

# HERITAGE

FALL 2022



**Azle  
News**



**The  
Springtown  
Epigraph**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**3** **Throw Princess**  
BY JESSICA MCKINNEY  
Shelbi Vaughan Walley  
training for Olympics



**6** **We ARE Our Brothers Keeper**  
BY MADELYN EDWARDS  
Springtown overdose  
awareness group



**10** **Muscle Bound**  
BY JEFF PRINCE  
Monte Sparkman  
teaches strength and  
conditioning



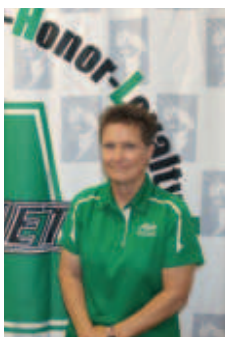
**14** **Putting the unit back together**  
BY JESSICA MCKINNEY  
Equine therapy



**18** **COVER STORY:**  
**Springtown ATV rider represents US in European race**  
BY JEFF PRINCE



**20** **Raising leaders**  
BY MADELYN EDWARDS  
Springtown 4-H



**25**  
**Becky Spurlock**  
BY DON MUNSCH  
Coaching the coaches



**23**  
**Changing Faces**  
BY DON MUNSCH  
Azle native  
writes book

# 'Throw Princess' aims for Olympic return

## [PEOPLE]

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

It's been six years since Shelbi Vaughan Walley of Azle stepped into the throwing ring at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. She was a member of Team USA Track and Field, and her event was discus throwing.

Although she did not come home from Rio with a medal, Walley received a hero's welcome from her hometown of Azle when she returned.

Since then, Walley has worked as a coach for select volleyball, helped train some aspiring track and field athletes, started a cookie business, and got married.

And then, the icing on the cookie, she and her husband Korben welcomed their son Hudson to the world last year.

Now that Hudson is almost 2, Walley is training to go back to the Olympics.

"I'm trying for next season," Walley said.

Walley has been training at local gyms and traveled to track meets over the last year.

"It's been very different because Hudson is there with me," she said. "I'll have someone with him at the track to watch him while I'm there."

Walley has also been training without a full-time coach to help her, al-



Shelbi Vaughan Walley got the nickname "Throw Princess," in high school, thanks to her pink bow. COURTESY PHOTO

though she does reach out to a coach in Arizona who helps with advice and support.

Her husband has been training with her as she works toward her goal.

"(Korben) did track in high school,

so he gets it," said Walley.

The couple met in high school but didn't reconnect again until after college.

"He challenged me to a throw-off when we were dating," Walley said.





Walley in the throw ring at the 2016 Olympics in Rio.

COURTESY PHOTO

“And I beat him, of course.”

She had a minor setback with an ankle injury, but she’s not letting that push her off her path to the Olympics.

“Plus, I’m older now and recovery is different,” said Walley with a laugh. “No ice baths or trainers to help.”

While she trains, Walley has also started a cookie business, Blessing Bites, out of her home.

“I enjoy doing it,” she said. “It’s not

really for the money, but more for what I can do for others.”

Decorated cookies are a big business these days, with home bakers starting new businesses every day.

But Walley didn’t want to be one to put a high price on her work. She often bakes for fundraisers and charities.

She has also taken on the role of coach for select volleyball teams. This gives her a chance to take what she has

learned as an athlete and to share it with her players and their parents.

“It’s important to remember to love the sport, especially how much you have to give now,” Walley said. “This is something you love to do.”

Walley said as an athlete in high school, she always felt that she had something to prove, and to prove people wrong.

“I had this attitude of ‘Don’t tell me I



Walley blesses people with her cookie creations through her business, Blessing Bites.

PHOTO BY JIM STEVENS

can't do something.”

This is the same wisdom she imparts to her players.

“Don't let anybody tell you that you can't set goals high,” she said. “The sky is the limit. How bad do you want it? How hard will you work to get it?”

Walley also wants parents of athletes to know that “being there for them goes a lot further than you think.”

“Kids know what parents put in financially ... but it doesn't compare to having them there in the stands. Encourage (your kids) to not let anyone tell them they can't do something.”

# Come *Grow* With Us!



Ask about our  
PERSONALIZED  
PRICING



At Legacy Oaks, our residents pursue their passions with fellow residents excited about living their best lives daily. Through our social clubs and fun-filled activities calendar, we host more than 300 events monthly!



**Legacy Oaks**  
*of Azle*

INDEPENDENT LIVING | ASSISTED LIVING | MEMORY CARE



**SCHEDULE YOUR TOUR TODAY**  
**CALL 817-854-8291**



1364 Southeast Parkway, Azle, TX 76020  
[www.LegacyOaksAzle.com](http://www.LegacyOaksAzle.com)





COURTESY PHOTO

Jessica Castro speaks at a Springtown Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

PHOTO BY MADELYN EDWARDS

## [COMMUNITY]

# 'Not the only ones': Springtown overdose awareness group makes a difference

BY MADELYN EDWARDS

A few years ago, Springtown couple Jessica and Joe Castro celebrated their anniversary by going to Six Flags. The next day, their lives changed forever. Joe Castro got the call that morning that his son Joseph had died. He was 28.

At first, the family was told that Joseph died of a seizure, but then it was revealed that he had an overdose from fentanyl usage.

Joe and Jessica Castro described the loss as shocking and devastating, with Joe saying, "it's like our world fell apart." Jessica said there were days when she felt like she couldn't breathe or wasn't motivated to get up every day, like a piece of her life was missing.

Joseph's death probably would've still been painful no matter what kind

of person he was, but the couple described him as particularly special – a great older brother, a giving person, someone who Jessica Castro said could "make you smile on your worst of your worst days."

"He would just give you the shirt off his back," Joe Castro said. "He was always there for everybody, always smiling. You'd look at him and you would swear that he didn't have any troubles in the world. He was one of those to sit there and smile regardless of what his





Joe Castro holds a picture of Joseph to memorialize him for Black Balloon Day.

COURTESY PHOTO

problems were, but he would always make sure that everyone else was taken care of."

When she was grieving Joseph's death, Jessica Castro said people around her seemed quick to label Joseph and imply that he deserved to die through statements like, "He kind of knew what would happen to him." In her speech at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon in May, she said overdose deaths tend to come with shame and judgment from others. The labeling made Jessica Castro feel angry and lonely, she said.

"All these people are supposed to be our friends. If we tell them how he died, it's going to be like they're not going to want to be our friends anymore or they're not going to care," she said. "I didn't like that feeling."

The turning point for the couple was the establishment of the group "We ARE our brothers keeper" to raise awareness about overdoses and bring the Springtown community together. Joe Castro said the name of the group was inspired by Joseph who "always looked out for his younger brother."

The group's purpose is to allow people to be able to talk about drug ad-



Joe Castro sets up the Overdose Memorial Christmas tree to remember those lost.

COURTESY PHOTO



diction and overdoses, Jessica Castro said, and prevent deaths through communication.

The creation of “We ARE our brothers keeper” came when Jessica Castro was feeling angry and emotional over Joseph’s death. At the time, she said she drank heavily to cope with the loss and pain.

“I would pray and tell God, ‘I’m really mad. This is messed up. How can you expect us to keep going on and you’ve taken the best part about life away?’” Jessica Castro said.

Then one night when she felt particularly angry, she had a supernatural experience. Out of nowhere, Jessica Castro said she heard, “You’re not the only ones. You’re just not, and you need to go tell other people that they are loved.”

Her theory is that the message came from God and Joseph, and she interpreted this call to action as a way to keep the memory of Joseph alive.

“When I got angry that time and I heard that, I thought, that’s it - that’s how we keep him alive,” Jessica Castro said. “We don’t have to always shout about Joseph. We can just love other people.”

The best place to find out more information about “We ARE our brothers keeper” is through joining the private Facebook group. As of August 2022, the group has just over 860 members. In the group, Jessica Castro will often share news about upcoming events, and people will share information related to substance abuse or drugs and messages of hope.

While Jessica Castro is glad to see the Facebook group grow, it is not lost on her why it’s growing, and that every member represents someone whose life has been affected by drug overdose or addiction. She also recognized how important it was to connect people to resources.

“It also goes to show how necessary something like this is,” she said. “That’s 800 people that didn’t know the other one exists.”

Joe Castro said the group’s goal is not just to reach out to families who have lost loved ones to overdose but



Springtown Mayor Greg Hood presents Joe and Jessica Castro with a proclamation in honor of Black Balloon Day.

COURTESY PHOTO



also be able to intervene in people's lives and help.

"We also want to talk to those before it's a tragedy," he said.

Through "We ARE our brothers keeper," the Castros have had the opportunity to host community events and speak with people to spread awareness. They have taken time to memorialize people's loved ones who have died of overdose through the overdose memorial, the Christmas tree adorned with names of those who died, and Black Balloon Day. They hosted a car show to raise money to aid people seeking substance abuse treatment and for funeral expenses for families who have lost loved ones. They adopted a section of State Highway 199 in Joseph's honor as a way to bring the community together for clean-up days.

Mike Carter, who is the intensive outpatient program manager and alumni relations coordinator for the youth treatment center Clearfork Academy, was one of the speakers at the overdose memorial that "We ARE our brothers keeper" held in August 2021. There, he spoke about the rising number of overdose deaths, particularly those related to the synthetic opioid fentanyl, and people he had known who died of overdose. He also was able to introduce "We ARE our brothers keeper" to people they could ally with.

"We just started pulling in some people that we knew and trying to get behind what they're doing because I know that vibe that they have is such an important one and something that needs a voice," Carter said.

Carter said he started working with "We ARE our brothers keeper" because of the group's message of wanting to help people, specifically helping people access substance abuse treatment. Earlier this year, he attended the group's car show fundraiser to provide resources and information to people, and he has also attended the group's addiction support meetings.

"A lot of people just don't understand addiction and how it gets a grip on people," Carter said. "There's so many people who think that you can just quit anytime you want to and it's easy to walk away from, but it's not. It's a very difficult process."

Carter praised "We ARE our brothers keeper" for bringing more awareness to the Springtown community about substance abuse, overdose and places that can help like Clearfork Academy.

The impact Jessica Castro hopes that the group has locally is to bring about more information about drug overdoses and more understanding as opposed to judging. In the future, she would like to establish a resource center for people to access resources related to substance abuse, like counseling and classes.

"You notice there was places like Center of Hope or Freedom House where it's about domestic violence (help and awareness), things like that, which are very necessary, but there was another problem that we weren't addressing in town," she said. "I hope to make a positive impact like Center of Hope or Freedom House does, something that is very positive and helpful to the community in general."



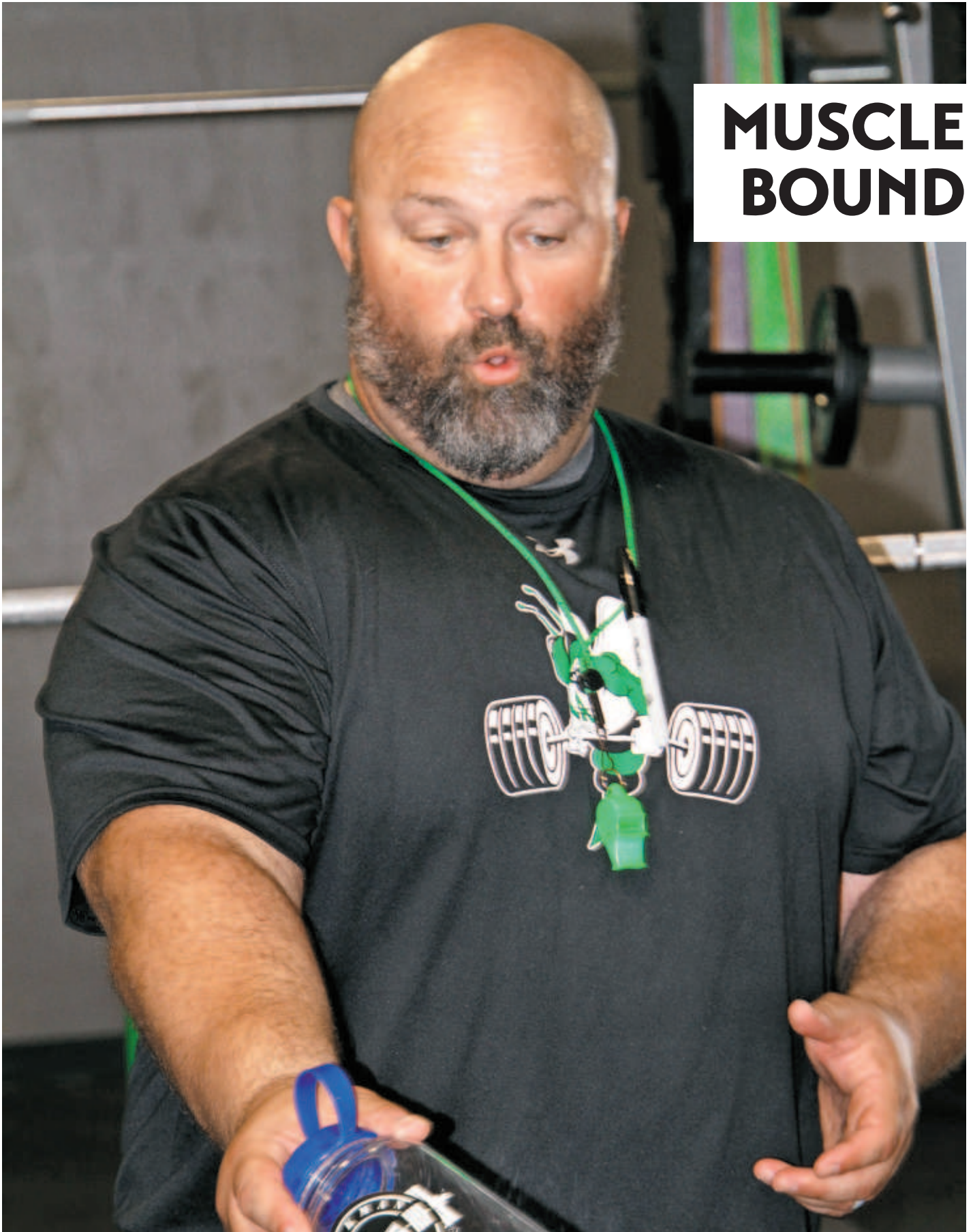
# Great Smiles Start Here



**Call to get your smile started today!**  
**817-444-1763 • SmileGreat.com**



# MUSCLE BOUND



Monte Sparkman uses his water bottle as a prop while discussing the importance of hydration during athletic performance camp.

PHOTO BY JEFF PRINCE



## [SPORTS]

# Performance coach increases athleticism while reducing injuries

BY JEFF PRINCE

The athletic performance summer camp at Azle High School is designed to improve strength, conditioning and flexibility, although coach Monte Sparkman spent most of his time on a recent morning talking about hydration.

“Water, water, water,” he said, encouraging a room full of teenagers at the Azle weight room to drink plenty of liquids before, during and after workouts.

In 2021, Sparkman became the school’s first fulltime strength and conditioning coach, teaching overall performance rather than a specific sport.

Not many high schools have created the position, Sparkman said.

“It’s still a fairly new concept,” he said. “You’re starting to see more and more (similar) positions pop up regionally, but the idea of having a full-time head strength and conditioning coach on staff is still a relatively new concept statewide. Azle is on the forefront of this new position, taking care of athletes from a performance standpoint, a nutritional standpoint and an injury reduction standpoint.”

In recent years, more high schools have begun following the examples of college programs and hiring a strength and conditioning coach to assist the sport coaches. Sparkman credited Azle athletic director Becky Spurlock with bringing him to the school.

“She is someone who has a great vision for our athletic department,” he said. “She saw the need for someone to be responsible for the training for the strength and conditioning of athletes.



The strength coach works up a sweat in the weight room alongside the student athletes.

PHOTO BY JEFF PRINCE

The tactical side of athletics has been taken care of by coaching for many, many years. But there has been a void between the tactical side and the injury reduction side. In athletic training, it’s been upon the coaches to take care of that. She saw the need to bring in somebody who was qualified, specialized.”

The coach has been certified by several national strength organizations and holds a master’s degree in educational leadership. He had been the strength

coach at Richland High School for several years before making the switch to Azle. His reasons for joining Hornet Nation included the school’s leadership under Spurlock and its impressive infrastructure.

“We’ve got a brand new state-of-the-art weight room,” he said. “Administrative support. Financial support. This is a great place to be from a resource standpoint and a support standpoint. I’ve got everything I need to create a successful strength and conditioning

program. That was the biggest reason for coming over here, the opportunity to create from scratch a brand-new program.”

Strength coaches can enhance muscle and power but also focus on speed and conditioning while adding a “layer of insulation to our athletes from an injury reduction standpoint,” he said. “A lot of people talk about preventing injuries. You can’t prevent injuries, but you can drastically reduce the incidence of injuries by proper training, proper conditioning. That’s a big component of this position.”

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts the employment of strength coaches will grow by 11% between 2018 and 2028, a faster rate than the average for all occupations. Most of that demand is expected to come from increased participation at the high school and college levels.

“Everything has a trickle-down effect from college to high school,” Sparkman said. “The next big trickle down is to get a fulltime strength and conditioning staff at high schools. It’s needed because, just like you have specialists in teaching and specialists in different sports, you need to have a specialist in the training of those (athletes).”

A workout with Sparkman involves numerous warnings. He tells kids frequently to watch what they are doing and to be aware of people around them.

“That’s the most dangerous room on campus,” he said recently, pointing at Azle’s weight room. “You want somebody who is specialized, qualified and certified running that program.”

Sparkman and his wife, Sabrina Sparkman, have been married for 16 years and have two daughters – Jackie Shea, 13, and Allie Rae, 11. Sabrina works as an engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers in Fort Worth.

## ROLE MODEL

Burkburnett, a small town in Wichita County, is where Sparkman grew up. As a kid, he was impressed by a football coach who was a former college and professional football player.

“He was really strong, and I wanted to be like him,” Sparkman recalled.



About 260 kids signed up for athletic performance camp over the summer.

PHOTO BY JEFF PRINCE

In high school, Sparkman became a fixture in the weight room. He wasn’t the tallest or biggest kid around, but he wanted to be the strongest and knew how to make it happen.

“I was drawn to the weight room and to the pursuit of strength,” he said. “Strength has always impressed me.”

He played football through high school, lettered three years on the team at Baker University in Kansas and lifted weights religiously.

“The little success that I was able to have goes back to being strong,” he said. “That was really my biggest attribute. I was never the fastest. I wasn’t the biggest. And I really wasn’t the most athletic. All I knew was to get stronger.”

He continued pumping iron after college, but it wasn’t until he was 30 that he realized lifting could become more than a hobby.

“That’s when I figured out, hey, this is what I want to do,” Sparkman said. “From then on, it’s been pursuing that opportunity full time.”

Nowadays, he considers strength just a piece of overall athleticism.

“I would go as far as to say, that’s the easiest thing to do, is to make somebody stronger,” he said. “To make them a better athlete is a whole different concept.”

The program Sparkman has developed over the years and is installing at Azle includes resistance training, movement, mobility, nutrition, restorative periods, hydration and other elements. That means a wrestler or basketball player will benefit from the program as much as a football player.

“If I’m going to get a rebound, and I can jump faster than my opponent, I’m going to have a better chance of getting that rebound,” Sparkman said. “We can train that in here.”

## TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

Sparkman’s program includes technology that tracks each athlete’s progress, which can serve as a great motivator.

“When I come in to lift, when I train myself, I want to know that I got better or not,” Sparkman said. “Getting better each session fuels me to come back, and that’s what I try to create with our athletes, to instill success when they come in here.”

Each weight rack has an iPad, and athletes log and track their data daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. The information helps develop profiles of athletes that will eventually stretch four years if they remain in athletics.

“From the time they come in, to



the time they leave, we have a snapshot of the body of work they are doing, just like in the classroom,” the coach said. “The number of reps. Number of sets. The weight. Lasers that measure how fast you run. We have devices that tell you how fast the barbell is moving. These are all technologies that aren’t common, and we are fortunate to have them here at Azle. That goes into creating that second-to-none experience.”

Building strength and muscle can be a slow process. Tiny improvements from day to day aren’t always noticeable. Kids like to see their progress, he said.

“Having that technology allows us to show them,” he said.

That day in the weight room, several kids established personal records, which made them happy and encouraged them to try for new records.

“Are they going to improve every

day? Not necessarily,” Sparkman said. “But the idea is at least once a week or every other week, they hit what we call a PR – a personal record.”

Seeing those results inspires the kids to do better, and they keep coming back. Sparkman said he is blessed to have so many coaches around, all focused on improving the lives of kids through work ethic and good health.

“We’ve got 14 or 15 tremendous coaches who do an outstanding job working with our athletes,” Sparkman said. “It’s surrounding ourselves with the right personalities and right people who want to pour into these kids. It’s hard work to show up and train in 100-degree weather day in and day out, but if the athletes care, the athletes know that you care, and you can inject a spirit of fun and a spirit of energy into their training, that’s how you get them to buy in.”

The push appears to be working.

About 260 kids signed up for the athletic performance summer camp, where high school boys work out in the early mornings, high school girls train from 9 to 10:45 a.m., and the middle school kids go to noon.

“The goal next year is to break 300 and then to just keep it keep it going from there,” Sparkman said. “We want as many kids being a part of this thing that we can get because it is crucial, and not just from a fall sport standpoint. We’ve got cross country, volleyball and football coming up, but you also want to bridge the gap to those sports a little bit later - basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, golf, swimming.”

The Azle school district boasts about 800 kids participating in sports.

“The goal would be to get them all here,” Sparkman said with a smile. “The ultimate goal is, we want to create a program that kids don’t want to miss.”



Monte Sparkman shows kids how to lift and slam a medicine ball.

PHOTO BY JEFF PRINCE



  
WESTERN CROSS





[THERAPY]

# Putting the unit back together

## Healing PTS with equine therapy at Western Cross Ranch

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

---

Winston Churchill once said that there is “something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”

As a young man, Dale Long came to realize that he had two fathers: the one that was every day, and the one that was in the saddle on a horse.

It was this realization — the difference in someone when they are interacting with a horse — that has led to the start of Long’s nonprofit organization Western Cross Ranch.

The mission of Western Cross, located in Azle, is to “save lives and put families back together; to provide a haven for the damaged warriors, and those they love, to heal” with Equine Assisted Learning. The programs will aid veterans and first responders, as well as their families, deal with post-traumatic stress.

Long’s father was a Vietnam veteran and was dealing with post-traumatic stress, although they didn’t know it at the time.

“That wasn’t a word that was used,” Long said. “But it was real in our lives.”

Long talked of having to “walk on eggshells” and having a father who was “emotionally voided in a lot of ways” while growing up.

“(He) was distant and quick to become angry, and volatile almost,” he said.

Dale Long is bringing his knowledge and experience with horses to Western Cross Ranch.

PHOTO BY JIM STEVENS



Cynthia Graham, a Vietnam era veteran, has partnered with Dale Long on a mission to help those living with PTS.

PHOTO BY JIM STEVENS

Then, in 1979, Long himself enlisted in the Army, flying with combat units and medivac.

“Saw a lot of trauma, death, dismemberment, injuries, burns. ... Just a lot of things,” said Long.

But through it all, and even many years after leaving the service, Long didn’t feel affected by all that he had seen and experienced in the military. It wasn’t until a few years ago that his wife Donna started to realize that something was changing in Long.

“I began to experience some, I don’t want to call it depression, but some feelings and emotions that I hadn’t had before. Donna started recognizing in me some sleep issues. She would wake me up every once in a while, because I’d be talking in my sleep. I said, well, it can’t be post-traumatic stress, (because) I’ve been out since 1990. Here we are in 2018. That’s way too long to begin.”

Long began to research what might be happening to him, and that’s when he learned about delayed post traumatic-stress.

“The best way to describe it is this: you got this beautiful slab of foundation. But if we get a crack in it, and the weeds can start getting up through it, it starts making the cracks bigger ... when it starts to break, that foundation of all that stuff that’s underneath here starts coming back up through. Well, that’s the same thing with post-traumatic stress when it’s delayed. I’ve kept it for all these years and kept it under cover.”

Long said he wanted to remember the good times about his military experience. But when the crack started happening, it was like he couldn’t stop thinking about the bad instead.

He wanted to find a way to get back to himself. But he didn’t want to rely on antidepressants or other chemical drugs. And counseling isn’t really his thing, either. So, he began to research other ways to heal.

He came across a study by Columbia University on post-traumatic stress and equine therapy.

“What they came to find out is there is a true physiological reason, medical

reason, if you will, of why horses help veterans with post-traumatic stress,” said Long.

## MAN O’WAR PROJECT

Columbia University Irving Medical Center created the Man O’War Project to “explore the use of and scientifically evaluate equine assisted therapy to treat/help individuals who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other mental health problems.”

The project came about when veteran and philanthropist Earle I. Mack became concerned about the mental health crisis facing veterans.

According to USO.org, research showed that more than 30,000 active-duty personnel and veterans who have served in the military since 9/11 have died by suicide.

In that same 20-year period, 7,057 service members were killed in combat. That means the suicide rate among military members is four times higher than death during military operations.

The project sought to validate and strengthen the clinical data in the



efficacy of Equine-Assisted Therapy (EAT) for veterans with PTSD, develop a standardized protocol for delivering EAT for PTSD, and prepare a manual to be used and develop a training curriculum for practitioners.

## WHY HORSES HELP

There are several studies that show the benefits of working with horses in the treatment of PTSD.

- Because horses are prey animals, they are hypervigilant, giving veterans the chance to recognize and understand fear responses.
- Horses are sensitive to nonverbal and verbal cues, which gives great feedback to veterans about how they communicate.
- Horses live in a social structure and seek those relationships in a herd.
- Horses live in the moment. They are patient and forgiving, which vet-

erans need when making mistakes and learning from them.

- Building trust and relationships with horses must be earned.

EAT allows veterans to re-learn how to trust themselves and how to build trust with others, which is essential in developing successful relationships at home, work and back in the civilian world. It also helps them build on their own emotional awareness and their skills in regulating their emotions.

## ESPRIT DE CORPS

Western Cross Ranch is developing an EAT program that will help veterans, first responders and their loved ones heal from the trauma that comes from PTS.

The term esprit de corps means “a feeling of pride, fellowship and common loyalty shared by the members of a particular group.”

Long talked about veterans and being part of a unit when they are in service.

“The unit is just like the herd of horses,” Long said.

“You pull one horse out of that herd, and he becomes nervous. Where’s my herd? Where’s my support? What am I supposed to be doing? Well, it’s the same thing with a veteran. When you pull him out of that environment, he feels like he’s alone. He’s lost that.”

What will set Western Cross apart from other organizations is that the program is being run by veterans and children of veterans who know the pain of PTS.

“It’s putting the unit back together,” said Long.

For more information about Western Cross Ranch, visit [www.western-crossranch.org](http://www.western-crossranch.org).



## Christian Brothers

AUTOMOTIVE®

Complete automotive repair  
Service all makes and models

Free courtesy shuttle

Locally owned and operated

**Nice difference.®**

Bring in this ad for

# 20% OFF Parts & Labor

Up to \$200 Off



Mon - Fri: 7am - 6pm Sat - Sun: Closed

(817) 237-0606 [ChristianBrothersAuto.com](http://ChristianBrothersAuto.com)  
6531 Lake Worth Blvd, Lake Worth, TX



Dr. Jessica Brace,  
D.C., C.C.S.P.

## BRACE CHIROPRACTIC & WELLNESS CENTER, L.L.C.



Dr. Matt Mishio, D.C.



Olivia, Paisley and Gabby

### Chiropractic Care Can Treat:

- Headaches
- Pediatrics
- Personal Injury
- Asthma
- Common Cold
- Backaches

*Walk-ins Welcome!*

**Accepting All Major Insurance  
& Medicare In Network with**

**Care N' Care, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, PHCS,  
Aetna and United Healthcare**

Hours: Mon. 9am-12pm & 2pm-6pm • Tues. 9am-12pm & 2pm - 5pm  
Wed. 9am-12pm & 2pm-7pm • Thurs. 9am-12pm & 2pm-6pm • Fri. 8am-1pm

[www.bracechiropractic.com](http://www.bracechiropractic.com)

**237 W. Main St. • Azle • 817-444-2170**



Bryce Ford competes at the 3 Palms Action Sports Park in 2022.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TREMELLEN MEDIA HOUSE

## [COVER STORY]

# Springtown ATV rider to represent United States in European quadcross

BY JEFF PRINCE

Climbing onto an all-terrain vehicle – also known as a quad – for the first time at age 4 was a thrill for Bryce Ford of Springtown.

The thrills keep coming year after year.

As a child, Ford rode his ATV at a local motocross track frequented by motorcycle riders. One of them advised Ford's parents – Jon and Robin Ford – to let the kid race in the “locals.”

“My parents said, ‘What’s that?’” Bryce Ford recalled. “It was a racing series that was called TQRA. We looked into it and signed up for a local race, and then, it was up from there.”

In 2011, Ford raced the full year and won his first national title. He was 9.

Bryce, now 20, and his older brother,

Cody, now 22, both found success on the quad track, and the family created a business to oversee their efforts. Established in 2017, Ford Brothers Racing was designed to sponsor teams of riders at the youth, amateur and pro levels.

At times, as many as a dozen riders from the United States and Canada have been members of the team.

Ford Brothers Racing was created to “help other racers live their dream of racing nationally,” said Robin Ford, Bryce’s mother. “It’s an expensive sport, and training is very important to the success of the rider. We offered a free place to train as well as rider support.”

She remembers those early years as

extraordinary times for her entire family. Some of the riders who trained at Ford Brothers would soon become her sons’ competitors.

“We helped pros those years that both our boys race (against) now,” she said. “We have many long-lasting friendships from the experience.”

In 2013, the family built a practice track adjacent to their home on Jay Bird Lane. The property included 32 acres with horse stables. The Fords converted the stables into a race shop, apartment and training facility for riders, and they built a large practice motocross track. That track was later expanded to two tracks with large jumps, big berms and complicated whoop sections.





Showing off hardware from a recent race.  
COURTESY PHOTO

“That track has brought a lot of cool people that have come to train,” Bryce Ford said. “It’s super cool to wake up and go in your backyard and ride one of the best tracks in Texas.”

He trains from January through September, with much of his time spent at the backyard track.

“I know some of the neighbors probably don’t like us a ton because our bikes are pretty loud, but we’ve been fortunate enough that there have been very few complaints,” he said. “We train there are a lot.”

The overhead costs of the pro program increased over the years, and Ford Brothers Racing is currently sponsoring the Ford brothers only.

Bryce Ford’s quad triumphs continued as the years rolled by, and he has been named the American Motorcyclist Association’s ATV MX champion 12 times.

In 2015 and 2018, he was Youth Rider of the Year.

In 2019, he earned Amateur Rider of the Year.

In 2020, he won Pro Rookie of the Year.

COVID-19 decimated ATV competitions in 2020 and 2021, but Bryce Ford returned in 2022 and achieved what might be his biggest accomplishment yet. He was one of three people selected to ride on Team USA ATVMX. They will represent the United States at the Quadcross of European Nations competition slated for September 24-25 at Kramolin Track in the Czech Republic, an event that attracts riders from 20 nations and draws thousands of spectators.

Each nation sends a team with three riders. Teams compete in multiple races, with the team’s top five scores determining the overall finish positions.

Team USA is the defending champion after winning titles in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Ford’s racing partners are Joel Hetrick and Chad Wienen.

Wienen is an eight-time winner of the AMA Pro ATV Motocross National Championship who will represent Team USA for the fourth time at the European race. Hetrick is a two-time national champ who will represent Team USA in Europe for the third time.

Ford is making his first trip to race at Kramolin Track, although he has been racing as a professional for three years in the AMA Pro ATV series. He is the youngest team member to compete at the international event.

Ford described racing on Team USA with two of his heroes as the “experience of a lifetime” and said he will do

his best.

“It’s a super big deal and something I’ve always wanted to get selected for,” he said.

He grew up watching older riders being selected for Team USA and dreamed of hearing his name called one day.

“And now getting selected and only being 20 years old in my third year of pro class, it’s a surreal thing for me,” he said. “It’s very special. I’m excited to go compete against other countries and show them that the United States is dominant and that we are going to go there and do our best, and hopefully, we can bring back a title.”

In years past, the three members selected for Team USA were the top three riders from the previous race season. However, COVID mangled the 2020 and 2021 seasons, so this year’s Team USA members were determined by which three racers had compiled the most points so far in 2022.

“There is just one team from each country to get selected,” Bryce Ford said.

Ford was sitting in third place for the season when the team was created, and he earned his place among the veteran riders, Hetrick and Wienen.

“There are two guys that are really solid,” Ford said. “They’ve been racing for a long time.”

Ford is thrilled to be included.

“It’s something special, and I’ve dreamed of that,” he said.



Bryce Ford flies across the finish line at a race in 2021.

COURTESY PHOTO



Springtown 4-Hers make deliveries to first responders in conjunction with the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce. Pictured are 4-Hers Scarlett Webb, Makayla Beasley, Granger Farris, Brayden Beasley, Issac Gootee, Emma Hauprich, and Maverick Webb (in front.)

COURTESY PHOTO

## [ORGANIZATION]

# Raising leaders

## Springtown 4-H offers multiple activities, life skills to local youth

BY MADELYN EDWARDS

Cooking, archery, lambs and insects. These are some of the topics that Springtown High School freshman Emma Hauprich has explored under the 4-H umbrella.

"If a kid has an interest in anything, we have something for them in 4-H," said Kara Farris, Emma's mother.

The Springtown 4-H Community Club connects kids with a variety of activities, such as showing livestock –

sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, horses, poultry and rabbits – as well as working with crops, fishing, STEM, entomology, food and nutrition, and fashion and interior design, among others.

Members of 4-H also participate in community service around Springtown. That has included gardening work for the city of Springtown, planting vegetables for residents at Springtown Park Rehabilitation and

Care Center and helping an older resident with yard work, among other tasks.

"We do a lot of community service in our club, and I just think that feels really good," Emma said. "It's a lot of backbreaking work, but the aftermath feels good."

Emma is serving her second term as president of the Springtown 4-H Club and her eighth year in 4-H.



“My family – my mom’s side and my dad’s side – were both heavily involved in livestock and 4-H and FFA, so it’s just kind of in my blood to join it,” she said.

The Springtown 4-H Club has about 63 members, about half of whom usually show up for the monthly meetings. As president, Emma is able to harness her leadership skills.

“Our club has a lot of members, and I feel like I have good leadership skills, and I have good communication,” she said. “It’s a way for me to help other people and get more people to join 4-H and get more people to be an officer and just things like that.”

Emma shows lambs in livestock shows and is involved in food and nutrition, entomology and archery, all of which have some sort of competition element. She has won awards for the confections she baked and for showing lambs. She talked about how she and a team competed in a food and nutrition competition where they were told to make a dish with random ingredients and present it to judges.

Being in 4-H has connected Emma to interests that she never knew she had, like in the study of insects.

“I’m usually like, ‘Kill that bug,’ and now, I’m just like, ‘Get a container. I want to put it in the freezer,’” she said.

The same goes with friends. Emma has made friends with people she might



Emma Hauprich with the 4-H scrapbook.

PHOTO BY MADELYN EDWARDS

not have met if it weren’t for 4-H.

“I have many friends that I don’t go to school with,” she said. “I do hang out with them because I met them for 4-H.”

What Emma does in 4-H may be a starting point for her future career. She has two aspirations – to become a veterinarian because she loves animals or a county agent to continue working with 4-H because she loves kids. Either way,

she is building a foundation for her future in the Springtown 4-H Club.

## WHAT IS 4-H?

The 4-H Youth Development Programs in the U.S. began as a way for agricultural leaders to educate rural families and agricultural producers at the turn of the century. The origins of 4-H in Texas began with a corn club for boys created in 1908 in Jack County. Thereafter, pig clubs and beef calf clubs as well as tomato clubs for girls started up. From there, Texas 4-H grew from 25 corn club members in 1908 to more than 1 million members in 2000.

Created by Dorothy Huddleston, the Springtown 4-H Club began as a group of seven girls in 1954, and about four years later it became the Springtown 4-H Community Club, Emma said.

The 4-H program began to spread education to rural families, and while Parker County isn’t as rural as it used to be, 4-Hers can still bring education home to their families, said Kathy Smith, Parker County Extension Agent for Family and Community Health.

“There’s still opportunities for youth to gain skills in helping to preserve nature, being good stewards of our land,



Springtown 4-Hers present their float at the Christmas parade in Springtown.

COURTESY PHOTO



Springtown kids play a game at their Christmas party.

COURTESY PHOTO

taking care of it,” Smith said.

Smith joined the Springtown 4-H Club when she was 12 years old in 1972, and she eventually became the club’s president during her senior year. She remembers the club having about 80 or 90 kids involved and great leaders.

“We had a good group of kids, and the thing is I’m still friends with some of those kids that were in 4-H,” Smith said. “It was great program.”

In fact, 4-H is a significant factor in why Smith became a county extension agent. She looked up to the county extension agents who were around when she was a youth and admired their jobs. After high school, she set her sights on becoming an extension agent and eventually was able to achieve her goal and return to Parker County for the job.

“I love everything I do, but I still love being involved with the 4-H program,” she said. “Although I don’t have as much direct contact, I do support them, and I try to be involved as much as I can.”

There are over 500 members of 4-H in Parker County, and the club is still going as strong as it was when Smith was a member, she said. There are more activities for kids to participate in, but the club still retains some of its traditional elements, like offering leadership opportunities and allowing kids to make a record book to commemorate their time in 4-H.

Today, the Springtown 4-H Club

meets up on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the SHS cafeteria, and the kids are usually active from September until the Parker County Livestock Show in June. The meetings, planned by the club’s officer team, usually include updates on past and future happenings, a game and a guest speaker. Separate meetings are involved depending on the members’ chosen activities.

Kids in 4-H range in grades from third to 12th, and there is also a group for younger children called Clover Kids for those 5 years old up to second-grade age, Emma said. The Springtown 4-H Club president said that most members range from third graders to sophomores, but there are not a lot of older kids, who tend to lose excitement in 4-H as they grow up. One of her goals is to recruit more older members to be leaders in the group.

Farris, Emma’s mom, said sometimes high school-age kids will choose to participate in FFA instead of 4-H, which may be more convenient since FFA meetings take place during school as opposed to 4-H which is an afterschool activity. She talked up the scholarship opportunities that 4-H has to offer.

“I don’t know that kids realize there are great scholarship opportunities through FFA but also through 4-H. I know our club personally, we have scholarship opportunities at the club,

the county and the state level for 4-H,” Farris said.

Above all, Farris said 4-H teaches skills to kids that will last a lifetime, such as leadership, helping others, making new friends and time management. She also pointed out how 4-H has shaped her daughter’s career path.

“That’s what 4-H is teaching kids is how to be a leader, have life skills that they’re going to use forever,” she said.

For more information about the Springtown 4-H Club, visit its Facebook page at Springtown 4-H or reach out via email to [springtown4h@gmail.com](mailto:springtown4h@gmail.com).



Emma Hauprich at the Fort Worth Stock Show.

COURTESY PHOTO





Lisa Brown with son Logan. Lisa, who grew up in Azle, has written a book about how the family coped with Logan's medical condition.

PHOTO BY DON MUNSCH

# Azle native writes book to encourage understanding of rare condition

BY DON MUNSCH

Logan Brown has some convention interests for a young man – video games and cars – but he hasn't led a conventional life.

His mom, Lisa, wrote a book about how much her family has had to cope with a rare condition that afflicts Logan.

"Changing Faces: A Journey of Hope and Perseverance" was written to inspire people, Lisa said in an interview. The book was released in May, with Georgia-based Abuzz Press as the publisher. Brown grew up in Azle and went to Azle High, graduating in 1989. Brown and her family live in Willow Park.

"I'm not going to lie - I poured myself into this," Brown said about the book. "It was hard to do, but I'm glad I did it for the whole family."

Logan suffers from Apert syndrome, which is a rare craniofacial condition caused by a "fluke mutation" that hap-

pens after conception, Brown said.

From [rarediseases.info.nih.gov](http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov), we learn that the disease is "characterized by fusion of the skull bones too early during development (craniosynostosis) and webbing of fingers and toes (syndactyly)," adding that the condition "is inherited in an autosomal dominant manner, but many cases result from a new genetic change in a person with no family history of the disorder."

Brown wants people to know that awareness is the key to understanding Apert syndrome and that parents can educate their children that everybody is "made differently." Not all Apert sufferers have the same degree of the condition. Doctors treat the condition by remodeling the skull and separating the fingers and toes.

Logan has had 15 surgeries, but there are a lot of young people who

have had more, depending on the severity. Apert sufferers have a good prognosis for life, and Logan will be monitored through his adulthood.

Brown said people with Apert syndrome are sweet, loving, giving and caring individuals with a lot to share with the world.

## THE DIAGNOSIS

She and her husband were "shocked" to get Logan's diagnosis.

After Logan's diagnosis, the Browns met with a geneticist who prepared them with the realities of his condition.

"I don't think anything could have prepared us for what truly we were going to go through," she said. "But it's probably a good thing to not know everything in advance. You just have to take everything day by day."

In her book, just after Logan was

born, Brown describes how the geneticist explained the condition was discovered in the early 1900s by a French physician and that it affects one in 160,000 births.

With all disabilities, there's a range of how Apert syndrome affects a person's cognitive skills, Brown said, and Logan had a learning disability in math but he did well in school with a lot of modifications and accommodations and inclusion.

"And that helped him a lot being included," he said.

Logan, 20, attended Brewer High School and graduated in 2020. He now works at Walmart in Hudson Oaks, and he has worked there about a year. He loves cars and has thought about attending college, and his dream job would be to work with a racing team some day. Logan's paternal grandfather has rebuilt street rods over the years, and so there's a lot of car knowledge in the family. Logan doesn't have his own car yet. Besides cars, he enjoys playing video games and watching Japanese cartoons.

Besides his family, one particular friend has been supportive in Logan's life: Izzy Stark, who attends the University of Arkansas. She and Logan attended school together and have known each other since they were babies. Stark's mother and Brown are good friends.

"If I ever get down, she will push me up and say, 'hey, don't worry about that,'" Logan said.

Stark was in Finland this summer working on a lab research project.

In an email, she said she and Logan trick-or-treated together for years, especially around their neighborhood in Azle.

"We would drive go-karts in our yards, spend many summer days in Logan's pool, and play video games together," Stark said. "We were neighbors for years, and our parents worked at the same school, so we spent lots of before/after school hours together. We were very close. When we were three, we were Tinker Bell and Peter Pan in one of our preschool shows and even

had matching Incredibles pajamas."

She said they had plans to attend his prom as friends, but COVID-19 canceled those plans.

"Logan was quiet, but once around those he was comfortable with, his bright personality shone," she said. "He was always ready for whatever mischievous adventures each day brought, has the most infectious laugh, and is the greatest Lego builder in the world!"

## POSSESSING GRIT

Lunches were lonely for Logan in high school, his mom said, when kids find their niche and go their separate ways from others, and it was tough for Logan, although he did meet up with a couple of students to participate in a Bible study. Logan gets through life as best he can, and his mother said he "definitely has grit."

"Sometimes, it made it pretty rough," he said about his condition.

Brown holds an associate degree in accounting from Tarrant County College and worked in the accounting field for about five years. She eventually pursued and received a degree in social work from UT-Arlington and worked for early childhood intervention through the state. She received her master's degree in special education and taught for 16 years at White Settlement ISD. She left teaching in 2016 and she is back part time in accounting.

In 2016, she decided to write the book. She started a blog in 2014 after one of Logan's cranial surgeries, and she was ready to start sharing her experiences.

"Honesty, I felt it's something God laid on my heart to do, to share our family's journey with others," she said about the book. "We've been through a lot, and I wanted to let others know that there's hope out there."

The book took five years to write. This is Brown's first book.

"It was hard because it's personal, so I had to relive a lot of things," she said. "But it was cathartic at the same time. I pitched it to literary agents for about six months. This publisher is ac-

tually a hybrid publisher and they do publish through Ingram, which is the biggest book distributor. But I do have to self-market."

She has received good feedback in the short time it has been out, and she enjoys the positive reviews it has garnered.

"Really, I just want my book to get out to people to encourage people, to inspire people, help others know they're not alone," she said. "Anyone struggling, really, not just special needs families but people who go through hard times."

Through writing the book, she learned that she was holding on to a lot of emotions.

"I learned that I don't have to feel like I'm in control," she said. "I learned I can rely on my faith a lot more than I was. I learned that even though we may feel like we're alone, we're all going through struggles, so it's a matter of how we approach how we're going to handle it."

It was obviously difficult to experience everything that happened to Logan.

"I talk about that very candidly in the book," she said. "I talk about the hard times, but I also talk about the good times. We're like normal families, too. We have normal things that happen to us, funny things. It's tough on the whole family, it's tough on the marriage, but you do what you have to get through it. And for us, it's been relying on our faith. We're true believers in God and the power of prayer. And we're fortunate to have a lot of family who have been there with us and been our support."

Brown's parents – Linda and Emmett Hartsfield – live in Azle. Her parents read the book and loved it, Lisa said.

Lisa and husband Steve are also the parents of Landon, 17, who attends Aledo High School and will be a senior this year.

The book may be found on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com or BookLocker.com. A meet and greet for Brown will be held 3-4:30 p.m. Aug. 28 at The Journey Church, 9100 Chapin Road in Fort Worth.





Becky Spurlock, Azle ISD athletic director, manages various components of the athletic department, including coaches' evaluations.

PHOTO BY DON MUNSCH

## [SPORTS]

# She coaches the coaches: Spurlock shapes Azle athletics

BY DON MUNSCH

Seeing green.

Green jerseys, more specifically. Becky Spurlock oversees everything at Azle ISD's athletics – including ensuring green jerseys can be found.

It's a part of the job that one would not think would be difficult, but not many high school sports teams wear green, so Spurlock has to find companies that offer the appropriate green colors.

Locating clothing and equipment is just one facet of the job, as Spurlock has to hire coaches and ensure that those who are working here are per-

forming to district standards.

It's a year-round job with lots of demands.

"It's an honor to do what I do, to be honest with you," she said. "And I think I make a difference. I think I can help young coaches be better coaches; I can help old coaches be better coaches. You just have to approach them a different way."

Spurlock's parents were educators, and she has always had sports in her blood. She grew up in Woodville, in Southeast Texas, and was a multi-sport athlete there. She played volley-

ball, track, tennis and basketball. She attended Angelina College on a tennis scholarship. She attended the school for two years and also was a manager for the basketball team. She then went to Baylor and got involved in the sports medicine program and graduated in 1982.

Her first job after Baylor was at Waco Connally High School, where she was the head athletic trainer. She coached basketball, track, tennis and golf at the school.

In July 1992, Spurlock received a call from Baylor athletic director Grant Te-

aff and head athletic trainer Mike Sims to come back to Baylor. She worked as associate athletic trainer and worked with the football and women's basketball programs. In August 1999, Spurlock went to work with Keller ISD, and in her third year there, she was offered the assistant AD position and she stayed in there until she left in 2017, when she came to Azle where she was hired as AD.

## “THE KITCHEN SINK”

When asked about duties as AD, Spurlock playfully replies “the kitchen sink.” She ensures coaches understand University Interscholastic League rules, and she oversees budgets and ordering of equipment.

“We do all of the game management from here, meaning setting up our tickets – everything from season tickets in football to tickets for the games to tickets for all home events, no matter what sport,” she said in an interview from her office this summer. “We do a lot of that during the summer because that’s our prep time. We get our schedules from our coaches. We have a certain time we do our season tickets, which we’ve already done our renewals in our ticket exchange and now we’re in open seating. We have a few season (football) tickets left, but they’re going fast.”

Spurlock said Azle ISD has a three-year rotation on uniforms, and she buys uniforms every third year. Coaches pick what they want in a uniform and get a quote and then they send that information to Spurlock, who signs off and makes the orders. Football uniforms are the most expensive jerseys.

Equipment also must be purchased and managed, and the athletic department will try to buy a certain number of shoulder pads for football every year so they are up to industry standards. Helmets are purchased every year so that they don’t have a bunch of helmets go out of date.

“I think that’s critical – that’s the best way to do your budget,” she said, noting that coaches turn in a helmet roster each year.

Spurlock talked about how jerseys and pants are selected, pointing out at one point that black uniforms can last longer than white uniforms.

“You wash white in the wrong detergent and it’s going to yellow – and then you can’t get that yellow out,” she said.

Jerseys in Azle can be emblazoned with either Azle or Hornets, Spurlock said. Sometimes, a jersey can have Azle on the front and Azle on the back.

“The one thing I try to keep very constant is our logo,” she said, adding that changes to the logo are “not an option.”

ADs are limited to what the suppliers provide.

“Those companies put out certain colors and they’re like, ‘these are the colors for the year,’” she said. “You’re locked into purchasing a uniform they may not be exactly what you want because that’s what the big uniform people give that year. You do have to deal with that sometimes.”

The district still copes with the effect of COVID-19, as some uniforms cannot be acquired, or at least not received in a timely manner. Kelly green, Azle’s color, is “very, very hard to find,” she said.

## COACHING COACHES

Spurlock performs all the evaluations of the coaches and hiring coaches. Spurlock is involved in the hiring of junior high coaches as well as high school staff.

“Our junior high staff has gotten extremely stronger since I’ve been here over the five years, and I think we’re beginning to see the difference in the skill level of the kids coming up from the junior high level, which is what you’ve got to have,” she said.

Coaches have to be good classroom teachers, and that is non-negotiable, Spurlock said.

“If they’re not a good teacher, I don’t care if they’ve won 10 state championships, they’re not going to come coach (here),” she said.

Spurlock said coaches are among the best teachers on the campus.

As far as coaches’ performances, a win-loss record is factored into a coach’s evaluation, but it’s not the No.

1 factor for Spurlock.

“Athletics goes through phases,” she said. “The other thing that affects high school athletics is that every two years, UIL gives you a new district.”

She points to how the football team will have Denton Ryan and Aledo for the next two years in district play. But as far as the bigger picture, she looks at how well did Azle athletes compete and how coaches prepare the players. Coaches should hold “purposeful practices” to get the team ready to play its next game, Spurlock said.

“Now, we’re going to win some and we’re going to lose some games,” she said. “We’re going to compete for being in the playoffs, and I certainly think we have every chance to be in the playoffs in our sports, not just football. ... But what I look at is how coaches prepare those kids.”

She also looks to see whether coaches make adjustments during a game, if the situation necessitates it. She also wants to see a coach’s demeanor, and she wants to see how a coach teaches life lessons. Almost every team performs some type of community service, and that is critically important, Spurlock said.

Spurlock doesn’t see herself as a micromanager in many ways, explaining she wants to hire a coach and then let the coach exhibit his or her personality as that person coaches the team. A new coach coming in has to get to know the athletes, and Azle coaches seem to do a good job of knowing how to handle certain situations with players, such as those who may not have played well in a game, she said.

## MANAGING CONFLICTS

As far as coach-athlete conflicts, the Azle ISD protocol calls for the student and coach to talk, and if no resolution can be found, then a parent can request a meeting with the coach. If the coach-parent meeting finds no resolution, then the high school principal becomes involved.

“I am in that loop all the way, knowing what’s going on, but I’m the last person they come to,” Spurlock said, noting that some parents might talk



to some other individual, such as Superintendent Todd Smith. Azle parents are respectful of the process, she said, and let their children fight some of their battles. Athletics will teach people how to handle adversity when it arises, she added. Face-to-face or phone calls are recommended for parent-coach conversations.

On another topic, if students are not maintaining grades, then they can be released from athletics, Spurlock said.

Azle ISD has an extracurricular and co-curricular code of conduct for students who want to participate in athletics. The code outlines what consequences students may face if they are not following rules or coaches' directions.

Spurlock attends games and practices, and she will be apprised if coaches are not doing their job in the classroom, noting that situation doesn't happen very often.

## A STEADY STREAM OF DUTIES

There seemingly are a never-ending number of issues Spurlock must handle, from approving schedules and out-of-town tournaments to being involved in the pre-planning of playoff game logistics. In managing budgets, she has to ensure everything is Title IX compliant.

During the summer, she looks after hiring coaches and making sure they have everything they need, and summer camps have to be approved through Spurlock's office. As for the games themselves, Spurlock has to ensure people are available to work there. There is also maintenance of facilities to coordinate, too. Spurlock also works as the district executive committee chairperson.

Spurlock said she loves her job and said her regret is that she didn't ar-

rive in Azle 10 years ago. She appreciates the support of the school board, administration and parents. She likes seeing how much the athletic department has grown in her time as AD, and Azle teams made the playoffs in nearly team sport the last two years. The most challenging aspect to being Azle ISD AD is dealing with the growth in the district, she said.

"The growth in our community is going to grow our programs, which is a wonderful thing, but when you grow your programs, you also have to grow the number of teacher-coaches you have," she said. "We have been able to able to manage the growth so far, and our coaches are pretty phenomenal."

Keeping people in education also amounts to a challenge, because there are opportunities for educators to make more money and not deal with the pressures that exist now.

**More than just a pharmacy.**

**Laura's Pharmacy**  
 • Drive Thru Service  
 • Compounding  
 • Nutrition  
 DELIVERY AVAILABLE  
 817-406-4546

**Laura's HealthMart PHARMACY**

- **Essential Oils**
- **Homeopathic and herbal products**
- **Accepting Most Insurance**
- **Convenient Drive-Thru**
- **FREE Deliveries In Azle City Limits**
- **Most Prescriptions filled within 15 minutes.**

**Pharmacy Hours**  
 Mon-Fri 8:30 AM - 6 PM • Sat 9 AM - 1 PM • Closed Sun.

*Because We Care*

**232 W. Main St. • Azle**  
 www.lauraspharmacy.com • Fax 817-406-4550  
**Pharmacy 817-406-4546**

**Eagle Crest VILLA SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY**

*Welcome Home*

- Onsite Personal Care Attendants available 24 hours
- Medication supervision included
- Social and recreation activities
- 3 delicious home-cooked meals daily
- And More!

**Call About Our New Lower Rates**  
 Call Heather Holman Today to Schedule your Private Tour and Lunch  
**817-444-3249**

**113 DENVER TRAIL • AZLE**  
 www.eaglecrestvilla.com

Accepting VA Aid & Attendance, Long Term Care Insurance & Private Pay.



The right care,  
right here in Azle.

### Care and Wellness Where You Need It.

You don't have to go far for quality health care. You can get it right here in Azle. Texas Health Azle offers many services and advanced technologies, so you can get quality care closer to home. Plus, we are part of one of the largest health systems in North Texas, so you can feel confident trusting Texas Health Azle with all your health care needs.

Texas Health is right there with you.

**3D Mammography ■ MRI ■ EKG ■ Bone Density Testing**

**Emergency Services ■ Gastroenterology**

**Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy ■ Surgical Services ■ Orthopedic Surgery**

**1-877-THR-WELL | [TexasHealth.org/Azle](https://www.texashealth.org/azle)**

