

The Gateway

UNIVERSAL CITY COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2025 / JANUARY 2026

CoverStory

LIVING THE LEGACY



55+ NEWS | PET INSPIRED BUSINESS



Universal City Municipal Directory

2150 Universal City Blvd. Universal City, TX 78148

Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADMINISTRATION 210-659-0333

City Clerk	Maribel Garcia Uribe.....	7 4 8
City Manager	Kim Turner	7 0 5
Code Compliance Officer		7 2 5
Communications	Kathy Williams.....	7 0 1
Court Administrator	Brenda Watkins.....	7 1 5
Development Services/EDC	Michael Cassata.....	7 2 0
Finance.....	Christine Green.....	7 0 8
Fire Chief.....	Todd Perna.....	7 8 6
Health Official.....	Anabell Maldonado.....	7 2 7
Permit/Zoning.....	Linda Iglehart.....	7 2 3
Police Chief.....	Johnny Siemens.....	7 5 5
Community Events.....	Mari Zeppenfeldt.....	7 2 1
Senior Activity Coordinator.....	Annette Strapple - astrapple@uctx.gov	
Water Billing.....		7 1 0

Departments

Animal Care & Control	210-659-0333	EXT. 700
Fire Department	210-659-0333	EXT. 250
Golf Course	210-659-0333	EXT. 653
Library.....	210-659-0333	EXT. 048
Parks/Pavilion Rental	210-659-0333	EXT. 364
Police Department	210-659-0333	EXT. 353
Public Works.....	210-659-0333	EXT. 364

MAY 2026 ELECTION QUICK FACTS

POSITIONS UP FOR ELECTION

Mayor (incumbent Tom Maxwell)

3 Councilmembers (incumbents Putt, Rubal, and Vaughan)

Candidate Information:

Candidate filing period from January 14th through February 13th at 5 p.m.

Eligibility for candidates:

Be a U.S. citizen;
 Have resided continuously in the State of Texas for twelve (12) months and in the City of Universal City for six (6) months immediately preceding the date of the regular filing deadline for a candidate's application for a place on the ballot;
 Be eighteen (18) years of age or older on the first day of term to be filled;
 Be a registered voter at the time of taking office (Registered Voter means a person

registered to vote in this state whose registration is effective);
 Not have been determined mentally incompetent by a final judgment of a court;
 Not have been convicted of a felony from which the person has not been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities.
Source: City Charter, Sections 3.01; 8.01; Texas Election Code, Chapter 11 and 141.
 Candidate filing packets available at City Hall beginning January 1st, 2026 (2150 Universal City Blvd.)

\$20 filing fee



**For EMS, Police
and Fire Emergencies
Call 911**

DECEMBER 25 / JANUARY 26

MEETINGS

■ **December 1, 2025** 6:00 p.m.

Planning & Zoning Meeting

■ **December 2, 2025** 6:30 p.m.

City Council Regular Meeting

■ **December 11, 2025**..... 5:00 p.m.

Economic Development Corporation Meeting

■ **December 16, 2025** 6:30 p.m.

City Council Regular Meeting

■ **December 22, 2025**..... 6:00 p.m.

Board of Adjustment Meeting

December 24-26, 2025 @ 12 p.m.

CLOSED Christmas Holiday

■ **December 30, 2025**..... 6:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting

January 1-2, 2026

CLOSED New Year's Holiday

■ **January 5, 2026** 6:00 p.m.

Planning & Zoning Meeting

■ **January 6, 2026** 6:30 p.m.

City Council Regular Meeting

■ **January 8, 2026** 5:00 p.m.

Economic Development Corporation Meeting

January 19, 2026 - CLOSED

Martin Luther King Day

■ **January 20, 2026** 6:30 p.m.

City Council Regular Meeting

■ **January 21, 2026** 5:30 p.m.

Library Advisory Commission Meeting

■ **January 26, 2026** 6:00 p.m.

Board of Adjustment Meeting

■ **January 27, 2026** 6:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting



LEADERSHIP



TOM MAXWELL
MAYOR



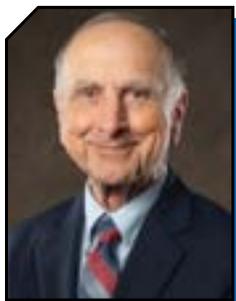
PHIL VAUGHN
COUNCILMEMBER



BEAR GOOLSBY
COUNCILMEMBER



LORI PUTT
COUNCILMEMBER



BERNARD RUBAL
COUNCILMEMBER



WILLIAM SHELBY
COUNCILMEMBER



CHRISTINA FITZPATRICK
MAYOR PRO TEM



KIM TURNER
CITY MANAGER

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KIM TURNER
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NEXT U.C. ELECTION
MAY 2, 2026

ON THE BALLOT

Mayor (Incumbent Tom Maxwell)
3 Councilmembers (Incumbents Putt, Rubal, and Vaughn)

For Candidacy Eligibility visit
UCTX.GOV/ELECTION

UNIVERSAL CITY



BRUSH PICK-UP

DECEMBER 29 - 31

JANUARY 2 - 3

ALL BRUSH COLLECTION MUST BE AT THE CURB BY 7 A.M. THE MONDAY OF PICKUP WEEK

LIMITED TO SIX CUBIC YARDS TOTAL INCLUDES BAGS OF LEAVES AND LIMBS. BAGS SHOULD WEIGH NO MORE THAN 35 POUNDS EACH. PLEASE PROPERLY BUNDLE LIMBS

CoverStory

Living the Legacy

If you recently attended the City's Parks Partners Pumpkin Patch, he was the guy with the warm smile sitting at the Homes for the Homeless Pets table.

If you've been to, or even driven by UC's Aina B. Blake Dog Park, that same guy, Jerry Browning, is furthering

the legacy of the woman the park is named for.

His grandmother.

Alternately described as sassy, classy, passionate, and down for the cause she loved—the welfare of the animals of Universal City-Aina Blake was also a heck of a baker and a fierce fundraiser.



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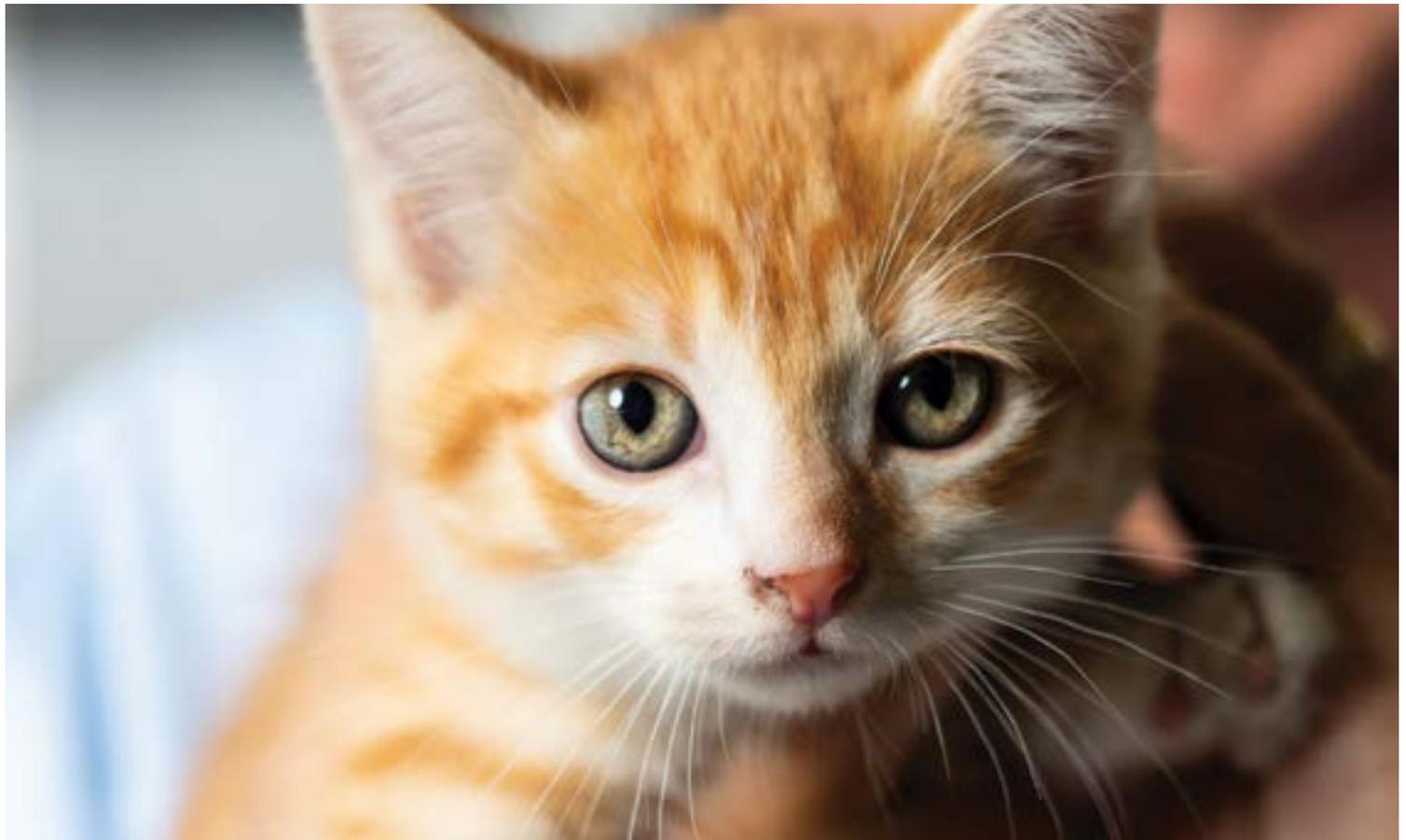


“She was known for driving her little white GMC pickup truck around town. And everybody knew the line was an Aina Blake sale, because of that truck,” Browning said. “Somebody would come up and want to buy a dozen cupcakes and she’d say, well, why don’t you throw an extra \$100 on there? And they would actually write the check for \$100 over what the cost of the cupcakes. And it all went to Homes for the Homeless Pets.”

One long time friend is among those who knew her well and can recall an Aina Blake story at the drop of a hat.

“That woman was amazing and a force to be reckoned with. She once got a guy to pay \$1,000 for a cupcake!”

Browning now leads the board for Homes for the Homeless Pets since Blake’s death in 2023. She financially supported the group and UC’s Animal Care and Control for years. Funds she bequeathed and donations do so now.



Few know the history of animal shelters in Universal City. Browning shared his vintage photos that trace the history. The first, and tiny shelter was located in the Aviation District.

The second, a much larger facility that now houses City items near the Public Works department is named for Blake. The third and current Animal Care and Control facility is located at 134 Athenian Drive.

Browning and his wife Pam divide their time between Universal City and Ohio. They were school kids when they met there and have been part of each others' lives ever since.

They work closely with the dedicated AC&C staff. They take great care with the animals, naming them and staging customized photo shoots for each one.

Homes for the Homeless Pets, Parks Partners, Friends of the Universal City Public Library and the Universal City Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association collectively make up the City's volunteer corp.

The groups were recognized with a Governor's Volunteerism Award, an annual effort led by First Lady Cecilia Abbott.

Fortunately for Browning and leaders of other local groups fueled by volunteers, they realize the need for a new generation of volunteers in order to grow.

"The immediate need for Homes for the Homeless are additional volunteers. Because we're always looking for different ways to do it. And it takes people to staff that, whether it's going to events, whether it's sitting at tables and getting the word out, monetary donations to keep us going."

The American Red Cross recently reported that 25 percent of its volunteers are 24 or younger. The Gen Z crowd has built a reputation for stepping up for causes they care about. Regardless of the size of the community.

Browning says social media will be a big part of the strategy for the future which means opportunity in the Gen Z 13-28 year old crowd.

He loves what he does. And is excited about what the future holds as he and board leadership further the Aina Blake legacy.



"That woman was amazing and a force to be reckoned with. She once got a guy to pay \$1,000 for a cupcake!"

— Longtime Friend



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Universal City TREE LIGHTING

DECEMBER 2

6p.m. - 8p.m.

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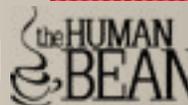
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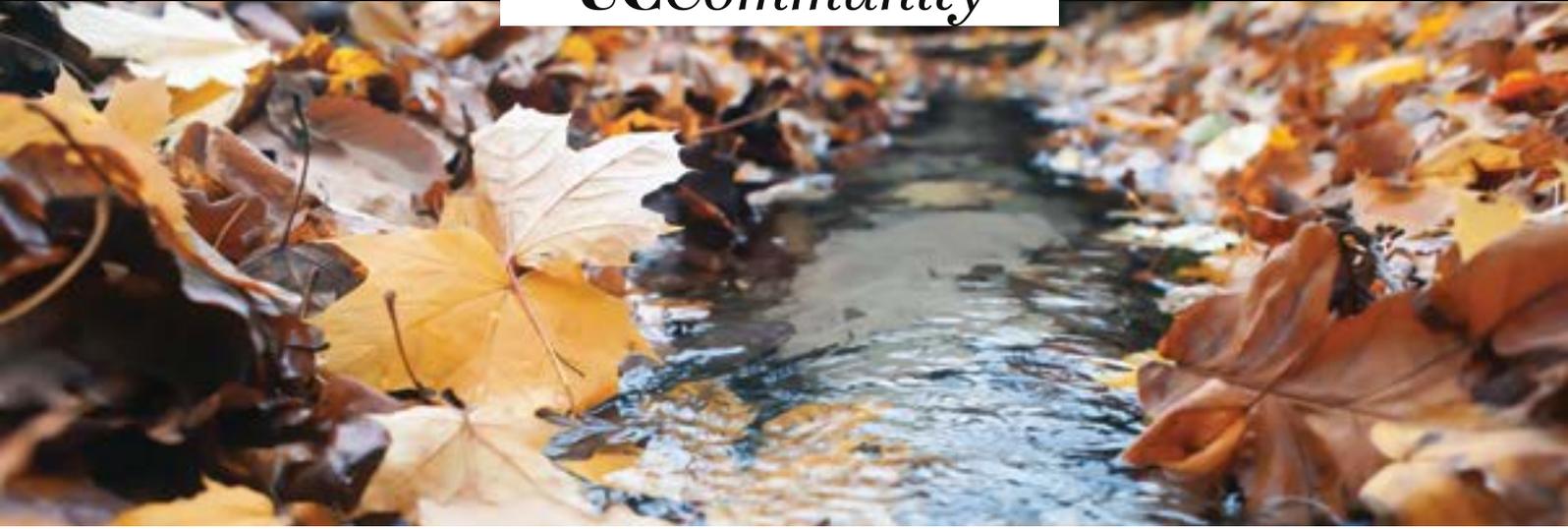
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Autumn's Hidden Threat: Stormwater Pollution in our community

As autumn settles in, cooler mornings and colorful leaves bring seasonal charm to Universal City. But beneath the beauty lies a serious environmental concern—stormwater pollution. Fall's unique mix of weather, yard debris, and urban runoff create perfect conditions for pollutants to enter our waterways.

Why Fall Is Critical

- 1. Leaf & Yard Debris:** Falling leaves and acorns can clog storm drains and break down into nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, which fuel harmful algae blooms in creeks and rivers.
- 2. Heavy Rain & First Flush:** Sporadic autumn storms often produce a “first flush” effect—washing away months of built-up pollutants like oil, trash, and bacteria from streets and sidewalks into nearby water bodies.
- 3. Increased Outdoor Activity:** Fall landscaping and vehicle maintenance can lead

to fertilizer runoff and oil leaks—especially if done right before a rainfall.

- 4. Dry Summer Residue:** After a dry summer, roofs and roads accumulate pollutants. The first rain of the season often carries a concentrated load into the stormwater system.
- 5. Urban Surfaces:** As the City grows, more impervious surfaces like roads and rooftops mean less water absorption and more runoff carrying pollutants directly to creeks.

Local Impact in Universal City

Universal City is part of the Cibolo Creek watershed, which already faces water quality challenges. After rain, bacteria levels—especially *E. coli*—often spike, making creeks unsafe for swimming or fishing. Local terrain, heavy development, and limited vegetation worsen runoff issues.

Fortunately, efforts by the San Antonio River Authority and city programs are promoting solutions

like rain gardens, permeable pavement, and public education campaigns like “No Dumping – Drains to Waterway.”

What You Can Do

- **Manage Leaves & Yard Waste:** Keep leaves out of streets and drains. Compost or mulch yard debris.
- **Use Chemicals Wisely:** Avoid applying fertilizers before rain. Choose organic or slow-release products and follow label instructions.
- **Check for Leaks:** Maintain vehicles and clean spills immediately. Never pour fluids into storm drains.
- **Get Involved:** Join a creek cleanup or volunteer program. Visit the Universal City volunteer page for opportunities.

Protecting our water starts at home. This fall let's all do our part to reduce stormwater pollution and keep Universal City's creeks clean and healthy.

December 13, 2025



**WREATHS
ACROSS
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Economic Development Corporation



Billy D's Success Story

The Universal City Economic Development Corporation (UCEDC) plays a vital role in attracting new businesses to our community and supporting those already here. Its board leadership remains committed to transparency and is committed to regularly sharing progress with residents.

One recent success story is Billy D's Club, which has experienced a transformation thanks to the City's Storefront Improvement Program and the vision and dedication of new owner Vanessa Flowers.

With the program's support, Flowers has re-energized the space, expanded the customer base, and created a fresh, inviting atmosphere. Billy D's has also stepped up as a strong community supporter—most recently helping sell tickets for the Greater Randolph Area Veterans Council (GRAVC) spaghetti dinner fundraiser during the Veterans Parade.

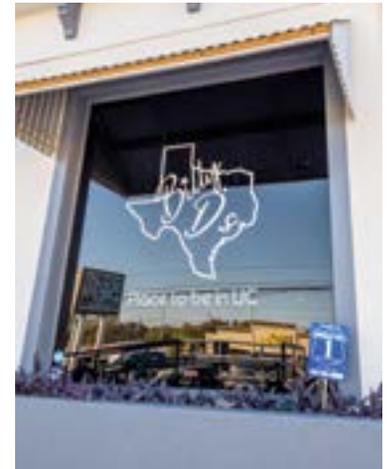
These improvements are just one example of how the UCEDC's initiatives help strengthen local businesses and beautify the community.

Through the Storefront Improvement Program, Billy D's received a \$36,610.87 grant, which funded significant upgrades including:

- New signage and updated wall and window graphics
- Metal roofing repairs
- Plumbing improvements
- Fresh paint and new carpeting
- Parking lot enhancements

The UCEDC's mission is to promote, assist, and enhance economic development within Universal City. Its goals are achieved through a variety of projects and programs such as the Pat Booker Road Enhancement Program, the Northlake Business Park, utility improvements, and other initiatives that support business growth and expansion.

The UCEDC Board meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5 p.m. in the Council Chambers, and meetings are open to the public.



DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Michael Cassata, AICP, CPM

UNIVERSAL CITY EDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **President** Richard Crow
- **Vice President** Leonard Dagg
- **Secretary** Roland Hinojosa
- **Treasurer** Mark Dunlop
- **Mayor Pro Tem / EDC Director** Christina Fitzpatrick
- **Councilmember/EDC Director** Bear Goolsby
- **EDC Director** Bryan Kuhlman



A Sweet Staple in Universal City

If you've attended events in Universal City over the years, you've likely seen it — an ice cream truck decked out with colorful artwork of frozen treats that bring smiles to both kids and adults alike.

For 13 years, Christine Hazleton and her co-owner and son Christopher Stewart have grown Lilly's Frozen Treats into a beloved local favorite.

"We feel really tied to Universal City. Both of my grandfathers retired at Randolph and served, so this has always been home to us," Stewart shared.

Like many small businesses in the community, Lilly's Frozen Treats proudly supports Universal City in countless ways — sometimes as vendors at local events, other times by donating their sweet treats.

"We also have the Splashpad every season serving the community, and that's been going well," Hazleton added.

Beyond their dedication to Universal City, Hazleton and Stewart are also passionate about animal rescue. The business is named after Lilly, a boxer-bull mastiff the family rescued years ago. Although Lilly passed away in 2020, her memory continues to inspire the family's work — and there are no plans to change the name.

The family's commitment to community and family runs deep. Christopher recently made Christine a proud grandmother — welcoming Isla Grace, who has quickly become the heart of the family.

As for what's next, Lilly's Frozen Treats is expanding its menu. In addition to their signature frozen desserts, they now offer several hot items to keep customers warm during the cooler months.

With the Northview Splashpad now closed for the season, Hazleton and Stewart hope you'll visit them at the upcoming Snowfest and Carnival on February 21st.

Did You Know?



Did you know that before Universal City's two major shopping brands arrived, THE place to buy groceries in Universal City was Piggly Wiggly.

The first Piggly Wiggly in UC opened in April 1965 on Pat Booker Road in Randolph Plaza, the City's first shopping Center. What's in that space now? Polly's Pet Shop.

San Antonio actually had a showcase Piggly



Wiggly decades earlier at the corner of Fredericksburg Road and South Flores.

The photo of an ad for the chain is courtesy of John Davenport/Express News. It's now part of a display at the Alamo gift shop.

UC's store closed because of the rise of larger supermarkets with a wider selection of products.

Today Piggly Wiggly is still in business, with over 500 independently owned and operated stores in southern and midwestern states.

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“Community engagement is more than a commitment—it is part of who I am.”

— Annette Strapple

Annette Strapple

Meet Our New Senior Activity Coordinator

Editor's Note: Universal City has a vibrant, engaged 55+ community. Residents in that demographic will soon have new, exciting events and activities tailored specifically for them. Meet our new Senior Activity Coordinator. She brings a legacy of leadership to the position.

I am honored to begin a new chapter in my journey as Senior Activity Coordinator for Universal City. For more than 37 years, I have dedicated my career to building connections—through strategic communication, creative event planning, and purposeful service.

My passion lies in bringing people together, celebrating collaboration, and creating experiences that leave a lasting impact.

My professional path began within the Air Force Services community, where I had the privilege of serving in various marketing and communication roles.

Over the years, I have led large-scale branding initiatives, managed multi-million-dollar budgets, and now serve as the division chief of the Trademark Licensing Program for the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force.

This program, which generates more than \$2 million annually, directly supports morale, welfare, and recreation programs for military

families worldwide.

Whether developing marketing campaigns, coordinating events, or managing high-visibility projects, I have always been driven by the same purpose—to connect people through shared values and meaningful experiences.

“Community engagement is more than a commitment—it is part of who I am.”

Beyond my professional career, I have been deeply involved in community service throughout San Antonio. I have proudly served as an ambassador for two years for the Air Force, been a member of the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, and volunteered on the Red Carpet Committee for the Greater San Antonio Chamber.

My involvement with organizations such as the San Antonio Military Marketing Association, Brooks We Care Program, Toys for Tots and Elf Louise have given me the opportunity to support local families, service members, and children in need.

Additionally, I have worked for children of underserved families, helping young mothers continue their education, creating better futures for their families.

I draw my strength and motivation from my greatest inspiration—my mother. She has

overcome an inoperable brain aneurysm, breast cancer, stage three melanoma, and even survived being struck by a forklift, enduring 38 surgeries to reconstruct her leg.

Her resilience, courage, and unwavering faith remind me daily that anything is possible. She is, without question, my hero.

Outside of work, my greatest joy comes from family. I am a proud mother of two and grandmother of four wonderful grandchildren who keep my heart full and my suitcase packed as I travel to visit them.

When I'm not on the road, you can usually find me tending to my flower garden, writing, exploring or spending time helping my mom – each bring me a sense of peace and purpose.

As I take on this new role, my goal is to continue fostering collaboration and unity through events that celebrate our City's senior spirit. Their stories, wisdom, and lifelong contributions are the foundation to our community, and it's through them that I'm reminded of the lasting impact of love, service, and connection.

“Inspired by service, driven by passion, and grounded in community.”

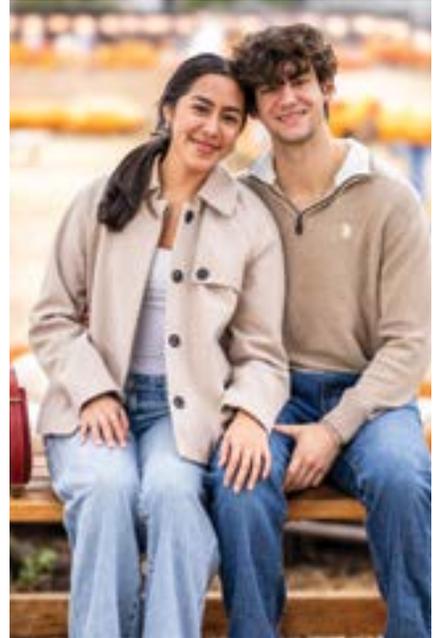
Have a story or activity idea for Annette? stories@uctx.gov.

UCCommunity
Out & About
Heroes Day



UCCommunity

The Pumpkin Patch



THE GATEWAY

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