

NARVA

PARK UNIVERSITY 17/18

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Unsung Heroes

Mother/daughter duo set to graduate

Jon Hokenson
Narva Writer

On a rainy autumn morning, Anna Hazen's home is idyllic. Her lawn lays freshly mowed, her living room free of clutter. If she weren't firmly, but quietly, preventing the youngest dog from jumping up and licking her guest there'd be no sign it was home to three dogs and two cats.

"I'm really glad you came to do this this morning," says Hazen. "It gave me an excuse to clean up."

The house was host to a dinner party that ran long into the previous night, though you would never know it. As she wrangles one dog away from the others' food and prepares shrimp tacos for breakfast, Hazen seems oblivious to her innate ability to control her surroundings; It's an air of competency she's been practicing her entire life. The map of her life tracks steadily toward her life at Park University.

"I got pregnant at 17 and I had Madeline shortly after I turned 18," she says. "She went to my high school graduation." Madeline's father quickly exited the picture, she says.

"He has chosen not to be a part of her life and we're just used to it that way," she says. She speaks these words like a person expressing the need for a new printer cartridge; just a setback in need of a solution. In this case, as a new single mother, she knew she'd better get a job. Hazen began working at a beauty salon, saving anything she could. She eventually saved enough to enroll in nursing school, where she picked up two valuable lessons before her funds ran out.

"In nursing school I learned medical terminology," says Hazen.

"I also learned that I could not be a nurse for the rest of my life."

Hazen was able to pick up a job as a medical secretary at KU Medical Center. After growing into surgery scheduling, Hazen began the gradual climb through the ranks.

"When people find out you're a good worker they say, 'Oh you should apply for this position.' So that's how I

got started in medical administration," she says.

After three years with KU Med, she moved to Springfield, Mo., to go to school again. She moved back to Kansas City a short time later, however, so she and her daughter could be closer to family.

"Then I started at St Luke's and I was there for 12 years," says Hazen. "Then

I started working for Children's Mercy and I worked there for 7 years and there's actually a few years where they overlap; I was working for both. I would work St Luke's on the weekends and Children's Mercy during the week."

At one point during this time, Hazen worked constantly without breaks. She says it was 47 days in a row, not because she got a reprieve, but because that's where she lost count. After gaining minimal ground through her grueling schedule, Hazen began to see the limits of how far hard work can carry you.

"It always gets tricky with titles because... You're an administrative coordinator?" she says. "What is that? So even though an office manager has a higher title, an administrative coordinator has more responsibility. I was just hamstrung by not having my degree."

Seeing people less capable than herself being promoted past her did not dull Hazen's drive, however. She continued working harder than those around her and gradually progressed through the ranks. Her efforts didn't go unnoticed. After several years, she was informed she was in line for an executive position when the job's current occupant vacated it.

"I had been groomed for this position; I had been doing it when Amy was gone on vacation," says Hazen. "Well, then the time came. Amy was getting a new job and the person making the decisions who was my boss at the time, essentially; they chose not to give me the job."

These words leave Hazen's mouth carefully and measured. Despite a visible tremble of her lip, she speaks with a collected calm, revealing how deep her



professionalism runs.

"They went with an external source," she says. "So, it wasn't not getting the position. It was the way my current supervisor treated me during the entire process. I just felt a true lack of respect for my work that I had done for her." With that, Hazen's metaphorical printer had again run out of ink; and, again, she quickly found her simple solution.

"So I said screw it, I'll just go back to school," she says.

"I had always been taking a class a semester and I thought, at this rate I'm not going to graduate until 2024," says Hazen. "And I'm not getting any younger." So that's exactly what she did, with a decisive lack of hesitation.

"I quit my job, my career, the day after Christmas and then two weeks later I started school full time," she says.

Though Hazen left the office world her work ethic continued to follow her. After taking 24 credits her first semester full time, she scaled back her hours the following summer, taking only six credit hours.

"I'm taking 15 now and I'll be graduated in two months," she says. "I'm just hoping that it gives me more credibility on top of the work experience I already have."

There have been snags, however. Hazen received a Federal Pell Grant but it was based on her 2016 income, when she was an office executive, rather than her current income of zero. She ran into the same issue when applying for health insurance and, with no expansion to Medicaid by the state this year, she was left without healthcare.

"I'm really just hoping to not get sick for two more months," she says. As always, every problem has a solution and, as is often the case, the only one harboring doubt in her capability is Hazen herself.

"I was really expecting people to be kind of a devil's advocate and they weren't," says Hazen. "Everyone has been completely on-board, my friends, my parents; my daughter was ecstatic."

Hazen's daughter will graduate from the University of Chicago with a Political Science degree and a minor in Astrophysics. Her mother will be finishing a two-decade college career with a Business degree.

"With luck, I'll get an awesome job or maybe I'll finally get to move to New Zealand," she says. "Or both; that would be good too."



PHOTOS/Connor Jones

Betty Dusing: 50 years serving library patrons

Arbër Dumani
Narva writer

Betty Dusing has been working for Park University over 50 years sharing her life and journey along the way from the front desk of several manifestations of the Park College, then Park University, library.

Betty was the oldest child in a middle-class family in Monticello, Ky.

"I was a good girl," she said smiling. "I always did what I was supposed to do and was responsible for my two younger siblings. I never did anything I shouldn't do."

Betty felt lucky growing up in a warm family environment. Her favorite memory from her childhood was walking to school.

"I grew up in a small town where everyone knew everybody and it felt safe," she recalled.

Upon graduating from high school, Betty attended the University of Kentucky where she studied library science.

"My mom gave me the best advice, she said go to college and take library science. I did, and I don't regret it," Betty said.

During her time in college Betty met her husband, Albert. Betty says it was love at the first sight and he became her best friend. He was a blessing in her life, she said.

Betty married Al the summer before her senior year and graduated in 1955. The same year, she gave birth to her daughter, Patricia.

How did they end up moving from Kentucky to Parkville, Mo.?

"There was a job opening for a biology teacher," she said. "Next thing we knew packed a little trailer and we were on our way to Missouri."

Was she said to leave Kentucky for Missouri? "Oh no, we were thrilled that we had a job," she said smiling.

Albert stayed in Kansas City for two years filling the spot of the biology teacher. He got transferred to Ohio for one year to do recruiting in the East Coast for Park University, at the time called Park College. The Dusings moved back to Missouri where they had their son, Roger. Roger Dusing is the current human relations director at Park. Al got a full-time job position as a biology teacher at Park.

There was also a job opening in the library where Betty applied and got the job. "It makes me happy seeing all these changes and bringing back the library to Norrington," she said. The library was housed in Norrington then moved to the underground and recently relocated in Norrington after extensive renovation to the facility.

In 2000 Park College became Park University. During this time, The Park University Library began working with the Kansas City Public Library to form a group of libraries to send books as interlibrary loans. Customers of those libraries could request books that Park owned and Betty would be in charge.

"This service has grown and we are currently a member of a consortium called MOBIUS

which covers libraries all over Missouri and some in other states," she said.

Part of Betty's daily work was finding the books requested from Park and packaging them for the courier. This meant walking from the library underground, to the annex and back.

"It was a fun walk, there is always something going on in the underground," Betty said. "We still have this service but I no longer do the pickups. I only find the books requested from Norrington."

The Dusings had a party each fall right after the faculty conference for the beginning of the semester. This was an opportunity for the old and new members of the faculty to meet and become acquainted on a social basis.

"It was always a fun time for me; I prepared a lot of party food," Betty said. "I frequently had a student come to my house to help me fix a variety of foods. That was almost as much fun as the party," she added.

Albert Dusing died in 2015.

"He had a lot of health problems and he was diabetic. He spent four days in the hospital before he passed away," Betty said.

There was a ceremony held at Park University similar to the one the Dusings held each Fall. Family and faculty members attended.

Betty said her husband was her biggest motivator.

"I loved him, we motivated each other and he was extremely organized," Betty said. "I have been fortunate with my life; my children have done well and now they are taking care of me."

She sees the success of her children as her biggest accomplishment.

"My children are good citizens, they have good families on their own," Betty said. She has



Betty Dusing at her new perch in the Park University Norrington library.

Photo: Cicely Nguyen

twin great-grandsons who are 3 years old. "My kids are healthy, have a good jobs and good friends; I am blessed."

Betty belongs to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Parkville has a branch.

"This year the meetings are held on campus in the Library Learning Center," Betty said. "Each spring the Kansas City area members have a program to honor college students who have come back to college after being out of school for at least five years and have earned at least 30 hours. I am the liaison between the group and the university."

Park University has been Betty's home for more than half a century. She said she loves her job and the interaction with the students is her favorite part of the job.

"Park has been very supportive in every way possible; they give me raises, sympathy when I need it and people smile at me. It just makes me happy to work here," she said with a familiar smile.

"My personal motto that I tell everyone is to do the best you can with what you got. It works with everybody."

Unsung Heroes

Honors Student Beyond the Textbook

Kellen Potter

Narva Writer

Park University senior Jessica Ngocham Pham is making a difference in the community. While her efforts reach many, her own acclaim is not something she boasts about. As an active volunteer, she goes beyond the call of duty for a full time student.

22-year-old Pham is an Oak Park graduate making her way through her final year as a chemistry major at Park. Like many students, she is “not sure,” about career plans for after graduation. However, she does know what direction she sees her future heading.

Grad school is a top priority for Pham after graduation which means another long road ahead of her. She potentially sees herself with a job in chemical research or industry, doing work with product testing. Though first, she has to make it through a few more difficult courses such as physical chemistry and bio chemistry with labs, and literary science.

Pham is in an honors class this semester, which isn’t just something that will look good on a resume, but it’s a class that is helping her get involved in the

community. Her most recent volunteering gig was recommended by her professor, so Pham jumped at the opportunity.

On Sept. 23 at 9 a.m., The Junior Diabetes Research Foundation, J.D.R.F., began their annual walk/run at the WWI Museum and Memorial to raise money for the foundation. Their ultimate objective is to create a world without type 1 diabetes. After reaching 87 percent of their goal, from just this event, the foundation has raised over half a million dollars.

For an event by the J.D.R.F., one walk requires over 300 volunteers to help everything function smoothly. Pham was unfortunately unable to help out on the day of the race due to an important test she was taking for one of her classes, but she was there for several hours on a sickly hot Friday afternoon assisting in whatever ways were needed, like setting up tables and handing out t-shirts.

The 1.5 mile walk is not the only place Pham has been a volunteer. Recently she also spent time at Holy Field Vineyard and Winery in Basehor, Kans. picking grapes during their harvest. Some wineries have volunteer parties where they encourage anyone with the ability to snip

grapes off the vines to come do so for the fun and experience. These vineyards will have the patrons clipping clusters from early morning until around noon, then serve lunch and wine as a thanks for helping. This keeps the customers involved with the winemaking process and reduces the use of expensive auto-harvest machinery that can potentially damage the vines and miss a significant portion of fruit. Those machines are sometimes practical in places like Napa Valley, but in the Midwest, most of the vineyards are considerably smaller in comparison and have more of a hands on approach when it comes to winemaking, which makes the use of volunteers is much more reasonable.

Extra time is not something many college students have very much of and Pham is no exception to this. If she has any extra time between school and volunteer work, she enjoys it by resting and relaxing. She likes playing sports like tennis and football, and listening to pop music on the radio. She commutes to school from her home in North Kansas City, but that doesn’t stop her from actively engaging in the Park community.

“Be involved. It will make the experience a lot better than just studying all the time,” said Pham. She is eager to lend a hand wherever the beckon calls. Since she doesn’t currently have a job, her efforts can be put toward the rewarding activity of volunteering, which is not only satisfying to her knowing that she is helping others, but is useful to the people she helps as well.



Jessica Pham stands near the science lab.
Photo by Arron Rifle

Park Tutor Helps Mold Minds of Others

Corina Rodriquez

On a chilly Monday afternoon, James Zachary Jarrard waited patiently on the top floor of Norrington for his next student at his white desk; one side cluttered with teaching materials and the other completely clear of the piled papers. Jarrard is a graduate student at Park University, studying to complete a master's in public affairs and a master's in business administration. On top of his studies, he has committed his free time to help others in their studies- a tutor. Jarrard explained how becoming a tutor has impacted his life, as well as others.

Jarrard began tutoring when he was 17 years old at Park Hill High School in Parkville, Missouri. He said his drive to tutor started by completing volunteer hours as a requirement for the Missouri A+ Program. Jarrard said he enjoyed helping others, so he used his knowledge in various math subjects, such as Statistics, Calculus 2 and other advanced classes, to help high school students to be successful. But Jarrard did not learn these subjects completely on his own. He said his mother's co-workers at Park University helped him to get through some of his courses in high school.

"Whenever I needed help on courses, I would ask my mom's co-worker, Licia, for math or writing tutoring," Jarrard said. "If it wasn't for her, I'd probably wouldn't be here today."

With guidance from a professional tutor, Jarrard continued to tutor as a freshman at Park. He started off as a math tutor, but he said he wanted to expand by helping students in writing subjects. Jarrard said that this process was not easy since he was only a freshman. But with the help of a good referral from an instructor, Jarrard was given the job to be a tutor in math and writing. He expressed this new role was going to make him more effective for Park's students, which brought success.

Jarrard said being a part of a successful student's story was nothing but exciting to him. These students' successes range from anywhere to understanding a math concept to getting a passing grade in any subject within a short amount of time. Jarrard shared a memory about one student in particular.

"One student I had worked with was taking an eight week course and unfortunately he had two weeks to complete all of his assignments," Jarrard recalled with a shy laugh. "We were together every day and he went from a F to a B. I was really proud of him."

But these are not the only success stories he was excited to be a part of. When Jarrard graduated in May of 2017, he said a student hugged him and thanked him for his work and patience. Jarrard's face had a soft smile recalling the memory, but he continued to explain it was really nice someone had appreciated his help. However, with success comes with challenges.

Jarrard explained the challenges he came across were quite ironic.

"Sometimes I felt like the students forget that I am a student too," Jarrard said.

Jarrard explained there were countless times when he was not

working, students continued to come up to him for help while he was studying for his own courses. He said his overwhelming emotion by sometimes hiding in Park's underground in hopes of catching a quick study break. Another similar challenge Jarrard came across was when he had to tutor students taking the same course as he was.

"It was really weird knowing that I just did this assignment a short time ago, and now I'm helping someone else write the same paper," Jarrard said, "for example, in Fall 16, I was taking a Statistics class online, while the student was taking the same course but it was face to face. It was kind of funny, but I knew I had to be very careful with these types of assignments."

Another challenge Jarrard came across was when he had to work with international students. He expressed about the frustration with the constant language barriers, but he defused the problem through a simple method. Jarrard said at the beginning of every tutoring session with a new student, he starts a conversation about where they are from and get to know them.

"I had people tell me that they were more engaged or effective in the tutoring session because I was interested knowing more about them," Jarrard said. "This helped them a lot by listening to me more."

Among these several challenges Jarrard said they had never hindered his thoughts about tutoring students. He recalled about a time when he felt like more of a mentor than a tutor with some students.

"At the end of tutoring sessions, I tell the students to always be optimistic and tell them what to do next," Jarrard said motioning to several pieces of blank white paper. "Sometimes I tell them to write out a detail plan. So, I get a couple of sheets of paper out, and I tell them that this is what you'll do every day till you get caught up."

Jarrard explained these actions to be some of his favorite moments because they are more meaningful to his original goal of helping others.

"A lot of students I've worked with have never been in college before," Jarrard said. "It's nice to see a tutor to understand their struggles in college, and being able to guide them in that

direction. Whether that be seeing them on a regular basis or once a while, it would be easier for them to stay focus and get good grades, as well as seeing their future goals."

Although Jarrard expressed his passion for helping others, he has plans beyond his role at Park. After he graduates with two Masters' degrees at age 24, he plans on looking for a full time position as a project manager, continue his research in his studies and plans on traveling around the world.

"After graduating, I still plan on staying active with the Alumni Association and I may continue tutoring at nights or weekends," Jarrard said. "But getting to help other students achieve their full potential, and getting to see them grow as people, in a diverse setting is something I will remember forever."



Photo: Nate Robinson

'...by morning everything is good'

Arron Riffle
Narva Writer

Rays of sunlight peer through the trees shining on a park bench at the Nelson Atkins Museum. At the end of those rays Diana Hunter, a junior double majoring in organization communication and interdisciplinary studies, sits on the bench in her causal green t-shirt, black pants, running shoes, letting her hair dance freely in the breeze and shading her eyes with bright pink sunglasses.

Hunter's laid back presence on the outside does nothing to reflect what is happening internally. For some, being a hero means doing something extraordinary, saving a life or stopping a crime. However, extraordinary events don't happen every day and that definition does nothing to capture the heroic nature of the ordinary life.

Though most people can't name an extraordinary hero they personally know, everyone can name a person who is the glue holding their family together, the person who burns both ends of the candle to create a better life for themselves, or the person who ensures you have everything you need before thinking of their own needs. Hunter is one of those ordinarily extraordinary people.

"I'm taking 18 credit hours this semester," says Hunter.

To be considered a full-time student a person is required to take 12 credit hours or roughly four classes. To take 18 credit hours Hunter would be taking six classes in a semester. There aren't many people willing to work one and-a-half time the full-time requirement either in the job market or academic setting, but for Hunter it comes to no surprise.

"Right now, it's stressful because I have a 10-page paper due Sunday, a 20 minute presentation Tuesday, working two jobs, cooking for four to six people and filling in the rest," says Hunter. "I'm lucky that I've always been a good test taker. I learn in a school setting easily."

"I set exceptionally high standards, like unreasonably high standards," she says.

For Hunter, taking on a heavy course load is second nature. Striving to be prepared for her future in the job market and not waste time getting there is just how it is. However, Hunter is no stranger to the job market.

"I work at Ibex climbing gym and Komatsu," she says.

Ibex is a rock climbing gym in Blue Springs, Mo., where rock climbers can climb year round in an indoor facility.

"Ibex happened in July," says Hunter. "I only started working there four months ago. I did it

for the people that worked there, they needed the help."

In addition to working at a rock climbing gym, Hunter also works at Komatsu. Komatsu is a restaurant in the Westport district in Kansas City, Mo., that specializes in ramen noodle dishes. A place Hunter and her boyfriend Ryan frequently went before being offered a position.

"We just hit a year Sept. 2," says Hunter. "He's eight years older than me and an ex-Marine. We are very different people."

Often overlooked in amounting accomplishments is the relationships maintained in our lives. It is easy to count the quantitative things like number of credit hours in school and number of jobs, but the qualitative and arguably more important things in life that can't be counted should not be left out.

"You have to work at a committed relationship, it doesn't just happen," says Hunter.

Just like a relationship with a significant other, families are built on relationships. Using the Enneagram Institute personality test which categorizes people into one of nine different categories, it is easy to see how Hunter balances her relationships.

"I'm a nine which is a peace-keeper type," Hunter says. "My family run very busy lives and I try to help them as well. As a big sister I feel like I need to be there for her, too. I prep meals for my dad... because he needs to eat healthier, for my mom, for my sister because she needs to eat healthier, too, and Ryan."

The person who reaches out in all directions to ensure everyone is getting their needs met becomes the glue that binds

relationships and families together. This allows those people to relieve their stress and continue moving forward. If not for these people the stress in your life can turn to quicksand and trap you. So, dealing with stress can be difficult while holding everything together.

"I just use it to fuel my productivity; I just run well on stress," says Hunter. "It's not exactly a desired character trait, but its good I guess."

"Sometimes it's artificially created stress. If it really gets to me I talk to Ryan or lay down and hug my cat and by morning everything is good again."

It is easy to forget everyone needs to be able to let off steam and be human for a while before jumping back into the rat race of life. For Hunter, talking to the people who are close to her or spending time with her cat allows her to maintain high operating tempo.

Too often the people who speed through life and not only push themselves to their limit, but still make time to extend their reach to others in need are overlooked. Not everyone will be given opportunities to save a life, but everyone has moments in a day to help others because insignificant rain drops cause damaging floods.



Photo by Kellen Potter

Unsung Heroes

Accidental Creation of The Room

Connor Jones

Jordyn Schmalz's journey to a bachelors in graphic design is nearly complete. After two colleges, four years of school and countless tests and projects only two semesters remain. Along the way, however, she accidentally created something extraordinary: The Room.

The room can only be described as an artistic desert; a wasteland of original creativity. The faint brown carpet adorning the rest of the house seems to have been replaced by layer after layer of drawing paper while various artistic media lay scattered throughout the room. Canvases, both painted and clean, lean against all four walls. A detached window frame sits in the corner, a random misfit gathering dust.

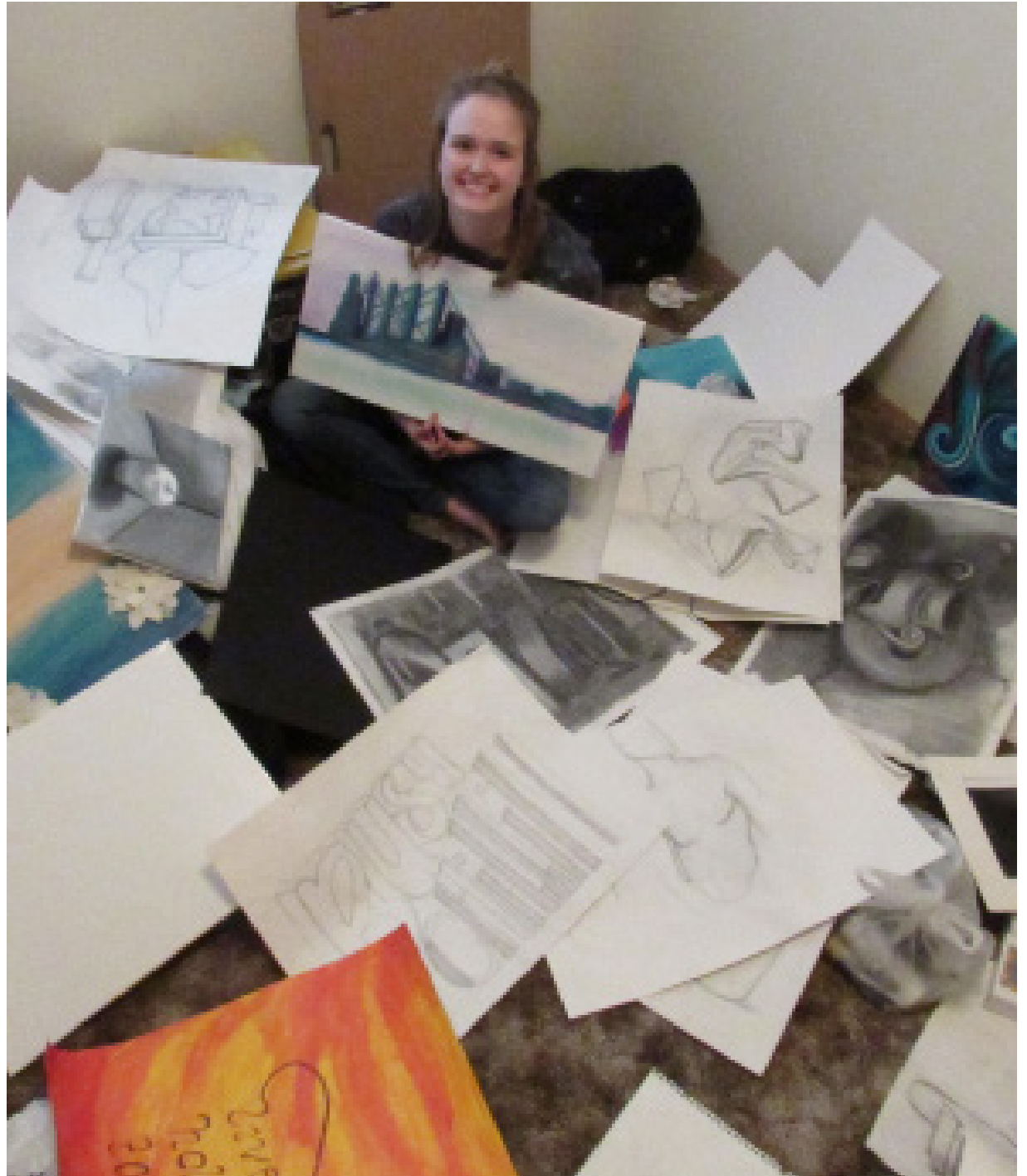
"It's kind of like a memory room...or a junk room," Schmalz said. "Even though I have my art in here, I also use this room to store things for upcoming things I want to do whenever I get free time"

For Schmalz, however, this wasteland of hopeless clutter represents an endeavor five years in the making.

"I was in graphic design my senior year of high school," Schmalz said. "...I really liked creating. I enjoyed creating logos, creating individual art. It was a form of making art and I found an interest in it".

In that room lies every project, drawing or photo Schmalz has crafted since she decided graphic design was her calling during her senior year of high school. Though her forgotten works lay strewn about, relegated to the wasteland, Schmalz has made a special place for the creations she adores the most.

A black and white photograph of an owl, glaring at the camera as if he knew Schmalz was snapping a photo of him. A pastel painting portraying the migration of geese



Jordyn Schmalz sits in her pile of her design work.

Photo by Connor Jones

over a lake, the deep blue of the lake somehow contrasting with the night sky while simultaneously blending into it effortlessly. These works have clawed their way out of the wasteland and slipped into the heart of Schmalz and, though each creation commands individual attention without detracting a spotlight from the other, Schmalz does favor one the most: a large canvas

oil painting of the Kansas City skyline.

"It shows where I'm from," Schmalz said. "I always talk about leaving Kansas City and wanting to go somewhere new but I'm always going to have a special love for K.C. It just reminds me where I've grown up".

Like Schmalz, the skyline painting portrays a carefree sentiment. The

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spires of the Kansas City Convention center are featured prominently with the entire skyline embellished by blended wisps of blue and purple. Schmalz yearns to create these images not simply for their beauty, but for something few people recognize.

"I enjoy the secret science of it... the science behind art," Schmalz said. "Everyone thinks that 'Oh, its arts and crafts,' but there's science to it. Like in typography the type of font has a direct influence on our society. People read sans serif fonts slower than tradition fonts like times new roman."

The appeal of art and graphic design, which lead to the artistic desert situated just steps from Schmalz's bedroom, stems from the behind-the-scenes scientific process of creation, something that has always come easy to her.

"I've always had these principles of art reinforced since I was in elementary school," Schmalz said. "You always learned about rhythm, you always learned about movement, these basic principles of art and it just always was easy... It just comes natural to me."

Schmalz shines the brightest during the process of creating a

work of art. But her light begins to dim when it comes to other areas. These pitfalls, however, only enforce and strengthen her passion for creation.

"Words are hard for me," says Schmalz. "...I don't listen. I'm more of a visual person. It's hard for me to listen to something but if I see something it's easier for me to interpret. I'm a very visual learner. I do

[graphic design] because I feel like I have a visual, I have an eye to make something visually appealing."

The zeal Schmalz feels when creating the visually appealing was the birth of The Room; a room full of countless original creations, each elucidating their artistry. The energy she puts into each of these works ensures The Room a long prosperous life.

"I don't like to [throw away my art] because I spent so much energy on them. I don't want to throw that away... I just don't want to. Because they're my creations."

"I enjoy the secret science of it."



Photo by Connor Jones

Student Juggles School, Life and Work

Emilie Heston
Narva Writer

The sun rolls in through the windows of Copley Hall on a quiet morning on campus. Students move through the halls, making their way to the next class of the day, a process that will repeat many more times during the coming hours for most. But for one student, attending class is only a small portion of her day. Between going to class, picking her daughter up from daycare and working full time, Jessica Pike is always on the move.

Pike, 31, is a “nontraditional” student at Park. The single mother not only attends the university as a full-time student, but also has a full time job as well as freelance graphic design work on the side.

This hectic schedule does not come easy. Especially with three-year-old daughter, Clairra, Pike has her hands full. Pike is out from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. every weekday, which does not allow for a lot of time with Clairra.

“I don’t get to see her much during the week, so we always make sure to cook dinner together and play Barbies after,” says Pike. “It’s hard for both of us. She doesn’t understand and just wants to play with mommy.”

After dinner and play time, it’s back to work for Pike. Luckily, she can do her freelance work at home. The small family of two sit down together with their computers and get to work. For Clairra, however, the work is not for money. She enjoys playing ABC Mouse, a computer game and learning tool that teaches children the alphabet, numbers and other essential learning skills.

“I feel so privileged to be able to work full time and go to school,” Pike says. “I just want to be able to provide for Clairra and give her the best life.”

A graphic design major, Pike earned her Associate of Arts and Digital Design degree at Kansas City Kansas Community College prior to attending Park. With the sometimes frustrating and confusing process of switching schools, not all of Pike’s credits transferred, so she is currently retaking some classes to finish her degree.

“It’s taking a lot longer than I expected,” Pike says. “I just want to be

finished and graduate. It seems so far away.”

Pike had interest in graphic design from early on in her teens.

“When I was 13, I would go to my friend’s house and we would sneak onto her dad’s computer after he went to bed so I could play around on Photoshop,” she says. “One time we somehow accidentally saved over one of his photos and couldn’t get the original back. My friend got in so much trouble.”

After this experience, Pike put her own design programs on her computer. This is what allowed her to eventually start doing her own freelance work.

Pike, who used to work at Burger King, began to do work for random clients on UpWork after a friend referred her to the site. She wanted to make some extra cash on the side and it turned out to be a success for her.

“I started with just a few small projects,” Pike says, “and then out of nowhere I started getting a bunch of clients. It was crazy.”

She named her business J. Pink Design Studios. Though it is just a side freelance job currently, she hopes to turn it into a full running successful business.

Pike realized that doing graphic design work could turn into a career for her. She left Burger King and began to work as an art director for a local design firm, and now she is in charge of running a design team at the studio. She guides her team to be creative and think outside the box. This allows her team to put themselves into the work they’re doing, with hope they, too, can be successful.

“A team is really important,” Pike says. “But my people kind of like to work solo. I encourage them to collaborate and bounce ideas off one another. This will allow them to go beyond their boundaries and grow. It is called a team for a reason. They are the players; I am the coach.”

Pike recently started feeling her once hobby is now a nagging task. She now has a love/hate relationship with graphic design but, she says, she has not let her love for design die. After graduation, Pike hopes to be able to leave her current job and run her business solo for a living.

“It’s really scary to think about running my own business,” Pike says, “but that is what I want. If I jump and fall, I will at least have my degree





Where

I'm

From

Summertime, Sunshine & Fish Fries with my Huge Family

Jon Hokenson

Writing about a writer is on par with nailing Jello to the wall. A writer's unending search for the perfect words makes sitting down for an interview like sitting in the captain's chair of a nose diving jet. Alison Overcash is a writer. In an interview marked by silent contemplation more than torrents of words, the 18-year-old English major expounded on her response to the "Where I'm from..." writing prompt. "I'm very introverted," Overcash says. "I love reading, and writing is really the only thing I could ever see myself doing for a career. I still don't know exactly what I want to do after I graduate but that's really all that I'm actually passionate about."

Hiding In my bedroom surrounded by books

Overcash attended Staley High School, just 20 minutes northeast of Park University. The school's proximity offered an opportunity to remain near her dog and the rest of her family. It also meant she could stay near her books.

"I would not be able to move all of them," she says. Overcash estimates she has around 300 books, mostly fiction classics from Steinbeck's, "East of Eden" to "Great Expectations" by Dickens. For many years, they provided a refuge from the demanding world of high school.

Staley High School where I was always the gifted kid

"In high school I felt like there were a lot of expectations people had for me that I couldn't live up to," Overcash says. "I could never really be honest about who I was." Over time, this obfuscation of identity became entrenched.

"I was just very closed off," Overcash says. "I didn't have many friends. I didn't really know who I was. When I had gotten really depressed, I didn't really even read. I kind of stopped caring."

It was always hard to breathe

With the suffocation of school on the left and apathetic isolation on the right, it was writing that offered Overcash a way forward.

"I always enjoyed it as a subject in school but I never really considered doing any writing outside of school," Overcash says. "'1984' is definitely the book that changed my perspective on reading and writing. I read it my sophomore year of high school and I would say it kind of changed my life. Sounds cheesy, but it did."

"The way I see it, writing has the power to do good or evil. It's up to us to use it in a way that is going to benefit humanity. Obviously, 1984 is just a warning about how it can go wrong that just inspires me more to use it as a tool for good."

The lack of hyperbole in her claim the book changed her life is evidenced in the unyielding lessons she drew from it. When reminded things



Photo by Kalie Strain

didn't turn out so great for Winston Smith in "1984," Overcash just laughs. "I think the act of defiance is more important than how it ends up," she says. "Whether you die or not, it's better than going along with something you know is wrong."

In a less dramatic example, Overcash embraces the notion that writing is only a tool, with its functionality contingent on the way it's used.

"I'm obviously still a pretty private person, but now I feel like reading and writing is a way I can connect with myself," she says. "It's a way I can think and process things."

A new connection with herself didn't take long to yield results. During the first semester of her senior year of high school, Overcash received the Park/McAfee scholarship, cementing her decision to attend the school here. After running a gauntlet of essays, recommendations, GPA and testing qualifications, Overcash was one of the four selected for the scholarship.

"It's full tuition and I'm in the honors academy," Overcash said. "It's a whole long process but it worked out." In addition to honors academy participation, Overcash will present a research project her senior year at that year's Student Research and Creative Arts Symposium. In a fitting consonance, she has already been asked to present at this year's symposium, unrelated to her scholarship. Her topic: a literary analysis of Kafka's "Metamorphosis" as a representation of mental illness.

"It was something that just kinda happened once I surrounded myself with new people," Overcash says. "It happened once I actually took time for myself to find out what I was interested in and enjoyed."

Overcash doesn't find it so hard to breathe at school these days. Hiding away in her library doesn't have the same call either, not when she could spend time with friends or her girlfriend or family.

"I feel like having the scholarship and having the pressure to keep my grades up and do well in school has actually helped me," Overcash says. "Otherwise I would just be laying in bed everyday doing nothing. It's nice to have something."



Where I'm From

Small Town Girl's Extraordinary Childhood

Cheyenne McGinnis

Where I come from is a place full of history

With a population of 16,680, located in the northern part of New Haven county, is a small town, Wolcott, Conn., the childhood home to Gabriella Rosner. Wolcott was originally named Farmingbury, but later changed to honor Governor Oliver Wolcott, who was credited with casting the deciding vote for incorporation. The town was founded in 1796 and is best known as the residence of clockmaker Seth Thomas and educator Amos Bronson Alcott. Alcott was known for changing the way children were taught. Alcott got rid of corporal punishment in the classrooms in the 1800s, and focused more on shaping the child's mind, body in unison and his passion for teaching is what led his life in Wolcott.

With long voluminous eyelashes to coincide with her blue eyes, a birthmark of a blonde streak in her hair, with smooth freckle-less skin, is 23 year old senior Gabriella Rosner an education major. She was born and raised in Wolcott. From the earliest of her memories to graduating high school, it was all do to the Northeast.

Where I come from has memories upon memories

"My family is the typical mom, dad, two kids, cul de sac, type of family who always had a dog,"

said Rosner.

Rosner's neighborhood was a close knit one. It felt like Parkville, she said. Small and local. Her friends from school lived around her, her neighborhood friends were just a house away.

"In high school I would sneak out with friends. I would wait for my family to sleep. My house had an alarm, but my back door was not connected. I didn't know until maybe a year ago that my mom even knew that I had done that,"

remembered Rosner.

Rosner saw her childhood home as nothing out of the ordinary. Strict rules came from a worrisome 100 percent Italian mom, and a soft spoken traditional melting pot American father.

"My mom was a fun mom. A traditional loud Italian woman, always wanting to put food in your mouth," Rosner said with a laugh.

She grew up with strict rules and always having a curfew.

"We still had a lot of freedom," Rosner said, "but six months before I was married, I lived with my parents, and even then they gave me a curfew."

Where I come from has harsh winters and mild summers

Rosner said the biggest difference between her childhood home and the place she calls home now, is the weather and the friendliness of the locals.

"My husband likes to make fun of me; it'll be 70 degrees out and I'll say, 'Hey let's go swimming,' because that's usually the top heat back in Connecticut," Rosner said.

Where I come from has cities packed with people

Rosner said even though it's cliché, people are much nicer in the Midwest. In Connecticut and in New York, people are taught to act like you're always heading somewhere, somewhere fast. There is no time for small talk, and you don't engage with strangers. Parkville brought new surroundings when a



Gabby Rosner sits outside Copley with her dog Poppy
Photos by Arron Riffle



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Where I come from is where I got my start

Rosner was surrounded by women educators.

"I chose to be a teacher probably because most of the women in my life are teachers, but in high school I had a teacher who was so so awesome...he was a great teacher and the one who really encouraged me to become one," Rosner said.

Similar to the educator Amos Bronson Alcott, Rosner has a passion for teaching, and a passion for ensuring the future

minds.

"I believe that there is meaning in everything we do and that any kid that walks into the classroom is going to get something out of it," Rosner said.

Rosner saw her childhood as nothing out of the ordinary other than the occasional Santa Claus giving out candy on a firetruck on Christmas morning. A family is a family and a house is a house, she saw nothing different.

Rosner doesn't see herself settling down in Wolcott, Conn. She sees it as the place she grew up, the place where her friend's dad owned the grocery store that supplied jobs for the students. She sees it as the place where on the 4th of July was spent around the lake.

"I miss Connecticut, but it's not home to me anymore," Rosner said. "this is my home."





Life in a Small Town Forms Big Memories for a Lifetime

Arron Riffle
Narva Writer

Down Missouri highway 33 the small farm town of Holt is home to a population of 477. To drive through Holt takes all of two minutes. In a town as small as Holt neighbors are separated by fields, family is close. This is where Emma Thoman spent her years growing up.

Now a junior majoring in social psychology with a minor in social work, Thoman sits at a round table in the Norrington Center surrounded by a different type of family, laptops illuminated and psychology books open, studying with her classmates for their next test.

"I chose these degrees because I love to help people overcome any type of difficulties in their lives. I had several people who help me overcome difficulties in my life," says Thoman. "I plan to get a masters in counseling after I finish my bachelor's degree." For Thoman her tightknit community has led her to helping others, fostering more tightknit communities.

Where I'm from you can raise your own livestock (to eat)

"It's a lot of work. It's fun when they are little," says Thoman. Thoman's parents share property with her grandparents where they raise cows, pigs, and goats. However, the fun wears off once the animals grow up. "My experience is being stuck in the mud and having the pigs running at me with foam coming from their mouths when I'm trying to feed them," says Thoman.

"I see them as a baby and I know we are going to eat them. So, it kinda scares you," says Thoman. Most people don't know what it's like to raise the food you will eventually eat, but living on a farm Thoman is accustomed to the reality of animals being food. That reality doesn't come without learning how to cut bonds with the animals destined to become dinner.



Thoman stands in her front yard overlooking her home in Holt, Mo.

Where I'm from Grandma's house is right through the woods



When most people visit their grandparents, they don't go over the river and through the woods, but for Thoman going to grandma's house is exactly that. "Literally go through the woods, cross the creek a couple times and through a big field and you're at grandma's house," says Thoman.

"After a walk through the creek with my rubber boots and a climb up the bank I would have to climb over the fence. Sometimes my boots would get caught on the fence."

"I could honestly go over there anytime I wanted. She taught me how to cook."

Living so close to her grandparents provided Thoman a lot of experiences both at her grandma's house and out in the fields with her grandpa.

"Saturdays we were always helping my grandpa," says Thoman. When she heard the chainsaw running or other farm equipment she would always go out to help. Her grandpa wasn't the kind of man to ask for help, if she didn't go out to help he would just do it himself.

"He would be trying to cut down a tree limb standing on his truck by himself. Another time he was burning the field and it got out of hand and burnt the front of his truck," says Thoman. Where Thoman's from going out into the field to help is just a way of life. This way of life meant weekends weren't for relaxing.

Where I'm from Saturday you are out in the field working

"We never got to sleep in Saturdays we would have to wake up no later than 7:30 or 8 a.m. depending on what we had to get done," says Thoman. For people who live on a farm the work is continuous, its taking care of the animals or fixing buildings or equipment.

Thoman remembers often waking up early to cut fire wood. "We would be out there from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m," says Thoman. "Our dad would run the chainsaw while us kids would stack the wood either in the truck or in a pile... For lunch we would pause for a hotdog roast with all the sticks we would collect in between stacking the wood."

"I felt like every time we cut wood it was always cold out so it was always miserable."

Where I'm from my cousins were right next door to play



Living on the farm with her family so close by has meant grandparents and cousins were always around.

"My cousin's house is right through the woods, too," says Thoman. "You can see my cousin's house right from my house." Having her cousins so close meant Thoman always had kids to play with.

"We would climb the mulberry trees," says Thoman. "My cousin had a two-story playhouse. So, we would make mud cakes and sprinkle dirt or sand on top of the mud cakes."

Growing up with her family around her gave Thoman a lot of opportunities for fun and adventure even in the cold Missouri months.

"We would go out in our woods and go to 'suicide hill,'" says Thoman. "The hill was super steep and if you didn't jump off in time you would go off a big cliff. The cliff was about six feet high so it was really scary." Everyone who grew up sledding had the one hill that got its name from the perils and danger involved with hoping on a sled and challenging gravity, sometimes ending victorious and sometimes succumbing to painful defeat.

"It was painful, but it was kinda the thrill of it. You either bailed off in time or..." says Thoman.

Where I'm from riding in the back of a truck is
perfectly normal

In the back of a green 1951 Chevy Advance-Design pickup truck with dents in both driver side fenders and rust eating at the edges of the cab and foot boards is the beginning and end of many memories in the Thoman Family.

"My dad's 1951 Chevy truck he got from his great grandpa," says Thoman, "it's been through a tornado so it has some dents on it.

"We would get dressed in our overalls and hop in the back of the truck and drive around town. It wasn't ever very far. Everyone was always drawn to the truck. So, it was nice to sit back and wave at the people."

Either on the farm or driving around town to Thoman riding in the back of the family truck in plain fun. "To me its relaxing... It's like riding with all the widows down, but more epic," she says.

Although riding in the back of the truck can be relaxing and fun it isn't without peril.

"There was one time," says Thoman, "we had to get some haybales at my grandpa's barn. We stacked the haybales really high and my brother climbed on top of them and during the ride home the haybales fell off and so did my brother."

In Parkville you might get arrested for riding in the bed of a pickup, but where Thoman's from it's the place of fond memories and adventure.





Where I'm from kids ride their bikes throughout the whole town

"Holt is super super small. In the middle of town there is the city park," says Thoman. "There's always kids playing out. During the summer you see them riding down there. It's nice to see kids riding their bikes instead of being cooped up inside."

In a small town, fun and adventure has to be found and for the kids of Holt that means hoping on their bikes and roaming the streets.

"We would ride our bikes down to the gas station and get a snack and eat it on the sidewalk in front of the gas station," recalled Thoman. From pedaling down to the park to going to the gas station to enjoy a snack Thoman and others like her continue to ride throughout Holt.

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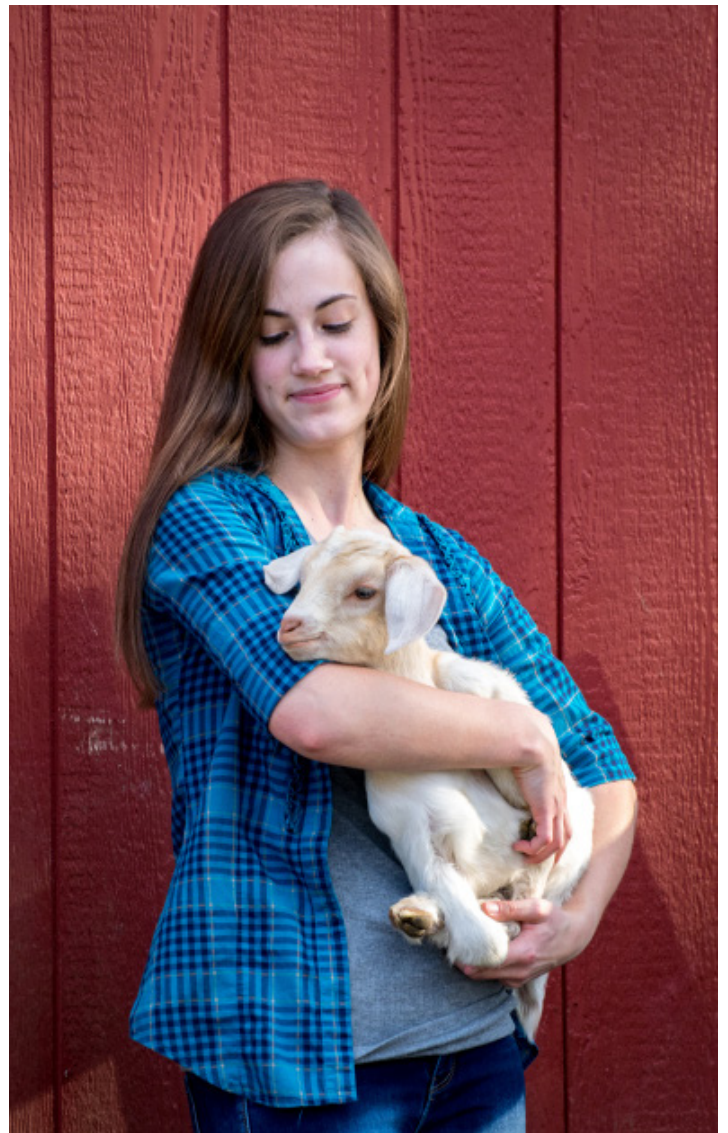
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Where I'm from fireworks are welcomed all year around

Out in the country there aren't regular restrictions on shooting off fireworks like there are in the city limits.

"You can shoot them off all the time," says Thoman. "This is why we live out in the country. So, we can do things that people in the city can't." Fourth of July is Thoman's favorite holiday. Her neighbors spend the day blowing up all types of fireworks from bottle rockets to sparkler bombs. "I would watch out my bedroom window and watch my neighbors shoot off fireworks all around us," says Thoman. She has her own firework stories. "Something happened to our mortar shell and it blew up and blanketed us. We had to duck under the sparks."

Where I'm from manure is the smell of home

"You know when you smell something and it brings you back to home?" asks Thoman. Everyone has smelled the aromas that break open the floodgates of home. For some it's the smell of mom's signature dish, for others it's the smell cigarette smoke, but for Thoman it's the smell of manure.

"It's weird, but it kinda brings me peace and comfort," says Thoman. "It's horrible when you're in the barn and you have to clean it, but when you're at the house it's not that bad."

While at school in Parkville Thoman is away from all the things she's from. Fortunately, Holt is only a 40-minute drive from Park University and on long breaks she can drive home.

"Once I smell it, it takes me to the past," says Thoman.







By: Nate Robinson

PHOTOS/Nate Robinson

On a minor artery, north of the Heart of America bridge, between the broad shoulders of the U.S. that span from the Atlantic to the Pacific sits Park University. A place of transients, a system designed to enrich and propel its residents to function throughout the larger body.

From its rudimentary beginnings in 1875 as the Parkville Experiment, growing into Park College and eventually into its mature state as Park University. Its evolution is a combination of rhythmic prediction and missed beats. However, its health cannot be measured without the flow of the current body and population. This population, a constant recycling of ideas and issues, aspirations and attitudes is a representation of here and now.

As a sampling of anywhere, anytime, Park presents a microcosm of the health of the nation. It is an example of the strengths and the weaknesses, the unity and the divisions, and the potential as well as the roadblocks modern America faces, not the least of which is racism.

From slavery, to the civil rights movement, to Black Lives Matter, the topic of race is an American institution. Prominent figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rodney King, David Duke, and President Trump have kept the issue of race in the headlines for decades. But, it feels as though the conversation is on the same loop, with little in the way of progress or resolution.

Racism is a social construct, an abstract structure of the collective imagination. Rooted partly in fabricated stereotypes, partly in bloodlines and heritage, and in a centuries old power struggle.

Unfortunately, each person can only experience the issue of race from behind their own lens. Rarely is there a chance to see the issue from the eyes of another. Yet to fully understand the

nuances and causes, the issue cannot fully be understood any other way.

In Copley Hall, a gritty old dorm converted to classrooms, a sanctuary of the humanities, four humans have come together to shed light on how race impacts their lives. Their experiences represent a small sample of what it is like across generations, races and gender to be part of this larger organism where we are all Americans.

Christian McFadden, a senior studying Communications at Park is an enigma. McFadden is a Private First Class in the Army Reserves, a student athlete, with a promising track career, an artist and spoken word poet. Standing six foot two inches tall he possesses an omni-present smile. McFadden is enthusiastically extroverted, the first person to introduce himself and make friends with everyone in the room.

McFadden grew up in Grandview, Mo., in a deeply religious household and maintains the spiritual upbringing as his guiding principles. On the surface, McFadden doesn't exhibit the signs of any sort of prejudice, but they exist, just below the surface. "Realistically speaking, the racism inside me is a problem," McFadden says.

This is an example that racism is a double-edged sword. It affects everyone and often embeds itself in the collective schema. But often the roots run deeper.

"Technically everybody is racist. We're subconsciously programmed to look at everybody differently. If I'm in a room full of white people, I'm looking for some black people. I'm more comfortable in mixed groups. I mean if I went on a road trip with four white guys, my family would be like 'Man Christian, what

21 are you doing? Take Dre with you or take Xavier with you.' Just in case, you know to even the odds."

McFadden speaks about this from a black man's perspective. It would be easy for a white person to call such a statement racist, but if the roles were reversed McFadden is vocalizing something many people can relate to.

"There's two different types of black families in America," McFadden says. "There's one type of black family that kind of tells their kids, 'Don't mess with them white folks, they crazy.' Then there's the other one that's like, 'get you a white friend', and I'm like why? They're like 'insurance,'" McFadden says joking, but he makes a legitimate point. "They're telling the truth. If I get pulled over, I'm going to tell my white friend, hey, we need to switch. Really we need to switch spots real quick."

This is the purpose behind Black Lives Matter. "The only reason it started is that we were just saying black lives matter too," McFadden says. "We weren't saying just black people matter. I think some people don't get that."

Some have twisted the ethos of this slogan and fired back with 'All Lives Matter', but the essence is lost when a white man gets pulled over, and the biggest fear is receiving a ticket. Separating these concepts has failed to fully penetrate the public discourse.

Which raises the core question, has any progress been made in discussing race over the last 65 years?

"I want to say we haven't made any progress, but at the same time I want to say we have made, maybe just a little," McFadden says. "That involves social media, that involves people recording how they feel. It moves beyond Martin Luther King Jr. getting up on the podium, where you would have this group of racist people, and they're just getting mad at him and not even listening to him. Social media is just another way to penetrate (public) consciousness."

Social media is a powerful tool in addressing societal con-

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Christian McFadden, Junior

cerns. It democratizes the field, giving everyone a voice. #BLM and #MeToo have raised massive awareness about discrimination over the years that has otherwise gone unchecked. The concern then becomes, what should be done? Awareness is critical, but true racism can be subtle but powerful in daily interactions.

"You can just tell when it's racism, you can tell when it's race related," McFadden says. "If you're not a naïve oblivious person, which I mean no one should be at this point. People will say, 'Oh, no, it's never about race. But they'll see a black dude with just as many credential walk into a job (interview) as a white dude, and the white dude gets the job. And it's hard not to say it's race related. Then people get mad at you for saying that. And I'm like, bro, it's right there, it's right there. Some people are like, black people are racist, and I'm like, no, we're just calling out the obvious.'"

What is obvious to McFadden isn't obvious to everyone. That is the point.

Often racist acts occur unintentionally. The effect is not less powerful than if it were. When McFadden explains how passing an individual of another race on the street there is an uncomfortable nod with pursed lips. It's subtle racism like this which is pervasive and slowly chisels away at an individual.

"You have to understand that, because you're white you have a lot of opportunities," McFadden says. "That deters a lot of people that look like me from goals and ambitions that you think we should shoot for. I wouldn't say I'm angry at you, because you didn't do this to me, society did as a whole."

Cicely Nguyen shares a different angle. Nguyen is a senior studying Multimedia Journalism and Public Relations at Park. She is of mixed descent, Scottish/Vietnamese. Nguyen is an example of what the world may look like someday. Neutral skin tone, long, thick black hair, large welcoming eyes. She is a jester with a quick wit and energetic personality.

Nguyen's experience with racism is more rooted in family than personally. Her father Vinh Nguyen is a first-generation immigrant. "My dad came to the United States when he was in his early twenties. He's 62 now so he's been here about 40 years," Nguyen says. "He is a citizen, his wife is not. Well, she's not technically his wife. They just had, it's like a celebration. It's really common in the Vietnamese American community. That's what they do, often they don't actually get married."

This in and of itself is no means for discrimination by any reasonable standard. These cultural practices and traditions are a valuable component to maintaining heritage. Yet it shows cultural norms that may be misunderstood or misinterpreted by the 'general population'.

"I don't often deal with discrimination myself, but I've definitely seen it with my dad," Nguyen says. "If you talk to my dad he's kind of hesitant about going out in public without someone, without me and my sister there. He doesn't like to go grocery shopping without anybody. He always likes to have people around him. I think it's because he gets kind of nervous about the way he speaks and his accent and stuff like that and how people are going to perceive him. The same way. I mean. His wife 'quote, unquote,' she doesn't speak English at all. She literally can't do anything without him, or the kids, or the family around."

Beyond race, language has become another social barrier that spurs discrimination. Language may be more tangible than skin color. Without language, communication is stunted. A common complaint is the need to 'press 1 for English'. However, little thought is given to the individual that must wade through the complexities of a foreign land with a foreign language.

"There's a study saying that Asian Americans were the most accepted immigrants here in the U.S.," Nguyen says. "I think Asian Americans have more acceptance and I think they might be worrying a little more than they should because I know a lot of his friends and family are the same way they don't really like to go out unless it's with each other."

This reflects the statement McFadden expressed regarding feeling more comfortable in mixed groups. Nguyen says this feeling is common throughout the Vietnamese American Community.

"They're like a pack," Nguyen says. "They're with each other every weekend, they never go out to like bars or anything like that. I think it's just based on how they'll be perceived, their ability to communicate with other people and other people's ability to



communicate with them.”

While this may seem like a superficial issue to some, it does have real social implications.

“I think if I had to count the people outside of his culture that he’s established relationship with, it’s probably been less than 10 in four years,” Nguyen says.

These impacts address the concept of a stranger in a strange land. Even if that stranger belongs. As mentioned, Vinh Nguyen is a U.S. citizen. These experiences also reflect other minority experiences as McFadden noted.

Nguyen claims she doesn’t experience racism first hand, but deeper probing shows, possibly it is so systemic that it is normal.

“When I was a kid I would get jokes,” Nguyen says. I mean people might say it was bullying, but I don’t really, I don’t take offense to stuff like that. People would say that I ate dogs and cats and had slanted genitals and stuff like that. It really didn’t bother me.”

It’s hard to justify drawing the line on slanted genitals based on skin color as a form of racism.

Inherently, humans look to place blame. The issue of racism is societal, by its nature. This issue boils down to individual interactions, and blame can only be attributed to each individual. Yet, it’s hard not to acknowledge the influence of leaders and public figures.

“It was easy to relate to Obama because he is a minority. So, he’s a more relatable president,” Nguyen says. “I think just because we can’t relate to Trump it doesn’t necessarily mean that he’s a bad leader or that he is a racist or whatever, but it’s his actions more than anything, it’s the fact that, you can’t relate to him because most Americans are working class and we have to actually work for money. But, he’s also just not a very communicative person. I don’t think I’d be able to hold a conversation with him after some of the stuff that I’ve heard him say, the Pocahontas stuff, grab her by the pussy and all that. It’s little things like that. I know he will defend it by saying he was joking or he didn’t mean it like that, or it was years ago or whatever. He’s still a president, you can hear a lot about grabbing the pussy but there is a different context of a president versus a football player, who doesn’t have any effect on your daily life is going to be, versus a president who has power over how things are going in the United States.”

These ‘jokes’ are pervasive. Words matter and their gravity only gets greater as they come from individuals in elevated positions. Somewhere there is a balance between politically correct and offensive. But, it’s a slippery slope, and it feels like there is a downward trend.

Like the line between politically correct and offensive, there is a line between honoring heritage and discrimination. Both lines have to do with respect.

“There’s a difference between discrimination and prejudice,” Nguyen says. “I believe everyone has prejudices and I don’t think that they are necessarily bad. They are bad when they turn into discrimination.”

When prejudices cross cultural lines, they have the potential to escalate, intentionally or not to discrimination.

“Someone in my culture, might say something, like ‘oh they didn’t mean to offend you’, and I’ll defend someone who I don’t have a prejudice against. Regardless I’ll always try to initially, build a relationship with that person.”

These prejudices exist, these social assumptions spread across every minority and subculture, but do they have any value?

“I just can’t identify value in them,” Nguyen says. “Really if you think, no you shouldn’t, there shouldn’t be any. But, it’s probably one of the best feelings I ever have is when I have a prejudice against someone and then I start to talk to them and I’m wrong. I really, really enjoy that a lot. When I make a negative assumption about someone and then he’s really nice to me, being respectful regardless of how I look or how I was talking. I always like when I walk away from that conversation. I kind of like beat myself up a little bit but at the same time I find a lot of value in that. Because I feel like if it wasn’t for that prejudice I wouldn’t

know the value of having a conversation.”

Within those prejudices is the room for growth. The value is in self reflection. The ability to be wrong about a person. Much of the hostilities and divisions are based in fear and ignorance of others. Given the opportunity, these biases will shed themselves. These are self teaching moments.

“You can’t get someone to talk to anybody face to face anymore,” Nguyen says. “Whether it’s because they don’t think it’s worth it, or because they hide behind social media or something like that. I think it’s really important to still not only have the opinions but have the conversations. At the same time, it goes deeper than just having a conversation, you have to be willing to not lower your understanding, but change it completely, change it and try to put yourself in someone else’s shoes and see where they could be coming from.”

Aaron Riffle presents another perspective. Riffle is a senior at park studying Multimedia Journalism and Public Relations. He served six years in the United States Air Force from 2009 to 2015. After moving from Fairbanks, Alaska, back to his hometown of Raymore, Mo, he began attending Park.

Riffle on appearance is average. A white male, average height, 5’8”, average build, dark hair hidden under a truckers hat advertising an outdoor company, a fleece lined flannel and a spotty beard are his only fashion accessories. Yet, Riffle is beyond average in conversation. He is thoughtful and calculated as he

speaks. His words are intelligent and articulate, he makes conscious eye contact exuding an understated confidence. Personable but stoic, are characteristics he carries from his life both in the military and beyond.

Cicely Nguyen, Junior

A white male in the Midwest at first blush would have little to offer on the topic of racism, but discrimination does not exist in a vacuum. Riffle’s experience in the military is one civilians are often unfamiliar with. In many ways it is an example of unity over division.

“My background is from a white middle class family,” Riffle says. “However, I did enlist in 2009 in the United States Air Force and that was kind of an interesting change of events. In the USAF they don’t really care where you came from or who



“People would say that I ate dogs and cats and had slanted genitals and stuff like that.”

you are. You're all wearing the same uniform. And the goal is to accomplish the mission. There were people from Alabama that grew up with different cultures all their life and there's people from Kentucky that had never seen an African-American person in their entire life."

Riffle's experience is one that stripped the differences and made individuals part of something bigger. A whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

"During the special forces training to be a Pararescue jumper," Riffle says, "you were put through the most extreme circumstances and it's designed to weed out people who cannot handle that level of stress. There was a group of 120 of us got whittled down to 60 after the first day and throughout the next week while I was in that training program we were put to such an extreme that grown men were helping other grown men put on their shoes and tie them. I never had this experience in my life, where another grown man has put on my shoes and tied them for me, purely out of necessity to accomplish a mission faster. Once you get put in that mind frame there's no separation anymore. There's no color. There's no race. It's you are a group of individuals that are now part of a team and you're accomplishing a mission."

It's such a dumbed down concept but I think, honestly, it pushes through all of those issues. So, where I come from is that if you stop looking at race as a defining characteristic you can accomplish far greater things because you're focused on the goal and not who's achieving that goal."

Riffle's example is an extreme one. People are humans first, then some hierarchy of world and national citizens, wives, husbands, sisters, brothers, children, employees, students, etc. every individual aligns their own order of priority defining who they are, a sort of hierarchy of identity. It is hard to imagine race making it into the top of any list. However, the topic of heritage is a salient one. It's a trait that often gets written off in the narrative of race.

"It's not a solution to say, look we're all people, you know, we're all living the same life, we all have essentially the same DNA," Riffle says. "There is value in acknowledging. By refusing to acknowledge race, you would destroy that heritage. You essentially erase it, but by doing that, I think of getting rid of that as a discrediting factor. We're always looking at how to stratify each

out in what they call the active duty military, it becomes like a regular job. You go, back to scheduled hours and stuff like that. What's interesting though is that the Air Force is one of the few places, probably the other branches, but I can only speak for the Air Force. Everyone's pay is equal and their rank is equal. They really pull out gender. They pulled out race. They pull out all the other factors. You are purely your rank and your position. That's all you're evaluated on."

"When you become a manager, you are trained and taught that these are not things we evaluate people on. You evaluate on work ethic, rank and responsibilities which is something that you won't see in a commercial market. The gender pay gap doesn't exist in the military. They've excluded that. Once 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' was repealed, homosexuality was something that you could not penalize someone for. It was not something that was supposed to be even a factor. The training is that they beat these things into you, that you are expected to treat people as people and expect

to give people respect for their position and what they do, not who they are."

Maybe the country needs basic training, or maybe the country is a body that needs to recognize the value of all its organs for its health. Certainly, the military is not without its critics, but there is a harmony in the equality and pursuit of a greater goal," according to Riffle.

"You may never reach perfection but the chase of perfection is what makes it great," Riffle says.

While many have not had a direct experience with racism, 21 year old psychology student from Kansas City, Mo., Diamond Mosby-Norris, has been in plenty of situations that influence her perspective on diversity.

"I have experienced many cultures, and ethnicities. I always saw diversity as good and 'normal,'" said Mosby-Norris. "It has made me more open to differences and ways of life."

The Park student has been followed in stores, stopped by the police for no reason and someone has even gone as far as to warn other neighbors about her when she was waiting in her car outside of her coaches house one evening. The neighbor stated Mosby-Norris "didn't belong" there and that "you never know what they're up to."

Despite her head-to-head run-ins with racism, Mosby-Norris still has prejudices of her own. However, her prejudices are rooted from other people's thoughts about her.

"I am slightly apprehensive of older white men because they (not all, but when it happens, this is the type) have shown racism and prejudice to me on multiple occasions," said Mosby-Norris.

However, similar to Nguyen's ideas, Mosby-Norris understands the line between prejudices and racism or discrimination. Both believe everybody has their own prejudices, but it is when those thoughts turn into unjustifiable actions, that social morals are compromised.

"I believe it is hard to not have some sort of prejudice because we are always apprehensive of what we don't know or understand to a certain extent. And the media portrays certain types of people and races in a negative light making it hard to not believe those things," said Mosby-Norris. "In my opinion prejudice is a slight apprehension to a certain person or group due to a negative experience or taught behavior. Racism is the hatred of someone or a group of people due to differences."



if you stop looking at race as a defining characteristic you can accomplish far greater things because you're focused on the goal and not who's achieving that goal."

Cicely Nguyen, Senior

other, what makes us different. If you take race off the table, you can no longer say we are different because of it. It's going to limit you. But you're making that choice in hopes of coming together as a people instead of as individual races."

Riffle addresses the issue of leadership as well. As with most things in the military it is a little less abstract. The military creates the order, not a preconceived social structure.

"Once you get out of basic training you'll go through a period of technical training which is essentially how do you learn the job that you've been given," Riffle says. "But once you get

Mosby-Norris is not without hope for this divided society. Her experiences have given her the idea that creating a community where each member is valued despite their sexual orientation or race. Her belief in communication amongst individuals to reach a moral and equal understanding is still in tact.

"I think acknowledging diversity is the only real way we will prosper as a society. The intersectionality that diversity presents and gives is a way for multiple people to find unity within anything. Being able to get ideas and understandings from others will allow us to make phenomenal discoveries and advances in the world," said Mosby-Norris. "I still believe we need to have those hard conversations where we acknowledge our history and what we have done wrong so that we can start constructing a better society. You can not build a sturdy home on a cracked foundation."

These stories provide examples of experiences. A biopsy of a cultural tumor which has grown, after a period of malignancy. Although to heal, it is imperative to decipher what these results mean.

Adam Potthast, Phd. is the program coordinator and head of the philosophy at Park. His office is lined with books by renaissance men, thinkers and explorers of the mind and soul.

Potthast is short, with the trademark philosopher's beard, a receding hairline and inviting smile. He looks like a modern, Caucasian Buddha and he delivers with the same patience and wisdom.

"So, one way of looking at the debate is sort of saying, Wow! I've got all these social constructions, if we just kind of get rid of the social constructions we could be much more at peace," Potthast says.

"But I think that whenever you go chasing that particular line of argument it's problematic. Because on one hand, the social constructions are what we are. We're bodies, but are our bodies are real because

they're just assemblages of cells. Our cells are real because they're just an assemblage of molecules, or are molecules really because they're just the assemblages of atoms. So, in Philosophically we have this kind of movement that came out of the 70s and 80s that's called reductionism. Most people believe that reductionism actually isn't a terribly productive project because you could say that it's only an illusion, it is really just atoms kind of shooting around but that ignores so much about what we really think is important, that it almost kind of doesn't matter that it's all atoms shooting around.

So, what are we without atoms, cells and neurons?

This is a sort of counterintuitive argument. An argument for the merits of divisions, but as with any philosopher, it goes deeper.

This is real work that goes to the individual and beyond. This kind of sweeping change requires a movement. The changing of the guard takes momentum and time.

"My simplistic take on why the project of the civil rights movement and second wave feminism didn't work out, was that while they questioned gender they were really moving more toward liberalism. The idea that we could all be essentially human and we could all share in our humanity. Everything else was just kind of window dressing that we put on ourselves. If we all kind of got back to love one another and do everything to keep participating in just these kind of very basic emotions and everything like that to be human. We wouldn't be black, we wouldn't be white, we wouldn't be male, we wouldn't be female, we wouldn't care about that stuff."

This great equalization is an idealistic version of what Riffle discussed regarding the military. To balance all people based on contribution rather than social divisions.

"My take is that what we thought we were discovering in the

60s turned out to be whiteness and to some degree of maleness," Potthast says. "What we thought was featureless, individual, plain human beings, were really what we took to be white people. They were articulate, they were rational, what we thought the general terms were actually, the way white people typically act or that's the way men typically act.

Unfortunately, you can't really sustain a movement where everybody's saying 'I want rights as a woman', and then black women are coming in and saying, 'But that doesn't actually model my reality. I need a lot more help than simply having access to the workplace. I need help with my culture. I need help being a black woman.' and so the big civil rights movements in the 60s kind of crumbled under the idea. (that this is my take).

As we started to solve some problems we started to kind of look and say. 'Oh there are actually problems with black women.' Or problems with Latino women, problems with transgendered women, problems with homosexual women and everything like that.

Potthast goes on to explain the concept of identity hierarchy. However, his construct removes the hierarchy. It recognizes every individual as a collection of elements composing a diverse individual composition.

"This is where the new metaphor is intersectionality," Potthast says. "Instead of being a white man, I'm at the intersection of whiteness and maleness and middle class ness or something like that. My particular identity isn't defined by any one of those things it's the intersection of a bunch of them. And that allows

"My take is that what we thought we were discovering in the 60s turned out to be whiteness and to some degree of maleness, what we thought was featureless, individual, plain human beings, were really what we took to be white people. They were articulate, they were rational, what we thought the general terms were actually, the way white people typically act or that's the way men typically act."

Adam Potthast, Phd. professor of philosophy

us to understand ourselves as kind of more nodes in a network of culture rather than some essential thing. It becomes quite clear that a black woman can't become a white man in the workforce because they're just different. Different expectations different senses of self that come from being in different intersections."

Potthast's discussion identifies the nodes each person plays in society. Just as biological systems are a series of nodes and intersections designed to communicate and function together for the benefit of the greater mission, life, individuals are parts of a bigger system-society. The circulatory system requires similar components to facilitate its mission of providing oxygen and nutrients to all parts of the body, yet it cannot function without the neurological system, or it needs the immune system to provide ongoing maintenance. Each system has a unique set of qualities and programming, but all intersect with each other to operate harmoniously.

Potthast explains that we are not our bodies, but we are our souls.

If history has taught anything it is that this is not a quick fix. However, the circulation of these ideas, the process of interacting across strata and preconceived bias only aids in the health of something bigger than any individual. Each division is a thing to be honored and appreciated, connection is needed within each subset, but dismissing them has proven to be a recipe for social illness.

"I think it's really exciting to realize that these issues do go a lot deeper," Potthast says. "It's about constructing a society as much as it's about figuring out the puzzles. I think it's about creating meaning for people. There's no magic fact that we're going to be able to teach people that it's going to bring them out of it. It's going to have to be we're all part of some kind of story. Unfortunately, the melting pot story has not worked."



Extraordinary Ordinary People

Giving back to something greater than you

Logan Freeman



Dreams are the essence of life. Passion drives those dreams, and this harmonious relationship creates the motivation to strive, to achieve, and to succeed; though it is rare, it seems, to find people actively living out this utopian ideal. Dreams fall by the wayside as life becomes all too real, and passion dies soon after, leaving people wandering, looking for direction. Some settle and accept what life has given them, but others, a precious few, hold on to those dreams in an effort to live life on their terms, be a part of something greater than themselves, and make the world a better place in the process.

In his approach to life, Zachariah King, 32,

has chosen the latter. After graduating from Park in 2016 with a master's degree in business administration focused in human resources, King has taken on the role of chief financial officer/treasurer for Youth Music Academy (YMA), a startup nonprofit music school based in Kansas City. In addition to his executive leadership role with YMA, he works as a regional operations supervisor for Redbox, a job he says has some cushy benefits.

"Excellent benefits," King says with a smile partially occluded by his renaissance style coffee mug before taking a sip. "I get a company car, five weeks of vacation now, holiday pay, nothing

major, run of the mill stuff."

King has worked for Redbox 10 years, mostly in management. For him, pursuing an MBA made sense.

"It's a degree to go after," he says. "Everyone wants an MBA, because it's one of the most sought after degrees out there that's not easily obtained. Businesses look for people who have that on their resume as their education, because it means that you've achieved a fairly decent understanding of management practices and how they apply to the workplace."

Having an emphasis in human resources helps him daily when interacting with his em

Photos by Logan Freeman

26 ployees, he says, though he admits he doesn't always use his degree consciously.

"For me," he says, "managing employees, with my focus being in HR, it helps me relate to the employees, helps me understand the employees, enables me to take a tactful approach when reprimanding an employee, or telling an employee they've done a good job, scheduling the employees. When you're in a management position, you use it nonstop, and you don't even realize you're doing it."

King says his education helps him when he's not at his primary job as a manager for Redbox, but also in his personal life and as CFO/treasurer for YMA.

"I use it a lot with Redbox," he says, "and I use it a lot with Youth Music Academy. I use mainly the finance classes there, and business development. It all plays into it because it's still in startup phases. Our team of three does a lot of work with that, but then I also find that I use my degree a lot with my friends, helping them make better decisions when it comes to matters pertaining to HR or just work in general."

Youth Music Academy, he says, is about helping others achieve their dreams, and he uses his degree to help the company support those people.

"Youth Music Academy," he explains, "is an organization that has been brought into existence to continue, as we like to say, the lifelong musical journey for people of all ages. We don't necessarily cater to young students or old students-- it doesn't matter if you're four years old or fifty years old, if you want to learn to play an instrument, if you want to learn to sing, Youth Music Academy has the means to help you achieve that goal."

King takes another sip of coffee and wipes his face as the hot liquid splashes onto his thick mustache. Seemingly unphased, he continues about what YMA means to him personally.

"YMA, to me," he says, "is an opportunity to learn and develop skills that I have, but it's providing me with avenues to use those skills when I probably wouldn't be using them. For instance, with my role at Redbox,



I don't use all of my finance knowledge. YMA, however, has opened up that avenue for me to use my finance knowledge and even use aspects of my leadership skills that I don't have to use in a day to day job. So I think that we could be limiting ourselves when we say that YMA is just for the musical journey, because when you look at our leadership team, it's developing us on a different level than what we're developing our students on."

Developing and focusing on others has always been a touchstone for him, he says.

"Prior to pursuing my MBA," he recalls, "I was actually working on a master's in counseling. It was a good fit for me as far as what I was doing work-wise, because counseling is very similar to management. It's the part of management that I liked-- that I still like. Switching from the counseling degree to an MBA in HR made sense because the counseling courses lined right up with the HR courses."

His focus on others goes further than just counseling, however. King says helping others is always his primary goal.

"Those who know me know that I am never about self-success," he

says, motioning his arms apart like an umpire calling the runner safe at home plate. "I have a sense of self-success, but I would bend over backwards to make sure other people succeed-- as long as it didn't harm me in the long run, because that's where my self-worth kicks in. But I would do whatever I needed to make sure other people succeed. That's who I am as a person. That's why I was pursuing a degree in counseling, that's why I've got a degree in HR; it's focused on other people vs. focused on myself."

Business has a reputation of being a dog-eat-dog world, each

person looking out for themselves and the next way to get ahead of everyone else. This seems to conflict with King's altruistic nature, although he rebukes the notion that business is always selfish.

"Business is a very cutthroat world," he sighs, leaning back and holding his arms behind his head. "However, there is a side of business that is



27 more about who you know vs. what you know. The interpersonal relationships that are in the business world based on who you know will get you further than the cutthroat will, because if you're always the one wielding the knife, cutting the throats, you have no one watching your back. But if you have friends that you have worked to build those friendships with who do have your best interests at heart, you've got their best interests at heart, you're helping each other succeed, you're going to get a lot further than the person who's simply out there to make a name for himself."

"So far, YMA doesn't have a knife," he continues with a laugh, "and I don't look for the organization to ever need one, simply because it would be contrary to the structure and the belief system that the organization is built on."

King gulps down another drink of coffee from the handmade mug. Light bounces off the glaze-covered dragon on its side as he tilts the rounded clay toward his mouth. He goes on about the leadership team YMA has.

"It's a good dynamic," he says, "because that way you have three individual voices. Three is an odd number, you can never have a tie on decisions-- it's a good number. It's a good start on a leadership team, and with our particular leadership team, three very strong-willed individuals, so opinions are sometimes very blunt, very direct, but it's never delivered in a way that is meant to be demeaning. All three members of the leadership team have the idea of growing, and it's just which approach is the right approach, and how are we going to achieve it."

Sheree Yoder, the president and executive director of YMA, founded the school and serves on the leadership team. She explains why she brought King onto the team.

"I have known Zach personally for about five years," she says, blinking behind dark-rimmed glasses. "I've worked with him on committees through our church, and I have great respect for him as an individual and as a business person. I was frustrated with our previous CFO/treasurer and needed someone who would take the role seriously and work collaboratively with me to accomplish our mission. Based on those considerations, I approached Zach about joining the YMA musical journey, and he accepted the role."



Yoder gives high praise of King, and she says what he brings to the table is hard to capture with just words, though she gives it a try anyway.

"Zach brings competence, professionalism, ingenuity, determination, collaboration, forward thinking, accountability, and positive energy," she says, laughing as her glasses wiggle forward on her nose. "Articulating the many ways Zach has contributed to our success would require more time than we have, but here are two specif-

ic examples."

She stops briefly to push her glasses back in place, carefully grabbing the frame by the side before quickly scrubbing the lenses with her shirt and returning them to the bridge of her nose.

"First, Zach transitioned our accounting from Excel spreadsheets to an online accounting system," she says. "While that may seem simple, the process of converting our financial records, balancing accounts, and revising pro

28 cesses has required him to spend many hours working on his own and with me and another board member. He willingly gave his time and energy without ever having to be asked. Second, during the summer of 2017, Zach and I were reviewing finances, and he said, 'We need a fundraiser -- like a spaghetti dinner.' Working closely with me and with our director of marketing, we planned the first annual 'Fall Fundraiser Spaghetti Dinner.' Without Zach, that event would have been difficult, if not impossible, to execute. It was our most successful fundraiser yet, and it's set in motion other fundraisers to help us continue to fulfill our objectives."

King is grateful for Yoder's efforts, he says, and part of their connection has been music, which has been a large part of his life to this point.

"Music has had the most influence in my life," he says, "because at a very young age it forced me out of my comfort zone. My parents recognized that I could sing, so before I was probably five or six years old, I was doing specials in church. By fourth grade, my music teacher had recognized my ability and had me doing solos during Christmas concerts.

"In high school, having an understanding of music enabled me to become a section leader, which would have been one of the first leadership roles I would have as far as being able to coach and help younger students. And then music has always just been that foundation you can fall back on as something for comfort, or something that helps you get through a hard time, or keeps you awake long car rides, even if it's the same Kutless CD over and over."

Laughing, he runs his hand through his hair and sits back in his seat, extending his legs forward. He pauses for a moment and muses about how he came to be the CFO for YMA.

"It's not necessarily a matter of being in the right place at the right



time," he says. "I knew Sheree before she asked me for the position, and she knew my passion for music at that point. It's more than just having known who she was that got me the position, or her knowing who I was.

"Call it destiny, I don't know. It is a perfect fit, although I've never really given it that much thought as far as from that angle, but me being in the position that I'm in very well could be because I've stayed close to the art of music and I've been involved with it. It's another way for me to stay connected to that."

King smiles and redirects to the company, saying he sees success and growth coming around the corner.

"I envision YMA continuing to grow at a much more accelerated rate than what it currently has over the next few years," he says, "simply

because Sheree has taken the time to build a board of directors and a leadership team that has a unified vision for where we all want to see the organization go. I think that YMA is getting ready to springboard off of that foundation and grow in the way that Sheree envisioned it doing all along, because she's wanted it to be something much larger than what it is. As she will tell you, her dream is to leave this legacy behind: an organization that fulfills its mission in fulfilling that life-long musical journey, and I think currently, with the way things are going for YMA, we're poised to take that step. I envision YMA taking off exponentially over the next couple years, quadrupling in size, easily."

Returning to his sense of selflessness, which seems to run through his veins, King expands on what he hopes his role is in the successes of YMA.



“I just want to be a part of it,” he says before taking another drink from his seemingly bottomless coffee mug. “I don’t have to leave my own legacy; being part of a successful organization is fun, and knowing that you’re a part of that organization is just as exciting as being the cornerstone that built the organization.”

King shifts in his chair and leans on its back, perched with one elbow on the cushion and one hand holding the back of his head. He looks at the ceiling, and while he prefers to focus on the

person with outstanding character. Ethical. I want people to see a person who enjoys life, who’s focused on friends and family, who is extremely optimistic, and loves to use sarcasm in almost everything he does.”

With a laugh, he leans forward and grabs his mug for the final time. Coffee swirls and sloshes as he throws the drink back, his face pointed upward to let gravity drain the colorful cup. He wipes his mustache again and offers advice for upcoming managers and future business people.

“The advice I would give is don’t be afraid

“Otherwise, I think you run the risk of being what I’m going to call a textbook manager, and that’s someone who has all the knowledge but none of the experience. Having worked in retail for 13 years, because Redbox is a retail business, I’ve encountered textbook managers, and they do a real good job of telling people how to do it, but they have no knowledge when it comes to showing you how to do it.”

“A true leader,” he continues, “everyone knows the phrase, they lead by following. They don’t just lead, because they know that in order



success of the company rather than his own, he still discloses what he wants his legacy to be--though he won’t call it that.

“Successful,” he says. “Who doesn’t want that? Successful at any cost, though, means that I could revert back to the common business practice of the cutthroat world, and that would not be how I want to get where I hopefully end up. I hope to be successful by being honorable and trustworthy in all of my dealings, and that it’s my character that gets me to those places, not my scheming and conniving. Through using good practices, being a trustworthy person, a

to jump in and actually get your hands dirty,” he says. “And I don’t mean that in the sense of going out and doing yard work. But if you’re going to go into business, and especially into management, don’t try to do it from the sidelines.

“You have to actually get into a position that allows you to be a leader. Whether that’s in the restaurant industry, the retail industry, or whatever industry you want to go into, you can’t learn to be a manager without actually being in a position that allows you to be a leader in some form.

to be a successful leader, you have to be willing to get in show people how to do it, and then it’s going to take off. You can’t lead from behind a desk.”

King sets down his mug, letting the spoon in the handle rattle as the clay hits the table. He reaches down into his bag and pulls out his laptop and a large, black binder-- YMA’s hard copy of financial records. In true businessman style, he rolls up his sleeves and promptly dives into his work, letting his passion drive him toward his dream of being a part of something greater than himself, making the world a better place as





Park's Year of Diversity

By Max Mohr

When Park University declared 2017 the Year of Diversity, we came together to celebrate cultures and ideas from all across the globe.

My goal for this project was to initiate a conversation about what diversity is. I wanted this to spark thoughts and open people's minds to new philosophies. I saw sides of people they don't normally show. I had intense discussions over what diversity can and can't include.

I gathered responses and took photos throughout the semester, compiling them in the end to create a spread showcasing the ideas and images. These are the answers of current students from all around our world, all connected through Park University, but also connected in their frame of mind.

It is more important than ever, especially in today's society, to embrace and celebrate diversity. My hope is that one day, we won't have actively search for diversity and what it is. Instead, it becomes a part of our lives. It becomes so loved and cherished that instead of only seeing the differences, we see only the similarities. We will view no culture as superior. This is what I think the world needs.

This is Diversity.

Madison Workman, senior, special education, King City, MO – “To me, diversity is bigger than you or me. It's an idea of differences but being united as a group; being, experiencing life shaped by those differences and celebrating.”

The World Through Our Lens

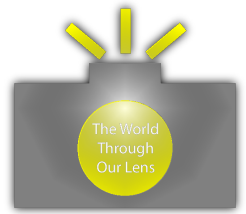


Ayla Parham, senior, biology and secondary education, Clever, MO – “I’ve studied biology for a while now, and often you talk about diversity. How when you plant one kind of tree or have only one fish species in your stream, the community and the ecosystem aren’t going to do so hot. Eventually, this will even negatively impact the population that is taking up the majority of the community. I feel that this goes for human populations too. That when we have differences between us, it makes us stronger than if we were one monoculture. Diversity just boils down to all the individual differences that make us stronger as a community.”



Margarita Araiza, senior, secondary education, Kansas City, MO – “Diversity is the difference of cultures. Cultures can be anywhere from race, low socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, personalities, religions, etc. Diversity means difference of people and their unique and special way of being. Diversity is greatness, diversity is knowledge, diversity is extraordinary.”

The World Through Our Lens



Marcus Lopes, freshman, fitness and wellness, São Paulo, Brazil – “Diversity for me means different people or things together.”



Lucas Silva, senior, economics, Brazil – “The inclusion of different types of people such as people of different races or cultures.”

The World Through Our Lens



Indra Ganbat, senior, international politics, Mongolia - "Growing up in a small rural city, I was not exposed to diversity. Everyone around my little town looked the same, has characters that is almost eerily similar and most of us would go through similar steps in life. It was when I came to the U.S. that I came to appreciate the concept of diversity. I was surrounded by people of different races, cultures and characters. In college, I've met people from countries that I have never heard of and with that I've learned so much from them and my own little uniqueness was also a contribution to the diversity in the community. Diversity helps us come out of our bubbles and learn to appreciate the differences that we once were afraid to approach. In my opinion, that is what makes diversity beautiful and also necessary."



Jasmin Mir Peter, senior, international business, Micronesia - "Diversity encompasses complex differences and similarities in perspectives, identities, ideas and points of view among people in a group as well as among individuals who make up the community. It is the inclusion, appreciation and recognition of a variety of different types of people's characteristics such as gender, cultures, economic background, races and ethnicities, ages, marital status, religious and political beliefs, and language to name a few. Understanding and appreciating diversity is very important because it allows for a richer life experience, gives a new big picture perspective from different point of views, diminishes discrimination and it helps a person become a world citizen."

The World Through Our Lens



Anna Jaehn, psychology, Heidelberg, Germany - "diversity means to welcome, embrace and celebrate differences as they give each of us a sense a sense of uniqueness."



Aadarsh Chandan, freshman, management/logistics, Kam-pur, India – "The variety one discovers or experiences in the materialistic objects and organisms. The term 'diversity' can be used to denote the different types of the same subject."

The World Through Our Lens



Austin Appolis, freshman, biology, Johannesburg, South Africa – “It is the chance the next person’s life experiences, origin is the polar opposite of what yours is.”



Allison Davidson, sophomore, social work, Kansas City, MO – “Diversity is togetherness. It’s a unity that supersedes and simultaneously includes the things that make us different.”

The World Through Our Lens



Abby Jeans, senior, broadcasting, Kansas City, MO - "To me, diversity is expressing uniqueness. It what makes a person who they are."



João Vitor, freshman, marketing, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - "The difference between every single thing about humans. "

The World Through Our Lens



Greg Gunderson, President of Park University, "The mission of Park University is to value, respect, and celebrate diversity and inclusion. We do so via raising awareness and providing strategies and tools that support diversity of thought and expression which reflects civil discourse driven by love and reason."



Kiara DeVine, freshman, psychology, St. Joseph, MO – "Diversity is walking into class and FINALLY seeing someone who looks like me!"

The World Through Our Lens

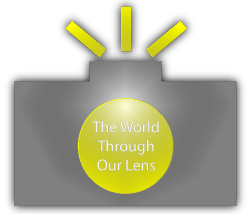


Kaitlyn Friesner, senior,
elementary education, Sioux
Falls, SD – Diversity is the cele-
bration of different cultures.”



Rodrigo Limn, sophomore,
business, Compinos, Brazil –
“Diversity is a range of differ-
ent things.”

The World Through Our Lens



Iroda Narzullaeva, junior, computer science, Uzbekistan - Diversity for me means understanding that every individual is unique and respecting the differences between us. This includes race, gender, political beliefs, sexual orientation, etc.



Jonathan Anguino, freshman, fitness and wellness, Kansas City, MO – “Diversity to me is the spread of different types of culture. To me it’s great to learn about different types of cultures. I personally learned new things about the cultures of my soccer teammates.”

The World Through Our Lens



Sydney Phillips, freshman, undeclared, Republic, MO – “The mixing of different cultures and people.”



Tijana Sisic, junior, finance, Novi Sad, Serbia – “The condition of having/being composed of different elements. Like the US, it’s composed of different nationalities.”

Last word: Where I'm from...

'You can travel the world with their stories'

By Eva Watson

"People need to freaking listen. They just need to listen. That's all I'm asking. Just listen and ask questions about people. Sometimes people don't want to talk, okay, don't ask questions, just listen to their body language. Watch them. You can tell a lot by their eyes. You can tell a lot by their body movement. You can travel the world with their stories."

This is what Margarita Araiza Villegas, a Park University senior majoring in biology and education, wants people to know. She wants her American neighbors to listen to her parents' broken English. She wants her parents to listen to her brother about his sexuality and addictions. She wants her parents to listen to her when she advocates for the community outside of her family. She wants everyone to be heard, so that everyone knows they belong.

Margarita's story begins when her father moved from Mexico to his sister's place in Michigan to work at a Mexican consulate, a branch of the Mexican government which issues Mexican identification cards in the U.S. for people who do not qualify for state identification cards. While at that job, he was able to give his wife and son permanent visa status in America. It's easier if you work for the government. Shortly after, Margarita was born in Michigan, a U.S. citizen. Her father was able to issue her Mexican citizenship as well. A month after Margarita's birth the family moved back to Cortázar, Guanajuato, Mexico where they had jobs, family, and a house being built. They went back home.

Margarita's mother worked as the secretary to the president of a sesame seed processing company. Her father worked as an accountant. Her mother was respected and professional. Her father knew everybody, and everybody knew him.

When Margarita was four years old, her father heard rumors that a lot of people were going to get fired in the company where he worked. There was an uncle in Kansas City who could get him a job, so he packed up and started to prepare his family's new life. While her father was in



Margarita Araiza Villegas --photo: Arron Riffle

America and her mother worked all day, Margarita remembers being in the care of her two godmothers.

"I do remember this, and there's a picture of it, 'cause it was like an everyday thing. One of my godmothers, the way she got around town was on a bike, and so she would have my brother in the front of her bike—the handles in the front, and she had me in the middle, then she had my cousin in the back. She carried all of us on one bike. She took me to school like that."

Margarita remembers going to catholic preschool where she was taught by nuns. Her brother and cousins would come visit her in class, and the nuns would get upset with them for distracting her, but she was always so happy to see them.

Where I come from, I am neither white nor am I brown

A year later, Margarita's father had a job, an apartment, and a minivan that he drove down to Mexico to bring his family to America. Margarita's father was excited, enthusiastic, driven and hardworking. He was also naïve, had dark skin, and spoke with an accent. They lived in the suburbs and he didn't know his neighbors. He worked eighty hours a week and was disrespected by men with plaid shirts, beards, and cigarettes. He saw his children at breakfast, dinner, and church. Within a year, the cars were paid off, and his family went from an apartment to a house.

Margarita's mother, submerged in a language she didn't understand, was left feeling unintelligent and disrespected. "She was never able to receive the respect

she received in Mexico," Margarita says. "I think that's one of the things that hurt her the most." She has worked at McDonald's for 16 years, and she appreciates the job. She appreciates having work to do and learning the stories of her co-workers.

At five years old, Margarita picked up school where she left off in Mexico. She recalls a photograph her preschool teacher took. All around are groups of children and adults talking and eating popsicles. Alone in the picture is Margarita, feeling lost and confused, left friendless from a

language-barrier. At five years old, she felt stupid. She went to summer school every year throughout elementary to raise her reading and writing comprehension. She listened to classmates talk about how only stupid people went to summer school.

By eight years old, Margarita was translating for her parents. Her older brother would not; he was rebelling against their circumstances. As a child, Margarita was aware of her family's struggle to feel at home in America. "I remember just like seeing their sadness," she recalls. "They were so sad." They call home to Mexico every Sunday. Their faces light up. They remember the dates of upcoming events, events they won't make it to. When the phone call ends, a sad, quiet depression resettles in the air.

The American dream. Her father makes enough money to support their family and help their relatives in Mexico pay for medical bills and go to college. He couldn't do that in Mexico with the state of their economy. Nuzzled in the suburbs of Gladstone, Mo., they have a comfortable middle-class life...smack dab in the middle of a foreign country with a foreign language and foreign culture. They live, sleep, work, and play a world away from their home. In American, they dream of being able to move back to Mexico.

Where I am from, I am neither Mexican nor am I American

In America, Margarita will always

be seen as Mexican. Game nights in her house were Mexican games; she didn't know what a bean bag toss was till high school. She was a senior before she had ever heard of tailgating, but when she is in America she immerses herself in American culture. Her parents visit Mexico every year. Growing up she would occasionally stay in Mexico for the summer, and when she was 15 she lived there for six months. When she is in Mexico, she feels fully immersed in Mexican culture, but her family teases her for her American mannerisms and style. She feels like she swings from extremes depending on where she is; she feels there is a balance somewhere that is eluding her.

"Anytime I'm in Mexico, I completely forget about my life here; so crazy how that works," she says. "It's so...like I'm dissolved into the life over there. And then whenever I'm here, though, I completely forget about my life in Mexico. It's so weird, like I hate it, 'cause I just feel like I should have a balance between both? But it's like either extreme."

Margarita is now 22 years old. In Dec. 2019, she will be graduating from Park University with majors in education and biology. She lives a full life, but she remembers what her family sacrificed to get her here. She remembers feeling stupid at five years old, and to this day her biggest insecurity is feeling stupid. To this day, everything she does is for her parents.

"If I'm stupid at school, how can I be better for my parents? If I don't have enough knowledge to give them? Everything I've ever done has always been for them. How can I not succeed in school, how can I not work hard, how could I not have good grades, how could I not have academic scholarships, how could I not... after my parents have gone through so many years of being alone in a country where they did not know the language, leave everything behind, leave their family behind to provide us a better life, and then me not be successful and not able to help them. And the only way I felt like I could help them as a child, and now as a young adult, like everything I'm doing now is for them."

I am not Catholic, but also no atheist

The Catholic church is a large part of Mexican culture. When her older brother came out as gay, then developed a drinking problem, her father blamed his addiction on his sexuality, and his sexuality on a lack

of morals. He went to church for answers, and cures, and came up dry. Margarita remembers being about 16 when, in bitterness and desperation, her father denounced his religion. Margarita followed suit; most of her American friends weren't religious anyway, but in Mexico it caused a bigger issue. Her father will wait outside the church when the rest of the family attends services and ceremonies.

Margarita also wanted to help her brother, but she couldn't, so she tried to help others with addiction. She went out into the community, learned all she could, and did what she could to help. She was driven by a selfish desire to make herself feel better, but that grew into a sincere activism.

I speak words of power, but also words of disgrace

Margarita's parents raised her with the values from their culture. Her father taught her stand strong and speak words of power. She stands strong in her vibrant personality. Her father meant for her to be serious. She speaks words of power in activism for those who are trying to make their voices heard. Her father meant for her to focus on the family. When she involves herself in the community, in her school, with her friends—anything that pulls her away from her family and career—her words of power are a disgrace to her parents.

I love those with a soul, but lose others without hope

Margarita listens to peoples' stories, falls in love with their souls. Somewhere along the road she found she could love women emotionally and physically to a greater extent than she does men. She saw the pain her brother caused with his "immorality," so she hides her sexuality.

Her family hopes she will marry and start a family someday. Margarita knows that marrying a woman and adopting children is not what they have in mind, is not what they are hoping for. While part of her longs to love the souls of this future family, the other part of her is afraid to let her parents down. Afraid they will not listen because of the trouble they had with her older brother. Afraid they will not support the lifestyle she chooses. Afraid they will not understand her love.

Where I come from, I could never be myself nor could I be someone else

Margarita doesn't think she would have

minged a life in Mexico. It would have been a simple life with a simple path to follow. She wouldn't have been exposed to all the diverse backgrounds people come from, or all the options there are for an individual to pursue. She would have lived a life content in its ignorance. Perhaps she wouldn't have been involved in community activism in Mexico, but she believes she still would have cared passionately about her family, values, and education. While so much of who she is feels dependent on which home she finds herself in, she knows there is a core of her being that survives and flourishes one way or another wherever she had grown up.

Where I come from I am only half and never full, but I am filled with light from all those in all my homes

Margarita lives a life of dualities. As she gets older, she is more comfortable with the discomfort of feeling like a part of her is always missing. The feelings become normalized. But sorting out life becomes more difficult. How will her family react if she proposes to someone? Where would they have the wedding and who would be able to come? There are so many logistics to sort out of having kids in a gay marriage. What if her future family isn't interested in visiting Mexico every year and celebrating the culture? As a teacher, will she upset anyone with her wedding pictures on display in her classroom?

These decisions may be in the future, but they tease her mind now. Just when she thinks she is ready for a relationship, they jump out to spook her. She struggles with pessimistic thinking, but she makes the choice to turn her thoughts and attention on those she loves and who love her, wherever she goes.

Where I come from I am my own

Margarita loves her family, loves her friends, loves her American home and her Mexican home, has made the most of her education, and will be making the most of her career before long. She doesn't know what a success story of a Mexican American would look like, but she doesn't feel she has made it there. She just wants to feel complete pride, and for her family to feel complete pride in her. She does not feel she is her own, she is the push and pull of where she is from, but she wants to be her own; she wants to feel complete.

A letter from the Advisor



Nate Robinson

This is the Park University Narva. This publication is approximately 116 years old. You may not have seen it before because it has not been published for several years. To be honest, the funding for the Narva disappeared mysteriously and the publication quietly left the Park scene. It was once a traditional yearbook complete with page after page of professionally produced student photographs. But the cost of publishing a hardback yearbook skyrocketed and the experience for journalism and public relations students, in my opinion, didn't mirror what they would later be asked to create as professionals. So, it morphed into an annual magazine.

The internet giveth and the internet taketh away. In this case, for all the data mush the internet giveth and all the single minded focus it taketh away, it giveth us a new way to publish the Narva. We found in 2018 we could publish the Narva online for a much more affordable cost. And this is the result.

The idea here is simple. We wanted to focus the 2017-2018 Narva on the actual people of Park University. When I advised the Stylus I had a poster on the wall which read: "It's about people. It's always about people."



Cheyenne McGinnis



Cicely Nguyen

This I firmly believe. Every story is about a person. A story about a new building isn't about the building; it's about the person who designed it, the people who poured the concrete and mitered the woodwork, and the people who will use it. Park University, similarly, is really about the people who come through its doors. This I also firmly believe.

And anyone who has been around Park very long and has seen this place with open

eyes, will attest the people who make this place are a quirky bunch. No cookie cutter students fill these classrooms, no cookie cutter faculty members lecture from the podium and no cookie cutter staff members keep this train on track.

We start here with *Unsung Heroes*. From there we go to a section we call "Where I'm From..." The background idea was to ask people to build a poem with the start of each line "where I'm from..." (This idea came from education professor Kathy Lofflin from something she did in her class that worked like a wonderful charm.) Then we transition to a set of stories under the heading of "Ordinary Extraordinary People." We close with a beautiful photo essay of portraits by Max Mohr capturing the diversity of the Park student body.

So, enjoy our new old annual magazine designed and executed by students for students.

Cicely Nguyen

spearheaded the project, Cheyenne McGinnis turned copy and photographs into gold and always seemed to have the right idea when we needed one, Connor Jones flexed his muscle, drank from gallon jugs of water and got out and pushed the car when it ran out of gas, Nate Robinson, Max Mohr and Aaron Riffle provided extra help when they had no academic reason to do so.

This is, beyond question, the best and brightest staff of journalists I have had the pleasure of working with across the past 36 years in academia. This, my friends and colleagues, is the way to walk out the door.

- John Lofflin



Connor Jones



Aaron Riffle