa Mann was born blonde-haired and blue-eyed. She will be a senior at Southmoore High School, in Moore, Okla., where she joined the Sabercat Legend newspaper last year as an editor. She would like to attend Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., or Cameron University in Lawton, Okla. In her free time, she loves to read Oscar Wilde, in whose book "The Importance of Being Earnest" she found her favorite quote: "The truth is never pure and rarely simple." Although her favorite author is Wilde, her favorite book is "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen. While reading, she has to be snuggled under her favorite periwinkle blanket. Mann hopes that her senior year will not start the same way as her junior year when she was the first student to fall down the school steps.

— By Karlea Martin

## Participant profiles



### KARLEA MARTIN

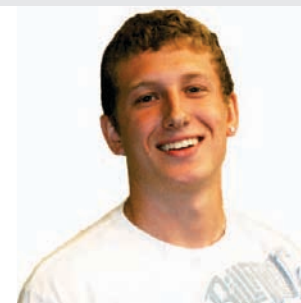
Karlea Martin is a junior at Pathways Middle College High School in south Oklahoma City. Her biggest goal in life is to become a special education teacher to "help kids that no one else takes the time to help." Even though journalism doesn't coincide with her life goals, it keeps her close to her mother and enables her to do what she loves — write. In her free time, Martin is an avid dancer, and participates in ballet, point, tap, jazz, modern and hip-hop. Even though she plans to teach, if ever accepted, she would go to The Juilliard School for dance.

— By Elyssa Mann

### WILL MASSIE

Will Massie wants to major in journalism and minor in business at the University of Oklahoma. The 17-year-old senior from Flower Mound High School just outside of Dallas loves writing and editing. Being opinion editor for his school newspaper carried a lot of responsibility and required a lot of time. His first passion was playing soccer. Massie spent last year playing for a professional club in an Argentina farm league. Unfortunately, knee injuries forced him to abandon his dream of playing professional soccer. His big dream now would be to open a car shop. He loves rebuilding cars and American muscle cars. "I just became obsessed with them," he said. Massie doesn't have the money or time to completely rebuild cars; however, he likes working on his Corvette. Massie also plays the bass, ukulele and guitar.

— By Ashley Montgomery



### ASHLEY MONTGOMERY

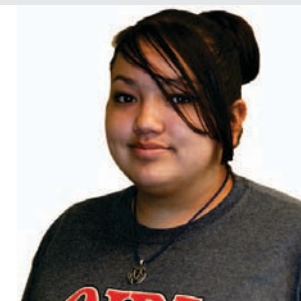
At 15, Ashley Montgomery is the youngest participant at the 2009 Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism Workshop but don't let age fool you. For starters, she is an accomplished ballet dancer and a thrill-seeking sky diver. Montgomery also dreams of becoming a songwriter and hopes to use her passion for poetry to improve today's music industry. Although she is musically talented, she is also musically picky. Hard Rock and metal, she believes, "are just too much," and she distances herself from them by finding her comfort zone in hip-hop, light rock and pop. Her career dream is to become a magazine editor and a journalist. Montgomery plans on preparing for her professional career by attending the University of North Carolina.

— By Will Massie

### SHONTEL MOUSSEAU

Although growing up with four sisters is hectic at times, Shontel Mousseau, 17, always finds a way to include time for herself. She enjoys reading to become lost in a world different from her own. Mousseau considers cooking her forte and once thought she might own a restaurant. To embrace her Native American culture, she participates in fancy shawl dancing, which "is like a powwow ... a lot of steps and twirling," Mousseau said. Shontel graduated from Pine Ridge (S.D) High School on the Lakota reservation. She plans to attend the University of South Dakota in the fall and hopes to major in biology and minor in journalism. "I want to be a pediatrician, and I think that having the combination of biochemistry and journalism will be a great help when it comes to the paperwork," Mousseau said.

— By Hillary Nickels



### HILLARY NICKELS

Hillary Nickels was inspired by her older brother, who has cerebral palsy, to become an occupational therapist. The 17-year-old believes she can be good at it because she's watched his therapies all her life. "I decided in the sixth grade that this is what I wanted to do, and so far, I've stuck with it," she said. Nickels will be a senior at Bartlesville (Okla.) High School in the fall. She'll once again be an editor for her school yearbook. Nickels also works at Living Word and as a receptionist for an optometrist. She likes to paint, take pictures and play the piano. Nickels plans to attend the University of Oklahoma to major in occupational therapy.

— By Shontel Mousseau

### SARAH PIPPENGER

Sarah "Pippi" Pippenger, 17, exceeds expectations and loves to learn, especially about science. Books on steam engines and drag racing filled her childhood library. She debated with her grandpa and dad about politics and nuclear warfare. "Scooby Doo" is her favorite show. Pippenger graduated from Bartlesville (Okla.) High School where she was active with Excelsior, school yearbook, and The Fourth Estate newspaper. As a senior, she was named class clown. Not only does Pippenger have an outgoing personality, she also has a deep passion to achieve as many skills as possible. "I don't like anything being handed to me," Pippenger said. "I work for what I want to get." Pippenger will attend the University of Oklahoma in the fall to study journalism.

— By Lillie Roney



### LILLIE RONEY

Sixteen-year-old Lillie Roney from Edmond (Okla.) North High School has been passionate about journalism since she joined her school newspaper, the Ruff Draft, during her freshman year. She believes her dedication as sports editor and her continued involvement in media classes will prepare her to major in journalism in college, either at Yale or the University of Oklahoma. During her freshman year, Roney participated in a mission trip to Arkansas to aid tornado victims, which inspired her as a humanitarian. "It touched me to know that even though all we did was paint and pick up trash, it meant the world to the people we helped," Roney said. With her activism and journalism as driving forces in her life, Roney still finds time to watch all seven seasons of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," her guilty pleasure.

— By Sarah Pippenger

## Participant profiles



### ALEX SCHOENEMAN

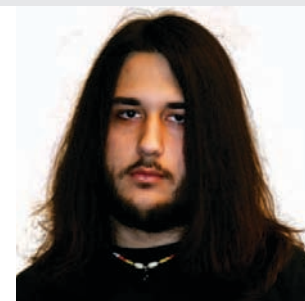
Alex Schoeneman, 17, is all about the environment and spends a lot of her time promoting eco-friendly habits. "I am the traditional hippie. I love peace and hate anything that doesn't better the environment," said Schoeneman, a senior at Westmoore High School in Moore, Okla. She has made a statement by unplugging her TV to conserve energy and by becoming a vegetarian. Schoeneman also has strong political views and doesn't believe in war unless it's a last resort. She has taken her spiritual fight for the environment to school, where she is the captain of the environmental club and helped start the school recycling program. "I really appreciate being able to work with the school to better the environment. It really makes me feel good," Schoeneman said.

— By Kyle Thederahn

### KYLE THEDERAHN

For Yukon (Okla.) High School junior Kyle Thederahn, heavy metal is more than a genre of music he listens to. "I like the whole 'metal-head' way of thinking," Thederahn said. "It's amazing and it's my life." When he's not busy researching metal bands, finding out about upcoming shows and creating his own Slipknot masks at home, Thederahn, 15, finds time to go bowling. While this self-proclaimed metal-head - and bass guitarist - aspires to be a musician, Thederahn loves to write. He will join his school's newspaper staff in the fall.

— By Alex Schoeneman



### JENNA TSOTIGH

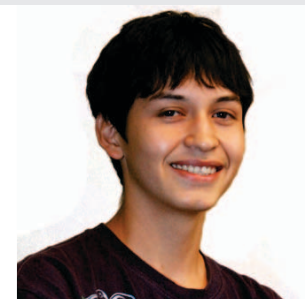
On the outside, Jenna Tsofogh appears to be a typical teenager, preparing for her senior year at Norman High School, in Norman, Okla. However, if you take a closer look, you will see that she has Kiowa and Cherokee blood running through her veins. "Growing up in Norman and being part of the Native American community has made me more open minded to situations and people," Tsofogh said. She has demonstrated a keen interest in her culture by getting involved in her community and by joining the Native American Club at her high school. She also is a member of Global Awareness Club, the Schools for Schools Club and the school yearbook. After she has finished leaving her unique mark on Norman High, she plans to attend Oklahoma City University and possibly major in journalism.

— By Jordann Wiltfong

### DYLAN TYMES

Dylan Tymes traveled 785 miles from his hometown of Pine Ridge, S.D., all the way to Norman, Okla., to participate in this year's OIDJ workshop in hopes of gaining knowledge of journalism. Tymes came from the Pine Ridge Reservation as a representative of the Native American population, which makes up 8 percent of South Dakota's total. Pine Ridge is a community of 3500 square miles and about 30,000 people, all connected to his tribes, which are Lakota, Oglala, and Sioux. Tymes is the oldest of four children. He has two brothers and one sister. Tymes will be a senior this fall and aspires to serve as the student body president of his high school in the town of Pine Ridge. Tymes has been involved in basketball and track and field. This coming year will be his fourth year to participate in Student Council at Pine Ridge High School.

— By Jenna Tsofogh



### JORDANN WILTFONG

Jordann Wiltfong is a sports fanatic. Her favorite college team is the Oklahoma Sooners and her career role model is Melissa Knowles, a reporter at ESPN. Jordann enjoys roaming around the country and visiting new places where she unexpectedly runs into celebrities. She was born and raised in Stockton, Kan., a small town in the northwest region of the state. She attends Stockton High School where she is involved in many activities such as Student Council, the Kansas Association for Youth Club, Teens Against Smoking in Kansas and the National Honor Society. She is also her school's yearbook editor and is involved in choir and cheerleading. After college, Jordann would like to be a sports analyst for ESPN, or write for Sports Illustrated.

— By Dylan Tymes

### ON THE WEB

## Red Dirt Journal

Check out the Red Dirt Journal online. On the Web site, you'll find a downloadable version of the Red Dirt Journal. You can also watch the OIDJ News newscast and other videos.

<http://jmc.ou.edu/oidj/reddirtjournal>

- News
- Sports
- Participants
- Archive
- About OIDJ





photo by Bryan Pollard

**STANDING TALL:** A total of 26 students attended the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism in June 2009. They came from high schools in Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, South Dakota and Alaska. The Gaylord College hosted the workshop at the University of Oklahoma.

# Learning the ropes

## Journalism training includes print, television, multimedia stories

**ALEX SCHOENEMAN**  
Red Dirt Journal

High school students from five states soon discovered that the nine-day Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism workshop would entail long hours and learning many facets of the business after they gathered on June 11 in Norman.

The workshop focused on giving students hands-on experience in print, broadcast and the Internet.

In previous years, the workshop focused primarily on print, but as technology makes possible more ways to disseminate and receive news, the workshop has broadened its horizons to include the multimedia world.

Students learned how to operate video and still cameras as they produced packages that combined print and multimedia news. They also learned how to take better pictures, improve their writing and interview sources for stories on camera and off.

"It is really interesting learning about all of the different aspects ... of journalism," said participant Elyssa Mann of South Oklahoma City. "It's more than just a print story. It's capturing photos, capturing videos, interviewing, et cetera. It's a lot harder than I thought."

Jordan Cook of Moore, Okla., said she met "some of the most unique people here. I had never met anyone from Alaska or anyone that participated in the Muslim or Jewish faith. I enjoyed being exposed to the diverse atmosphere because I'm always up for learning new things."

This year's workshop was the sixth and largest, with 26 participants chosen from approximately 40 applicants. Most students were from Oklahoma, while others came from Texas, Kansas and the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Recent high school graduate Nita Hootch came from Anchorage, Alaska.

Participants' strict schedule in-

cluded a 7:15 wakeup knock on the dorm door, and lights-out at 10:30. OU Professor Ray Chavez, the OIDJ director, stressed the importance of maintaining sleep schedules during the workshop.

Not everything in the institute was work and classes, though. Students visited the National Weather Center in Norman, The Oklahoman newspaper in Oklahoma City and the studio there of KFOR, News Channel 4, and attended an Oklahoma City Red-Hawks baseball game.

When story assignments were made, everyone started researching information. Assignments included the RedHawks game, teen job market, and the current recession compared to the Great Depression. Students wrote print stories and created audio slideshows and video packages for the institute news broadcast.

"It was really hot under the lights and stressful at first, but once we got into it, it started to click like clockwork," said participant Will Massie of Flower Mound, Texas. "I liked being one of the anchors because the other two anchors were great, and I feel that we had great chemistry."

### OIDJ Participants

Kare Adams	Elyssa Mann
Summayah Anwar	Karlea Martin
Jaylen Brewer	Will Massie
Alexandria Brown	Ashley Montgomery
Jordan Cook	Shontel Mousseau
Jasmine Davis	Hillary Nickels
Carmen Forman	Sarah Pippenger
Da'Rae Friday	Lillie Roney
Jordan Hendricks	Alex Schoeneman
Nita Hootch	Kyle Thederahn
Emily Hopkins	Jenna Tsofigh
Kayla Jackson	Dylan Tymes
Aspen Layman	Jordann Wiltfong

### Administrators & Faculty

Ray Chávez, OIDJ director  
Sue Hinton, OIDJ co-director

### Faculty & Staff

Cassie Carson	Chris Krug
Bob Dickey	Rob Lane
Bill Elsen	Tom Lindley
Ken Fischer	Bryan Pollard
Lynn Franklin	Joey Senat
Craig Henry	Monica Flippin Wynn

### Guest Instructors

Jaconna Aguirre	Mick Hinton
Rob Collins	Claire Lee
	James Tyree

### Assistants & Crew

Kolt Atchley	Brooke Thomas
Kimberly Query	Stephen Whiting

### Counselors

Jennifer Brewer	Preston Hall
Megan Bryce	Reneé Selanders

### Contributors

Dow Jones Newspaper Fund  
Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation  
Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication  
KFOR-TV  
Native American Journalists Association  
The Oklahoman

### About OIDJ

The annual high school journalism workshop is scheduled every summer on the OU campus (specific dates will vary). Students wishing to be considered for participation should notify the Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism. Updated application forms and information on the 2010 workshop will be available during the spring 2010 semester. However, contact the director so you can be placed on the OIDJ mailing list.

Ray Chávez, Director Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication	395 W. Lindsey, Rm 3520B Norman, OK 73019-4201 PHONE: (405) 325-4143 FAX: (405) 325-7565 E-MAIL: rchavez@ou.edu
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