THE FAMILY
YOU FIND

Forty years ago, Samir Ashrawi left Jerusalem's cobblestone streets for St. Edward's. Here’s the story of how he realized his dream of a college education — and who helped him along the way.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Almost 12 years ago, I tearfully delivered my letter of resignation to my first boss after college. I loved my job — my first as a magazine editor — and my stint with the company had been everything a first job should be: exciting, challenging, humbling. I learned something new every day, and I wasn’t ready to leave. But I had a wedding (my own) to be at in a month, and I’d already bought a one-way plane ticket to Germany.

So there I sat, in front of a woman I greatly admired and had never before cried in front of, and told her over and over again how sad I was. Things went downhill from there, as I elaborated on how I would never find a job I loved as much as that one and surely I had reached the pinnacle of my career. I was not yet 25 years old.

Perhaps in an attempt to get me out of her office, she said something I will never forget: “You make your own success. No place, company or job can define that for you.” She said the words I needed to hear at that exact moment, and I’ve thought of them many times since, often when I’m facing periods of uncertainty.

For this issue of the magazine, we asked several students to give us the great advice their faculty mentors have shared with them and the background story behind the advice. These often simple messages were delivered from a trusted advisor during a time when the student was seeking guidance. That’s a powerful combination.

I hope you enjoy our story and that it reminds you of the person who’s given you words to live by. If you feel inclined, please share that advice with us (see the back cover for how). We’d love to be inspired, too.

Frannie Schneider
Editor
A Green, Sustainable Campus: At St. Edward’s University, we think that preserving the planet starts at home. Take a virtual tour of how we’re conserving resources.

Wings of Courage: Watch Jennifer Hassin ’12 create artwork that raises awareness of sexual abuse.

More Great Advice: We couldn’t fit all of the great advice our students shared from their faculty mentors into the magazine. Read more online.

Introducing the Munday Library: Take a photo tour through the new intellectual heart of campus.

Is This Real Life? Watch Cassidy Schiltz ’12 become one of the biggest winners in The Price Is Right history.

Assistant Professor of Management Gary Fletcher and Austin-based nonprofit Honduras Good Works are teaching Honduran entrepreneurs how to run their own businesses — and break the country’s devastating cycle of poverty.

The John Brooks Williams Natural Sciences Center–South brings together technology and student research.

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How generously we have been blessed this year. Throughout the fall, the university was showered with new achievements, recognitions and distinctions. (Some of these are listed in the story “College Lists” on Page 3.)

We began the academic year with the largest freshman class in the university’s history. As we welcomed our new students to campus, we also opened the doors of two new buildings. Over the summer, faculty members and students moved into the John Brooks Williams Natural Sciences Center–South, which added almost 55,000 square feet and a botanical research garden to complete our 120,000-square-foot natural sciences complex. (Enjoy the photo essay on Page 24.)

On the first day of the fall semester, the Munday Library, a 21st-century research facility connecting faculty and students to the finest libraries around the world, was filled with students using some of the most sophisticated technology currently available. The library also marks a major step forward in the university’s global strategic initiative, adding classrooms that will make it possible to conduct classes in multiple parts of the world simultaneously. Faculty members will be able to invite guest lecturers from any part of the world into these classrooms for interactive dialogue with students through HD television. As usage of our global classrooms expands, the St. Edward’s University Austin campus will become richer in international educational experiences.

Most satisfying of all have been the achievements recorded by our students. For the fourth year in a row, St. Edward’s has been a national leader in the number of Fulbright awards won by students. St. Edward’s University science students, for the third consecutive year, walked away with a disproportionate number of awards at the annual competition sponsored by the Texas Academy of Sciences. Our athletes recorded an NCAA academic success rate of 92 percent, 20 points higher than the national average, and enough to tie for 16th in the nation. And The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that, compared to all other Hispanic-Serving Institutions, St. Edward’s has the highest Hispanic graduation rate in the country.

In December, St. Edward’s received an award that was especially meaningful. The Institute of Higher Education Policy, on the occasion of its 20th anniversary, recognized three institutions with its inaugural IHEP Champions of Access and Success award. St. Edward’s was one of the three recipients.

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These many blessings enable St. Edward’s to continuously raise the bar of academic excellence as it maintains its historical commitment to opportunity for all deserving students, no matter their race, religion or financial means. Pursuant to that commitment, the university has focused its $100 million Campaign for St. Edward’s University primarily on funding student scholarships and faculty-student research. It is a campaign that will strengthen the foundations of our Holy Cross mission — academic excellence, access and student success.

— President George E. Martin
Under cover of darkness and a veil of secrecy, St. Edward’s University Magazine was granted special clearance to interview the two students who bring the university’s mascot, Topper, to life. Alas, we can’t reveal the names of the students behind Topper, but here’s a peek underneath the white fur.

Q: What inspired you to step into the Topper suit?
A: I have a passion for dancing and being silly and showing my love for St. Edward’s in interesting ways. It’s fun to get people excited about coming to the games and supporting our Hilltopper athletes.

Q: Topper is the strong, silent type: How do you communicate with people?
A: The Topper outfit swallows every move and makes everything look really small. You really have to exaggerate your emotions and expressions through big movements to convey what Topper is feeling at the moment.

Q: What are the biggest challenges of being Topper?
A: Until I got the hang of it, stairs were tough to navigate, and it’s tricky to be quick on your feet. I take a break every 30 minutes, which gives me a chance to take off the Topper head and unzip the suit. My clothes are soaked by the time I get out. It’s like being in a sauna.

Q: Does Topper do any tricks?
A: People really like it when Topper turns his backside to the other team and shakes his tail at them. Topper is also known for pulling pranks and being goofy with the cheerleaders.

Q: How full is Topper’s calendar?
A: He is present for every home game for volleyball and basketball, as well as a few home soccer games.

Q: You don’t get personal recognition like athletes do. What are the rewards of being an anonymous athletic figure?
A: Even though you aren’t recognized, it’s so much fun to live as that character and be the face of the university. It’s rewarding to make the school spirit come alive.

Q: Any embarrassing moments as Topper?
A: One time I forgot how wide my arms stick out, and I knocked over a garbage can right in front of an 8-month-old baby. —Lisa Thiegs

Higher-education administrators love to debate the validity and usefulness of college-rankings lists. But we’ll admit it: We get a little bit giddy when others recognize the university’s greatness. Here are a few of the recent lists on which St. Edward’s appears.

- Named No. 15 in the 2014 list of “Best Regional Universities in the Western Region” by U.S. News & World Report
- Selected by peer universities as an up-and-coming school in the 2014 U.S. News & World Report rankings
- Named one of America’s “Best Bang for the Buck” colleges this year by Washington Monthly magazine — no other private university in Texas ranked higher
- Ranked first among 10 other Hispanic-Serving Institutions for the best six-year graduation rate by The Chronicle of Higher Education in 2013
- Included in “2014 Best Colleges: Region by Region” list in The Princeton Review
- Recognized in 2012 and 2013 as a top producer of Fulbright students by the Fulbright Program, the U.S. Department of State’s international educational exchange program
Branding Gets Personal

St. Edward’s recently unveiled new TV commercials as part of the university’s advertising campaign, and if you listen closely, you might hear a few familiar voices. Briley Dockery ’13, Mitch Harris ’13 and Matthew Buzonas ’16 did the voice-overs. Faculty and staff members, as well as students, contributed original video to the project by using GoPro cameras to document trips to India, Uganda, England and Chile.

You Like Us, You Really Like Us

Thespians from St. Edward’s proved once again that their talent is among the best in the city. In June, Mary Moody Northen Theatre received 10 nominations — and took home two awards — from the Austin Critics Table, which celebrates achievements in dance, classical music, visual arts and theater. Hannah Fonder ’14, Sophia Franzella ’13 and Lindsley Howard ’12 were also honored with the W.H. “Deacon” Crain Award for Outstanding Student Work, which recognizes artistic growth and development over the course of a student’s undergraduate experience.

See the World, Do Some Good

Sure, students at St. Edward’s donate countless hours of their time to community service locally. But now they have another overseas outlet. For the first time, the Office of International Education is taking a group of students to the Dominican Republic over spring break to build a home for Habitat for Humanity.

An LLC for Everyone

Living Learning Communities, groups of students who live and take courses together based on similar interests, continue to multiply on campus. A Modern Languages LLC was added in Fall 2013 for upperclassmen who want to improve their language skills. Two more LLCs will be available in Fall 2014. The Leadership LLC will guarantee freshmen a spot in the LeaderShape Institute, which focuses on leadership development and personal discovery, and students will work on a yearlong, community-developed service project. The Active Living LLC will focus on helping students achieve a healthy, balanced and fit lifestyle.

Birdies for the Better

Helping others is par for the course for the men’s golf team, which launched a campaign last fall to benefit a different Austin charity at each tournament based on player birdies. Team members combined for 33 birdies at their first tournament of the season, and a local dentist donated two teeth-cleaning kits for each birdie (66 total) to Back on My Feet, an organization that combats homelessness. —Hannah Hepfer
As a two-year drought continues to wreak havoc through Central Texas and much of the surrounding region, Austin has declared a stage-two drought response, which mandates that watering can only happen once a week. Yet barring a few trees lost each year, St. Edward’s remains the same beautiful green campus that visitors fall in love with every day.

The secret to maintaining the 160-acre campus in drought conditions is a clever use of resources, sophisticated technology and serious dedication from the groundskeeping staff, according to grounds supervisor Willi Chavez. Here are just a few of the ways Chavez and his team keep St. Edward’s beautiful:

- Using natural, organic fertilizer and worm casings to keep the soil healthy and functional
- Letting the grass on campus grow taller so it retains water better and stays greener
- Nurturing grasses and wildflowers on the hilltop to prevent erosion
- Upgrading the irrigation system to reduce water usage between 5 and 10 percent
- Reducing the water used on the athletic fields (the grass adapts to stay green with less water)
- Applying surfactants that lower the surface tension of the water so that it is more easily absorbed — sometimes just dew is enough to keep a plant watered
- Partnering with pest control companies (Bugs and critters who can’t find water at home sometimes look for it indoors!)

—Lauren Liebowitz

Waiting for Rain

It takes more than just preserving our most precious resource to make the St. Edward’s University campus sustainable. See how the university uses eco-friendly building practices and composting at stedwards.edu/webextras.

Eriann Panado ’15 thinks that most global conflicts stem from lack of understanding.

She may not be able to lessen the hostilities along the border between India and Pakistan, but the Global Studies major is promoting cross-cultural understanding on campus as the Asian heritage coordinator for the Multicultural Leadership Board.

This fall, Panado brought Diwali, a holiday marking the victory of light over darkness that is widely celebrated in India, to the hilltop. Because Panado is not Hindu, she researched the holiday and collaborated with Hindu friends to make the event authentic.

“A good event is supposed to engage the audience in as many ways as possible — hearing, tasting, feeling, learning,” she says. Her Diwali celebration combined all the senses: a performance and dance lesson from a Bollywood troupe; a catered dinner of biryani, samosas and mango lassi; henna tattoos; and stations to make rangoli decorations and paper lanterns. The event closed with sparklers against the night sky.

Her next event, Pacific Culture Night, was more personal — the celebration tied to her own Asian/Pacific Islander heritage and loosely coincided with Bonifacio Day, a national holiday in the Philippines. Panado dedicated the event to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan.

“I think by advocating and introducing cultural events, you can inspire students to appreciate cultural diversity,” says Panado. “I want them to see the beauty in multiculturalism. I feel like this is the best thing I can do: educating people to relieve tensions and decrease global unconsciousness.” —Lauren Liebowitz

Shedding Light

Eriann Panado ’15
Welcome, Freshmen

It’s tough out there. Private universities around the country are facing fewer high-school graduates, increased price sensitivity among prospective students and a marketplace of higher-education institutions that looks much different than it did just a few years ago. But St. Edward’s University has a lot going for it. And prospective students seem to agree with us. In Fall 2013, the university welcomed its largest freshman class in history with 791 students. Here are a few other things to know about the Class of 2017 and the university’s overall enrollment.

Class of 2017 Connections

Before Lauren Ayoub ’17 took her first Communication class at St. Edward’s, she was thinking like a professional communicator. Ayoub sought an online community as a way to connect with other incoming students. When she couldn’t find an existing Facebook group, she created one. By the time the academic year started, Ayoub had built a community of around 300 incoming freshmen.

I came to St. Edward’s because ... of the people. Everyone is so caring toward one another. St. Edward’s has a type of hospitality that I have yet to discover at another university.

I was most surprised by ... the approachability of my professors. I’ve had multiple hour-long talks with my professors outside of class.

I love to connect through ... Twitter. Facebook is a fantastic tool for bringing together large groups of people — everyone has a Facebook account, and most people check it often. Twitter, on the other hand, lets me connect with my close group of friends.

1,307
New College and graduate students

3,554
undergraduates

4,861
total students

59
international freshmen from 22 countries

29
language fluencies represented by the freshman class

30
states plus Washington, D.C., are represented (not including Texas)

23% of the freshman class hails from outside of Texas

60.7% of the freshman class is female, 39.3% male

43% of the freshman class identify as Hispanic
Delia Kothmann Paskos knows that video games get a bad rap these days, often cited as a cause of aggressive behavior. But the associate professor of Psychology at St. Edward’s is conducting a study that suggests something more optimistic: Video games may help people focus and concentrate better, as well as reduce stress levels.

While researching children with ADHD for her dissertation, Kothmann Paskos learned a lot about the prescribed medications that stimulate production of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is most notably associated with pleasure and reward, but it also helps people focus their attention and concentrate, which is why the drugs are effective in treating ADHD. While doing her research, she came across a previous study that had demonstrated that playing video games also increased dopamine production. “This led me to think that people playing video games were experiencing similar effects to those taking ADHD medication and could potentially be self-medicating,” says Kothmann Paskos.

Thanks to a Presidential Excellence grant, Kothmann Paskos spent last summer conducting two studies to determine if video games can reduce stress levels. First, she identified a positive correlation between impulsivity and video-game-playing behavior. Next, she designed a biofeedback experiment in which students play the video game Minecraft and have their physiological changes recorded.

The research is ongoing, and Kothmann Paskos expects to present her findings in the spring at the Southwestern Psychological Association conference. “We still have to do more studies on how long the effects of the dopamine last,” she says. “But if you could use the positive effects of video games instead of medication, it might make sense for some kids to sit down and play video games for half an hour before starting homework. And educators could even design teaching materials that are more game based.” —Lisa Thiegs

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**Summer Research**

Here’s a snapshot of a few of the 32 other projects funded by St. Edward’s University Presidential Excellence grants in 2013.

**Recipient:** Katherine J. Lopez, assistant professor of Accounting  
**The highlights:** Her paper, “Accounting — an Art or a Science?” endorses accounting education that promotes confidence, builds critical-thinking skills and encourages the use of scientific methods.

**Recipient:** Mary Dunn, assistant professor of Management  
**The highlights:** Her paper, “Learning to Produce Knowledge,” examines how developmental networks (mentors, coaches, career supporters) contribute to a graduate student’s future success.

**Recipient:** Fidelma O’Leary, associate professor of Biological Sciences  
**The highlights:** Her research shows that parsley seed oil, a synergist, can enhance the potency of synthetic pesticides. This enables one to get the same degree of pest control with a weaker concentration of pesticide. Because synthetic pesticides are designed to be persistent in the environment, being able to use less of them is much better for the environment.

**Recipient:** Jeannetta Williams, associate professor of Psychology  
**The highlights:** Her research explores the personality traits that underlie reactions to rejection in romantic relationships.

**Recipient:** Scott Christopherson, assistant professor of Communication  
**The highlights:** His film Peace Officer is a feature-length social-justice documentary about officer-involved shootings in Utah. He plans to submit the documentary to film festivals this year.

**Recipient:** Steven S. Fletcher, associate professor of Secondary Education  
**The highlights:** His research has found that St. Edward’s University Noyce Scholars have been positively impacted by the collaborative nature of the program and the sustained professional development. Graduates of the program are successfully teaching math and science in high-need school districts across Texas and the Southwest. —Lisa Thiegs

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**Don’t Tell the Kids**

**Video games aren’t all bad.**

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On the Road Again

After 15 albums, countless international tours and a performance at the Clinton White House, Tish Hinojosa’s career as a musician didn’t require a college degree. Instead, the singer-songwriter’s enrollment in New College last year was a personal mission.

Hinojosa grew up in San Antonio, the youngest of 13 children born to Mexican immigrant parents, and started playing music in her teens. After stints in New Mexico and Nashville, Tenn., she settled in Austin in the late ’80s, when her first major-label record was released. Her signature sound incorporates elements of both country and folk music, in both English and Spanish.

More recently, Hinojosa lived in Hamburg with her husband, a native German. She found it difficult to continue her musical career in Germany and considered going to college to become more employable. As her plan took shape, her relationship with her husband also began to change, and she opted to return to Austin last summer.

Now that she’s back in her musical milieu, the college degree is less an economic necessity and more of a personal goal. New College’s flexibility will allow Hinojosa to tour in Europe this spring, though she’s considering switching to the daytime program to pursue a degree in Philosophy. As a songwriter, she’s no stranger to philosophical questions.

“On the journey to write lyrics, you find yourself pursuing deeper thoughts,” she says. “In my early 20s, it was just about getting a decent melody and a good country beat and finding some words that matched. But as I evolved as a songwriter, things began getting more introspective.”

Hinojosa raised her two children, now in their 20s, in South Austin. They came to the St. Edward’s campus to walk their dog and learn to ride bikes. “This was our playground, so I have great memories of being on campus,” she says. “It’s a comforting place to come back to.” —Robyn Ross

Views of the Capitol

Most photographs of the Texas Capitol are taken outside and show the well-known pink granite dome against an azure sky. Professor of Photocommunications Bill Kennedy has photographed that same dome, but from angles most people will never see.

One of those is between the inner and outer Capitol domes. The roof dome you see outside is not the same one you see from inside the rotunda — there’s actually a smaller dome inside a larger one.

A photograph of the eerie passageway between the two was included in an exhibit of Kennedy’s photographs at the Bullock Texas State History Museum last fall. The 13 images were chosen from among roughly 3,000 that Kennedy shot in the early 1990s for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. His contract was to photograph things of historical importance, which included moments in Ann Richards’ governorship as well as the Capitol renovation and construction of its underground extension.

Kennedy had virtually unlimited access to the Capitol during that time: He photographed restoration work on top of the Capitol dome, standing near the foot of the Goddess of Liberty statue. At one point he found himself alone in the Capitol attic, an area half the size of a football field, with a single light bulb for illumination.

“You have this emotional response to that space, and the challenge for a photographer is how to make a photograph that speaks to what you’re feeling,” he says. “Any photographer can take a picture of what it looks like. The real question is, ‘How can I make a picture of what it feels like?’”

More than 20 years later, Kennedy’s images impart that atmosphere — mysterious, inspiring and a little bit spooky — to the viewer. —Robyn Ross
When Art Imitates Life

Jennifer Hassin ’12 creates autobiographical art. Her sculpture “Letters of Sacrifice,” which she developed for her senior project, has been shown at Lackland Air Force Base, the University of Texas–Austin, Texas A&M University, the Dougherty Arts Center and Camp Mabry. Hassin is a full-time artist based in East Austin, and she is currently a fellow of The Mission Continues, a nonprofit organization that challenges veterans to serve in their communities. During her fellowship, Hassin is working to raise awareness of sexual abuse by planning events that give survivors hope. | As told to Jonathan Wei

I’ve always been creative, and I’ve always done art on the side for myself, but I had never taken an art class before I came to St. Edward’s. I found out what some of the students were making, and I thought, I’d like to try this out. I took ceramics and beginning design. I took a drawing class. I loved it.

Several professors had an impact on me: Walle Conoly, Stan Irvin, Hollis Hammonds, Mary Brantl and Ryan Cronk. A common thread for all of them was that they [encouraged me] to find things I could make art about. I was older, I had served in the military, and I had a story to tell.

As I started getting closer to some of these professors, that’s when I started making work that was about deeper issues. I was making ceramic birds and getting a lot of criticism for them from my peers. One day I was with one of my classmates, and she said, “Well, maybe we should move on from these doves.” And I said, “For me they’re important because they represent hope.” She said that was cliché. I approached Hollis and broke down crying and told her that I had been molested as a child, and that the doves were my vehicle to making something about this tragedy that was inspirational and not just dark. And it was Hollis — Hollis and Ryan Cronk — who encouraged me to write my story and then put that text onto the birds. So I made little doves and put words on them as though they were headlines for what had happened to me. That duality does something to people. They’re holding this ceramic dove, and it’s beautiful, and then it says “Local Girl Molested by Family Friend” on it.

Being able to talk about these experiences is something I attribute to my professors. I’m working as a peer mentor with The Wounded Warrior Project. I help male and female survivors of military sexual trauma and encourage them to lace up their boots and march forward. On Veterans Day, I started a blog, thewingsofcourage.blogspot.com, to help inspire the victims of sexual abuse to prosper and make the transition to becoming a survivor.

I’ve spent a lot of time hashing out ideas for a nonprofit organization called Wings of Courage. My idea is to have a brand out there that could raise money and awareness about sexual abuse and fund organizations and shelters that take care of victims. I’ve had people ask me, “Who’s going to want to wear a red dove?” How many people have cancer, and how many people do you have wearing a pink ribbon? You can have people who support raising awareness and are proud to wear it, even if they were never abused.

I want the dove, much like the pink ribbon, to be the brand of my nonprofit. The dove can be mass-produced and also make a difference. I want to turn the scars of sexual abuse into badges of honor; I want to inspire and empower sexual-abuse survivors to carry on with life even though something terrible happened.

This year, I am traveling around the world to military bases, as well as universities, to give talks about life after sexual abuse. These inspirational talks end with an art project that uses the logo for Wings of Courage as a canvas. I am bringing the doves back with me and starting a collection. Wings of Courage will change the world, not because we will change the way people look at sexual-abuse victims, but because we will change the way that sexual-abuse victims look at themselves — as survivors.

Jonathan Wei is a writer, playwright and producer. He is the founder of The Telling Project, an innovative theatrical production in which military veterans and their families stage the “telling” of their stories of life in the military for their communities. Telling: Aggieland will be performed in College Station in April. It will be the second Texas production of The Telling Project and the 16th production nationally.

Jennifer Hassin ’12 created the red dove to be a symbol of hope for survivors of sexual abuse. Sales from her artwork, like the magnet pictured above, have helped support her nonprofit organization, Wings of Courage.

Watch as Jennifer Hassin ’12 creates a dove that maps out sexual abuse in Austin in a way that’s both hopeful and beautiful at stedwards.edu/webextras.
Power Players

Students from St. Edward’s University are getting an inside look at how Washington works.

Washington, D.C., can feel like the center of everything, full of movers and shakers making big decisions and changing the fate of the world. As a newcomer, it can feel like everyone knows everybody, and you’re on the outside.

That’s where The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars comes in. The center helps students find full-time internships in the D.C. area and provides housing while they’re there. Interns also take a class, complete a civic-engagement project and attend a speaker series during their time in the capital. Additionally, the center helps them connect with an expert in their field.

BRENT JOHNSON ’12
Major: Political Science
When: Summer 2011
Internship: Kieloch Consulting
What he’s doing now: Member of the Membership and Development team of Voices for Progress in D.C.; graduated with a Master of Public Administration from Syracuse University

“I’ve always been interested in politics and policy — any of my friends will tell you that I’m a political nerd. [The internship] illustrated to me how policy and politics work together to produce the type of meaningful social change that I care so much about.”

LE’DARRION ALLEN ’13
Major: Criminal Justice
When: Fall 2011
Internship: Office of the Attorney General
What he’s doing now: Special projects coordinator and advisor for the Multicultural Leadership Board at St. Edward’s; applying to Air Force Officer Training School

“Being at The Washington Center for a full semester required a lot of hard work, but it was worth it. I was considering different career paths. I was really interested in law, but after interviewing a court clerk, I realized I was more interested in military law. I’m now hoping to serve as an officer in the Air Force. The Washington Center was a turning point in my career aspirations.”

KYLE GREEN ’11
Major: Global Studies
When: Summer 2011
Internship: Peace Corps
What he’s doing now: Senior program coordinator at The Washington Center

“My internship gave me a level of confidence and professionalism that I had not tapped into while on campus. It also taught me a lot about what I enjoy doing — building and sustaining institutional relationships, which is exactly what I do at The Washington Center.”

Since 2010, 16 students from St. Edward’s have taken part in The Washington Center’s internship program, thanks to efforts by the university’s Career Services office to generate applications. That interconnectivity in D.C. is reflected in the ties among the students at St. Edward’s who have completed internships there. We spoke to a few of them about what their time at The Washington Center meant for them. — Lauren Liebowitz
REBECCA GREEN ’13
Major: Marketing
When: Summer 2012
Internship: Office of Strategic Employee and Organization Development in the Department of the Interior
What she’s doing now: Campus representative for The Washington Center

“Prior to The Washington Center, my career interests were all over the place, and I didn’t have a clear vision. My on-campus event-planning experience sparked my passion for logistics, and I wanted to expand those skills. Interning at DOI opened my eyes to an entirely new industry.”

STEPHANIE KEINZ ’14
Major: Global Studies
When: Summer 2012
Internship: International Strategic Services
Student involvement: President of St. Edward’s University Amnesty International chapter

“Everyone who goes [to The Washington Center] is driven; they want to get the most out of their experiences. For me, D.C. was about being where everything was happening — I got to interact with people leading our country and making the big decisions, and I had the opportunity to make an impact, to do something meaningful.”

MALLORY ASHWANDER ’14
Major: Graphic Design
When: Summer 2013
Internship: Trust for the National Mall
Student involvement: Publicity coordinator for Student Life

“I took an entrepreneurship class [at The Washington Center]. I’d never taken business classes before, and it really opened my eyes to the possibility that I could start my own business, like a graphic-design firm. The class was very hands-on, and we met with entrepreneurs in D.C. After I got back to Austin, the marketing director of an entrepreneur we met got in touch with me to see my portfolio for potential graphic design work.”

FRANK DURAN ’14
Major: Global Studies
When: Summer 2013
Internship: The Protection Project at Johns Hopkins University
Student involvement: Executive director of Student Leadership Team and director of Global Leadership (Eco-Lead 2013)

“My goal is to help rural communities [access] the resources available to them. The Washington Center served as a connecting point and introduced me to people who took me and my goals seriously. Without it, I don’t think I would have the mentality I do now, that it’s possible for me to do something as significant as global development or rural development.”

AMANDA WEST ’15
Major: Global Studies
When: Summer 2013
Internship: Migration and Refugee Services
Student involvement: Vice president of St. Edward’s University Amnesty International chapter

“My internship brought the cause of war crimes and refugees to my attention, and now that’s one of my passions. And I’ve grown as a leader and found I can adapt quickly to different situations in a work environment.”
Seven students share the life lessons they’ve learned from faculty mentors. By Erin Peterson | Illustrations by Sara Hahn

Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Policy Peter Beck has been more than a great professor to Janelle Sylvester ’14 — he’s been a catalyst for some of her most remarkable experiences at St. Edward’s. Although she’s always been a strong and driven student, she ticks off the many ways he’s made a difference. “He nominated me for the Summer Academic Excellence Award that gave me funding to go to Ecuador, he nominated me for [a] research award that sent me to Portland, Ore., for an academic conference, and he nominated me for the Dean’s Leadership Council,” she says. “He is the reason for many of my unique and enriching experiences.” Sylvester is far from alone. The wisdom of faculty members — often just as valuable as recommendations and nominations — can be all a student needs to move forward.

To find out more about the roles faculty mentors play, we asked students to share a favorite piece of advice they’ve gotten from a professor and how they have applied it. You might just find that their great advice applies to you, too.

Don’t be afraid to second-guess your plans.

**STUDENT:** Rebecca Thomas ’14, Philosophy  
**MENTOR:** Jack Green Musselman, director of the Center for Ethics and Leadership and associate professor of Philosophy

The value of mentors: They know you as people, not numbers. “Jack knows that people have personal problems and that those are just as much a part of a nurturing helpful academic relationship as the explicitly academic problems,” Thomas says. “He’s been a life mentor, not just an academic mentor.”

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**The backstory:** Long before Thomas arrived at St. Edward’s, she planned to be a lawyer. But a professor who might have been the biggest proponent of her plan — Musselman taught a class on the philosophy of law that Thomas took her first semester — was actually the biggest detractor. “From the get-go, Jack was vehemently against going to law school,” Thomas recalls. But his perplexing stance turned out to be incredibly valuable. “He tried to wear me down about going to law school, but it was a very tactful way to be sure that I was prepared to go in every way possible.” In the end, she suspects she may actually be more prepared for law school than if he’d been her biggest champion. His push-back forced her to be that much more prepared for every challenge in the process, from LSATs to recommendations to applications.
Failure doesn’t have to be an ending point. It can be a starting one.

**STUDENT:** Rene Soto ’13, Computer Science  
**MENTOR:** Laura Baker, professor of Computer Science

The value of mentors: They’re always in your corner. “I know that Dr. Baker’s office door is wide open, and I can go in anytime I need her help,” says Soto.

The backstory: Computer science can be an intimidating topic, vexing even the brightest students. For Soto, a single bad grade on an exam nearly put him into a tailspin. But Baker helped him get back on track. “She reminded me not to let one exam determine my fate. ‘When you look at everything in the big picture, that one exam is just a tiny little dot on the spectrum,’ she said. ‘You’re a smart guy, Rene, and I know you will learn from this and do better on the next one. You just have to look past these small obstacles and keep moving forward.’”

Success comes not from the achievements themselves but from the passion that drives the discoveries. “Success and immense satisfaction from one’s line of work doesn’t come with the desire to accrue monetary wealth or material things,” he says. “Achievements in a profession for which one has a passion provide immense and lasting satisfaction.”

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**STUDENT:** Alyssa Haney ’14, Spanish and Sociology  
**MENTOR:** Michelle Robertson, associate professor of Sociology

The value of mentors: They teach lessons that have real-world implications. “Dr. Robertson also taught me the importance of punctuality and organization,” she says. “I have been able to apply this to many settings, whether that’s group projects or just replying to emails in a respectful amount of time.”

The backstory: During a study abroad trip to Uruguay in 2012, Haney learned about a new program being developed by two teachers at the high school where she was volunteering. On paper, the initiative looked remarkable: They were using the poetry of a famous Uruguayan poet to help high-school students discuss violence against women. Haney knew she wanted to write about the program for her honors thesis. There was just one problem, says Haney. “In the school where I was studying, the impoverished conditions completely got in the way of the success of the literature curriculum,” she says. “In the end, the program that I thought would be so amazing failed.”

The experience might have ended there except for the guidance of Robertson. “When I came back, Dr. Robertson helped me realize this [failure] in and of itself was something worth analyzing, even though I felt like my project was a complete loss,” she says. “She suggested lots of reading, and I learned more about how community poverty affects many aspects of society, including education policy. That became the new focus of my research. I went into the study with one idea of how things would turn out, but the end result was completely different. She helped me realize that this is what conducting research is all about.”

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Keep Everything In Perspective
The best answers come from the right questions.

**STUDENT:** C.J. Menge ’13, Interdisciplinary Studies (Music and Nonprofit Management)  
**MENTOR:** Barry Silverberg, president of the Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations and adjunct faculty member

The value of mentors: Good mentors last a lifetime. “[Barry] has learned to put abstract theory into concrete practice [in his own life]. He will help me do the same. I hope to maintain a relationship with him for years to come, independent of my association with St. Edward’s.”

**STUDENT:** Dominic Dominguez ’14, Environmental Science and Policy  
**MENTOR:** Peter Beck, associate professor of Environmental Science and Policy

The value of mentors: Inspiration. “I hope that I can lead and inspire, just as I have been inspired,” says Dominguez. “People can’t help but gravitate to passionate individuals.”

The backstory: Dominguez was one of 10 students from St. Edward’s who spent the semester learning about ecotourism and sustainability in Costa Rica. The group traveled to the country to work on a research question they’d developed during the class. “On our last day in Costa Rica, our group took a tour of the [Arenal] Hanging Bridges [a series of suspension bridges in Costa Rica’s rainforests]. We were immersed in nature, and Dr. Beck said, ‘Hold on, guys, stop. Listen. Many of you will not have the opportunity to visit this place again. Take in the sounds of what you hear. This is nature.’ We paused in silence, absorbing the sounds around us: crickets, water flowing, leaves falling, wind and twitches of animal life,” Dominguez says. “I saw what brought him a sense of belonging and happiness. Bliss was all I felt.”
The value of mentors: They can serve as a surrogate family member. “My family lives more than four hours away, and we rarely get to visit,” says Rupenski. “It is an overwhelming feeling of comfort to know that someone cares about me here.”

The backstory: In the world of education, a one-size-fits-all approach isn’t just limiting for students; it can be devastating. Rupenski credits mentor Loughmiller for helping her see the nuances between equality and fairness when working with her students. “She best explained it as she quoted [author and educator] Rick Lavoie: ‘Fair doesn’t mean giving every child the same thing; it means giving every child what [he or she] needs,’” she says.

For Rupenski, that definition was transformative, because the needs of students in special education can vary so dramatically. “We must provide for each student’s needs in a way that leads him or her to success.”

Be flexible; you can’t control everything.

The value of mentors: They have real-world insights. “Learning from a professor’s experience is crucial for gaining the perspective that will help for life after college,” says Chang.

The backstory: In the summer of 2012, Chang went to France as part of the first-ever study abroad program for the Digital Media Management program. As with any new program, there were plenty of hiccups, but Perry helped students turn obstacles into opportunities. “[Perry’s] attitude on being flexible and working around the conditions that arose was a morale booster for all of us,” Chang recalls. “There were always issues that came up — equipment malfunctions, being late, bad lighting,” recalls Chang. “But he used every ‘crisis’ as a teaching moment so we could have the best learning experience possible.”
Forty years ago, Samir Ashrawi left Jerusalem’s cobblestone streets for St. Edward’s. Here’s the story of how he realized his dream of a college education — and who helped him along the way.

By Stacia Hernstrom MLA ’05
Photos by Jessica Attie ’04 and Abi Justice ’04, MACT ’15
Fly for his friend and exactly how the smooth newsprint of *al-Quds* remembers the welcome mental challenge of translating stories on the headlines. It's the spring of 1972.

Words he can't read. Samir turns the thin pages and begins translating the newspaper to stare at the endless columns of loops and dots that form Arabic. "What's happening in the world today?" Jim asks, leaning over the newspaper to stare at the endless columns of loops and dots that form Arabic words he can't read. Samir turns the thin pages and begins translating the headlines. It's the spring of 1972.

It's been 42 years, but Samir Ashrawi '77, MBA '93 still remembers the welcome mental challenge of translating stories on the fly for his friend and exactly how the smooth newsprint of *al-Quds* felt between his fingers. Those morning translation projects all that time ago literally altered his life.

In 1968, just before he turned 16, Ashrawi graduated with honors from St. George High School in Jerusalem and attempted to pay his way through Birzeit University, just a few miles north of the city. But his savings and the grants he received weren't enough. "The Middle East at the time was economically stagnant," he says. "For a family like us, university was not very likely."

When Ashrawi was growing up, his father worked two jobs as an accountant and a clerk to afford tuition for Ashrawi, his two brothers and his three sisters to attend prestigious Anglican and Catholic secondary schools in Jerusalem. His mother kept the home and cared for the children. Both his parents understood that a good education was the key to a better life. They dreamed of college for their children but, after fleeing their home in West Jerusalem during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War with "essentially the same place Jim went, a great little Catholic university in Texas." He also began looking elsewhere for opportunities to return to college, focusing his search on the United States and England, where scholarship money might be more available. Getting accepted was the easy part.

"Everywhere I tried, I always received partial scholarships," he says. "That was great, but it just wasn't enough. It looked like the only option was to work longer, save more and put off college."

Jim and Samir sit with friends around their favorite table at the N'a'oum restaurant in Ramallah on a warm evening in July 1972. Samir wipes sweat from his forehead and takes a gulp of water. The band he and his siblings lead has just finished its last set at N'aoum, where they play every weekend. As usual, "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" brought down the house.

The waiter plunks down a tray of maza — cheese, bread, dips, grilled meat, olives — and everyone digs in. Then someone mentions Jim and Samir's recent run-in with Jerusalem's finest. "Samir's more of a star than John Lennon," Jim says, as everyone laughs. "He rescued my mom and me from the police." When Jim's mom, Alma, visited from the States, Samir took them on a sightseeing trip — the Dome of the Rock, the Wailing Wall, Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives. There was a fender bender, and the three of them ended up down at the police station with a very angry Israeli driver claiming neck and back injuries. Samir's conversational Hebrew helped straighten out the insurance situation with Jim's rental car and foreign driver's license, while calming everyone's frazzled nerves.

Alma had wanted to know why such a smart go-getter like Samir wasn't in college, and he'd explained it all again, as he had so many times to friends from the institute. Then she'd offered to pay his way. Just like that. "I'll pay tuition for one year," she'd said. "You do the work, and I'll pay for school to the same place Jim went, a great little Catholic university in Texas."

In January 1974, having gotten scholarships from St. Edward's University to complement Alma Hanson's payment of tuition, Ashrawi boarded a plane bound for Austin, Texas, by way of Rome and New York City. He had one suitcase, his 12-string guitar and $250. His friend Jim — then—Holy Cross Brother Jim Hanson '66 — met him at the airport.

Jim, a faculty member at St. Edward's at the time, had arranged for Ashrawi to stay with him at his off-campus house until the dorms opened later that month. Over the next few weeks, Jim introduced his friend to favorites like Onion Creek, Barton Springs and McDonald's — "the only place that might be America's contribution to international dining," Jim liked to say.

Once classes started, Ashrawi moved into Premont Hall. "I didn't experience culture shock in the traditional sense because I was accustomed to the language and cultural norms of the time, but it was still extremely difficult," he says. "My family was very tightly knit, and I had many good friends back in Jerusalem. In Austin, I hardly knew anyone, and hardly anyone knew me."
He also found it surprising that students had telephones and televisions in their rooms. “When I left home,” he says, “we had neither.”

To make ends meet and pay for his second, third and fourth years of tuition, he took jobs with the physical plant and the bookstore, and later worked as a math and physics tutor and a Freshman Studies intern. He decided to major in Chemistry after a discussion with the late J. D. Lewis, a professor then newly hired to invigorate the science programs. Professor Henry Altmiller helped him decide to specialize in surface chemistry.

Ashrawi graduated magna cum laude in 1977 and went on to UT–Austin to earn a master’s in Physical Chemistry. After he graduated, he took a job as a chemist with Texaco. He returned to St. Edward’s for his MBA in 1990. All the while, he kept in touch with the Hansons.

“Someone invests in you and sees a human return, it’s uplifting for everyone,” Ashrawi says. “I’m amazed that, to this day, Alma still remembers those early stories of coming to Palestine and bringing me to Austin. She’s become like an adopted mother — she’s an integral part of my family.”

It’s Thanksgiving 1995, and Samir is celebrating in Austin with his family. Samir’s wife, Faten, mashes chickpeas for hummus and makes her famous Hashweh rice stuffing in the kitchen, along with the traditional turkey. Nine-year-old Yazan sorts his baseball card collection in the living room, and Alma soothes baby Raneem by playing “this little piggie” on her tiny toes. Six-year-old Yara prances in just as Alma launches into her alma mater’s fight song. “Dear old Nebraska U., where the girls are the fairest, the boys are the squarest, of any old school that I knew! Rah, rah, rah!” Then she reads If You Give a Mouse a Cookie because she knows it’s the children’s favorite.

The scent of stuffed grape leaves signals that dinner is almost ready, but Yazan and Yara convince Grandma Hanson to tell the “cow story” just one more time. She transports them back in time to small-town Nebraska, where 4-year-old twins Alma and Alta play dress-up instead of minding the cows out in the pasture. A grouchy neighbor pounds on the door to announce that the cows are eating her lawn. Again. “And that’s why you should always do what you’re told — and never, ever tell a lie,” she says, pausing a moment to let the lesson sink in. Then she shakes her arms in the air and starts to sing again. “Rah, rah, rah!” they all shout.

At dinner, everybody sits around the big wooden table, filling and refilling their plates, telling jokes, and coaxing the children to eat their salad. Alma mentions how thankful she is for family, and Samir squeezes her hand. Jim, Alma’s only child, has followed a calling to form a new religious order, Los Hermanos de Juan Diego, in Mexico, and his absence — along with his boisterous laugh and funny stories — is sorely missed.

But Alma’s right. They are family. They’re from different ends of the earth, but that’s just geography. In their hearts, they’re home.

THERE’S NO DOUBT Alma Hanson is a second mother to Samir Ashrawi. When he took the job with Texaco fresh out of grad school, she made sure he understood the complicated American tax code. In 2005, she convinced him to accept a position with chemical manufacturer Huntsman as director of intellectual property licensing, even though it meant moving to The Woodlands from Austin — and away from her. And Alma mentored his oldest daughter Yara Ashrawi ’12 when she decided to attend St. Edward’s.

When Yara was a student at the university, she and Alma could meet for meals in the dining room at the Brother Vincent Pieau Residence, an assisted living home near Teresa Hall where Alma lived at the time. They also grocery shopped together, with Alma frequently extolling the health benefits of the Hershey’s dark chocolate bars that were always on her shopping list.

“Grandma Hanson really wanted me to be there at St. Edward’s. She knew it was the right place for me, just like she did with my dad,” says Yara. “She believes in me — she has always felt that I was going to go on to do great things. I don’t know if I will, but she’s set on it.”

Alma lauded Yara’s decision to postpone graduate school for a year of service through the Augustinian Volunteers program in Chicago, where she served as a medical caseworker for poor women during and just after their pregnancies. “I wanted to do something different; I wanted to give back and be more selfless,” says Yara. “Alma is such the philanthropist — she is always teaching or tutoring or helping in her church. She was my first impression of what it means to truly give of yourself.”

She also helped convince Yara to enroll in the three-year physician’s assistant graduate program at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Boston. “It’s hard to be so far away from her,
but I know I’m doing what she envisioned for me by pursuing a career that allows me to help people,” Yara says.

(“Everyone has these smartphones nowadays. I get to talk to her all the time,” says Alma.)

And the hilltop connection continues — Samir’s daughter **Raneem Ashrawi ’16** is a sophomore English Writing and Rhetoric major. “Going to St. Edward’s has given me this great connection with both Yara and my father,” Raneem says. “When I graduate, we will all three be products of a Holy Cross education.”

For Samir, that’s the biggest blessing Alma has given him. “I’m a believer in what the university stands for — formation and transformation. I saw it in Yara, and I’m seeing it in Raneem,” says Samir. “Good people gave me an opportunity, and now it’s my turn to give back by investing in my children and the university. I know the education they get, the principles on which they are taught, the care of the professors and staff, the critical thinking — that’s a lot of good stuff.”

Even today, Samir keeps a room ready for Alma in his and Faten’s Houston home, though Alma insists she would never move in and burden them. She’s wheelchair-bound, her hearing is going and she can’t quite remember the children’s names when they visit her at the Austin assisted-living facility where she now resides.

But she never forgets Samir. He walks into her room and her face brightens. He replaces the batteries in her remote control and shows her pictures of the kids on his iPhone. He asks about her medications and how she’s sleeping. And they talk about how she wants to celebrate her birthday — she turned 104 on December 4.

“Oh, Samir,” she says, “I’ve never asked for anything, and you’ve given me everything.”

Samir shakes his head. “No, Alma,” he says, “just the opposite.”

Editor’s note: A payment to a particular person’s tuition does not qualify for an income tax charitable deduction according to the IRS.
Assistant Professor of Management Gary Pletcher and Austin-based nonprofit Honduras Good Works are teaching Honduran entrepreneurs how to run their own businesses — and break the country’s devastating cycle of poverty.

By Stacia Hernstrom MLA ’05 | Illustrations by Sara Hahn
Honduras, the New Florida,” says one. “Unpackaged. Unfiltered. Unspoiled,” proclaims a second. But here’s what those sites and books don’t tell you.

Three-quarters of the country is mountainous, making infrastructure like electricity, running water and sewer systems hard to construct and even harder to maintain. Roads regularly wash out and hillsides slide away thanks to an often-torrential rainy season. Drug cartels and street gangs have earned the country the ominous distinction of the highest per capita murder rate in the world. And the average Honduran makes $2 a day.

That’s why Gary Pletcher wants to go back.

Pletcher, director of the Global Business Institute for Societal Responsibility at St. Edward’s University, first visited Honduras in the 1980s to scuba dive off the bay island of Guanaja. Last May, he returned to the country with Honduras Good Works (HGW), an Austin-based nonprofit whose mission is to offer healthcare, education, and economic and spiritual guidance to poverty-stricken Hondurans. HGW’s latest endeavor is microfinance — Pletcher’s specialty.

Groundwork for the microfinance project began in July 2011, when HGW partnered with the Institute for Development in Honduras, a nonprofit lending institution based on Christian values, to finance fledgling entrepreneurs in Honduras’ poorest areas. A year later, Executive Director Jo Ann Swahn had secured HGW’s first grant to fund the loans. The following month, she traveled to Honduras to help start four “trust banks,” groups of entrepreneurs from the same village who agree to support each other’s businesses and share the responsibility of paying back their loans.

“We saw the need right away for technical expertise,” says Swahn. “Whether it was a taco stand on the street or a group of women coming together to sell jewelry, we had to help them develop business plans, so they could have the chance to be successful in their microenterprises.”

So she called Pletcher. Swahn and Pletcher had first connected in early 2011, when microfinance was a bullet point in HGW’s strategic plan. Now that the implementation was underway, she asked him to help her teach the Hondurans how to write viable strategic plans. Now that the implementation was underway, she asked him to help her teach the Hondurans how to write viable strategic plans. Now that the implementation was underway, she asked him to help her teach the Hondurans how to write viable strategic plans. Now that the implementation was underway, she asked him to help her teach the Hondurans how to write viable strategic plans. Now that the implementation was underway, she asked him to help her teach the Hondurans how to write viable strategic plans. Now that the implementation was underway, she asked him to help her teach the Hondurans how to write viable strategic plans.

He whittled business-plan creation down to eight steps, from crafting a mission to drafting operations and marketing plans, and asked Assistant Professor of Spanish Cory Lyle to translate it. He had the steps printed on water- and tear-resistant index cards, which were laminated and bound together with a thick metal ring. He packed 20 copies and a week’s worth of clothes and flew to Tegucigalpa with Swahn on a grant she had secured through HGW.

Their first stop was the lending organization in Tegucigalpa, where Pletcher presented his eight steps to the leadership team and loan officers. Then he, Swahn and institute employees traveled to the department of El Paraíso to help the would-be entrepreneurs refine their businesses and learn to support one another along the way.

“There are tremendous similarities [among] people from around the world — Hondurans want a better life for themselves and their children.” — Gary Pletcher

They spent three hours in a pickup truck traversing muddy, potholed, barely passable roads to meet with six groups in four villages. Instead of standing at the head of a classroom or a boardroom, Pletcher met with the entrepreneurs right in the village square because the small adobe huts with dirt floors could not accommodate everyone. The air was filled with plumes of smoke from farmers burning their lands nearby in preparation for planting. Curious chickens occasionally wandered by. Equally curious villagers stopped to listen as they brought buckets and bottles to the public faucets protruding from the ground every three blocks or so.

Immediately, Pletcher connected with the Hondurans he met. “There are tremendous similarities [among] people from around the world — Hondurans want a better life for themselves and their children,” he says. “Without access to capital to implement their ideas about how to earn more money for their families, they can never break out of poverty. They never have a chance. But if they can develop a business plan and back it up in writing, someone will be compelled to loan them the $50, $75, $100 they need to get started.”
Swahn and Pletcher’s presentation included basic advice like “Everyone participates” and “There are no bad ideas,” along with more complicated concepts like conducting a SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Then came lots of questions, discussion, debate and, ultimately, consensus. The group of entrepreneurs in Ojo de Agua decided to start a pig farm. In Yuscaran, a hair salon and cleaning-supply business. In Corral Quemado, a jewelry-making cooperative.

“We gave them a systematic way to come to an agreement and answer questions to help them develop an implementable and sustainable idea. They negotiated to determine what idea will become their business,” says Pletcher. “Once they arrived at that idea, they began to tell the story in writing, ultimately influencing decision making on their loan application.”

Despite the different types of enterprises being cooked up alongside the fried plantains and red beans, Pletcher and Swahn noted similarities among the entrepreneurs. Nearly all are women. Nearly all have children. And nearly all live on just 50 cents a day, significantly less than the country’s average wage.

“Most families subsist on what they get when they sell their harvest at market. Others try to make a little money selling used clothing,” says Swahn. “That’s the extent of their skill and what they know [how] to do.”

Many women paradoxically try to improve their lives by having larger families. “Having children is a form of security. The more children a woman has, the higher the chance that her children will take care of her when she’s older,” says Swahn. “It’s a self-perpetuating poverty prophecy.”

Having larger families means the children have an even smaller chance of obtaining a secondary education and securing transportation to the far-flung schools. It also taxes the already practically non-existent healthcare system — most villages in El Paraíso do not have resident doctors and rely solely on HGW’s annual medical brigades to treat common problems like lice, parasites, vitamin deficiencies, infections, high blood pressure and diabetes.

It’s these odds that Pletcher and Swahn are hoping to beat. “If these women have the opportunity to learn a skill, they can start to make positive changes in their lives in areas like nutrition, disease prevention, parenting and self-esteem,” says Swahn. “The statistics always show that women have a better record of paying back their loans — they want very much to invest in their children’s educations and in their communities.”

That’s where Victor Funes and Augusto Medina come in. They distribute and track the loan money that Swahn and Honduras Good Works provide. It’s their job to make sure the villagers have the economic, spiritual and personal support they need to succeed.
as entrepreneurs, because launching a successful business means that they can apply for second, third and fourth loans.

“They start with a little business. Then they have a little bit more income to keep going. They send their kids to school, and they have a little more now than they had before,” says Medina. “It’s a long, slow process, but already they expect a better future for themselves and their children. They have a path for hope.”

“As time passes, we can see how their smiles are shining more and more.”

–Victor Funes

Medina and Funes, who work out of the Tegucigalpa headquarters of the Institute for Development in Honduras, travel to the villages monthly to check in with their clients. They have connected the pig farmers in Ojo de Agua with agricultural advisors at the nearby Panamerican Agricultural University in Zamorano, who are teaching them about husbandry, quality standards, site selection and the permit process. Medina and Funes have helped the jewelry makers in Corral Quemado set up stands at local craft festivals and market their pieces to tourists. They are also working with Swahn to bring a new factory for a Houston-based tile company to the area — stone-cutting the small, delicate tiles requires a similar dexterity as jewelry making. If the deal goes through, the factory would dramatically increase monthly income for the workers to $350, projects Swahn.

Progress is slow but steady, says Funes. “Even though it’s slow, the villagers see that things are improving, little by little,” he says. “As time passes, we can see how their smiles are shining more and more.”

It’s the promise of those smiles that keeps the team motivated — and keeps Pletcher seeking out funding for a return trip so that he can train more staff members at the Institute for Development in Honduras and entrepreneurs in other remote villages. He is also looking to translate his business guide into other languages (Arabic, Hindi, Croatian, Vietnamese) for use in microfinance projects around the world. This spring, through the university’s Global Business Institute for Societal Responsibility, Pletcher will lead teams of graduate students from St. Edward’s in projects with indigenous tribes in Lima, Peru, where they’ll work with Amazon Health Products, a company that provides natural products from the region.

In Spain, undergraduates will help reforest a mountainous area devastated by fire. And, one day, Pletcher hopes students from St. Edward’s can join him in Honduras.

“We can’t take students without doing a risk assessment, and right now, the country is just too dangerous. I get a little emotional about what I do in my role at St. Edward’s because I want to share it all with my students,” he says. “We have accomplished a lot over the years, but there is so much more opportunity. There is just so much more to be done.”

To learn more about Pletcher’s work in Honduras or the Global Business Institute for Societal Responsibility, email Pletcher at garyp@stedwards.edu. For information on Honduras Good Works, visit hondurasgoodworks.org.
The 62,334-square-foot center houses the Computer Science, Mathematics and Bioinformatics programs, as well as custom laboratories for physics and science classes for non-majors.
Math major Alexa Ortiz '15 pushes against the heavy glass doors as she enters John Brooks Williams Natural Sciences Center–South. She swipes her student ID to enter the third-floor Computational Math Research Lab. The white board has remnants of last night's study session, and an ongoing chess game sits in the corner. Ortiz is in the room almost daily to work on her research project — exploring the use of binary partitions.

Her research is a three-semester-long process that will culminate in her presentation at Senior Seminar in May. She’s got a ways to go between now and then, so she logs on to one of the two computational computers and starts running a complex calculation. The computers are designed to process high levels of data and can conduct computations in about a third of the time as her own laptop. She checks her phone for the time. Soon, she’ll meet with her advisor, Associate Professor of Mathematics Edward Early, in his nearby office to go over her progress.

Around the corner in the Math Tutoring Lab, fellow Math major Dani Pedroza '13 helps students use Maple software to complete laboratory assignments. Down the hall, Associate Professor of Mathematics David Naples greets students who are about to start their final in the physics lab, where they’ll rotate through eight experiments followed by a short calculation. Downstairs, Computer Science major Kirby Powell '14 enters the Mabee Foundation Advanced Computing Lab, which is equipped with 36 computer workstations, where he’ll finish up homework before class.

Since the center opened in September, it’s established itself as a hub for student exploration and collaboration. The building is rich with research opportunities related to such areas as software engineering, computer technology, environmental science and forensics, but students of all majors benefit from the technology and shared spaces inside. In this photo essay, see how thoughtful architectural design merges with science to create an atmosphere of discovery and interaction.
02 The 125-seat auditorium accommodates science and general-education classes, faculty meetings and campuswide events, such as the Lucian Symposium, which brings noted scientists to speak on global health and infectious diseases.

Math major Sterling Loza ’16, one of nine math tutors, rolls a white board on wheels from table to table as he works one-on-one with students in the Math Tutoring Lab. Approximately 25 students drop by daily for free tutoring in all levels of math. The most popular tutoring request? Help with Calculus I.
The academic areas inside the natural sciences center expand possibilities for collaborative research, but the stunning two-story staircase showcases the building’s exceptional design. California-based Moore Ruble Yudell Architects and Planners collaborated with Austin-based STG Design Inc. on both the north and south science buildings.
The introductory-level physics lab is used by students taking first-semester Mechanics and Waves and second-semester Electricity, Magnetism and Optics. The courses incorporate up to eight stations to conduct short lab experiments, such as using a computer interface to determine the period of oscillation for a simple pendulum or using a vernier scale to measure the diameter and length of a cylinder.

The outdoor classroom allows students to study Texas Hill Country vegetation and the effects of extreme weather and sudden changes on the plants. Professor of Biological Sciences Bill Quinn teaches the course Economic Botany during the fall semester.

Four Computer Science classrooms act as open-plan studios for group and individual work.
As students wait for classes to start, conversations focus on upcoming exams and challenging homework problems. The thoughtfully placed benches encourage impromptu study sessions.

Faculty offices — 30 in total — are located near the classrooms, offering opportunities for students to drop in during office hours. Professor of Computer Science Laura Baker meets with a student in her office to discuss a web programming assignment.

A rain garden collects runoff from the building and purifies the water as it passes through a gravel bed while hydrating the surrounding plants.
Ultimately, this is the story of two teachers. Both are New Yorkers. Both are Irish Catholics. Both root against the Yankees. Always.

But one leans red, the other blue. One knows wine, the other sports trivia. Between the two of them, they’ve taught American history and politics to 10-year-olds, 20-somethings and every age in the middle. Each could once captivate a classroom by straightening his towering frame and telling a story about John Locke, John Smith, John anybody.

Neither has been at the blackboard in more than two decades, but both are still master storytellers. They are the duo responsible for raising more than $144 million through the Special Destiny campaign and the Campaign for St. Edward’s University — President George E. Martin and Vice President for University Advancement Michael Larkin.

Martin cut his academic teeth as a political science faculty member at St. Peter’s College in Jersey City, N.J., before becoming dean and eventually academic vice president. Larkin taught elementary and high school on Long Island before getting into the alumni relations and fundraising world. They met at St. Peter’s in 1997 when Larkin became head of advancement there.

“I could see right away that, although he’s an academic at heart, George is much more expansive in his thinking,” says Larkin. “There’s this amazing thing that he has the ability to do — he has tremendous recall. He has a remarkable command of facts and can give specific examples of the broader terms.”

As a result, Martin was the administrator Larkin preferred to take on visits with donors and alumni. Then, in 1999, Martin left St. Peter’s to become the 23rd president at St. Edward’s. Four years later, the advancement job at St. Edward’s opened up and Larkin applied.

Martin hired him. “Michael’s openness to collaborative work has always been one of his very strongest points. That ability to collaborate has led to the successes we’ve had together,” says Martin. “We read each other very well, almost instantaneously.”

That kind of innate familiarity has proven useful on the road because they can agree to disagree on the little things — like what time to leave for appointments and flights. (Larkin: “I like to be early.” Martin: “And I’m always saying, ‘Well, we’re here. What do we do now?’”) Even with GPS, they almost always make a wrong turn. (Martin: “Especially in Dallas.” Larkin:
President George E. Martin, Vice President for University Advancement Michael Larkin
and Larkin’s team of 10 fundraisers completed the Special Destiny campaign on June 30, 2007. The largest fundraising endeavor in university history, the campaign exceeded its $65 million goal by more than $5 million. Now, they’re aiming to best those records.

On Feb. 20, Martin announced the public phase of the Campaign for St. Edward’s University. He and Michael Larkin, vice president for University Advancement, have quietly raised $70.1 million toward the campaign since 2007, with an ultimate goal of $100 million by 2017. To date, they have spearheaded fundraising that totals more than $144 million for St. Edward’s. Here are the highlights:

• Created more than 70 endowed scholarships
• Funded eight endowed programs
• Established the Kozmetsky Center of Excellence in Global Finance
• Constructed Trustee Hall (2002), the John Brooks Williams Natural Sciences Center–North and South (2006 and 2013), and the Munday Library
• Currently renovating the Alumni Gym
• Currently renovating Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel and constructing new offices for Campus Ministry, as well as a Meditation Garden
• Secured the university’s three largest gifts from individuals (Bill and Pat Munday, the John Brooks Williams estate and the Robert and Pearle Ragsdale estate)
• Secured the largest gift from a corporation (University Federal Credit Union)
• Secured the largest gift plan from an alumnus (Bob Wilems ’63)
• Inducted 91 Edwardians (donors whose lifetime giving is $100,000 or more)
• Recruited a record-setting 409 President’s Associates (contributors who support the university through annual gifts of $1,000 or more) in 2013

“But we’re never late.”) And inevitably, former basketball coach and college track captain Larkin will quote famed UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, invoke a sports metaphor or insert a relevant sports statistic into conversation.

“Michael loves sports — and that statistical bent makes him very objective in his work. He can step back and say, ‘Is this working or not working?’” says Martin. “That makes for a highly effective operation in terms of dollars spent per dollars collected. He always knows where we have to be at a certain point to be successful.”

Case in point: Under Martin and Larkin’s leadership, the university’s annual fundraising has increased from $1.5 million to $10 million. They key is trust, says Larkin. “The president has to trust that the vice president will use his time well, and the vice president has to trust that the president will be ready.”

Even when Larkin left St. Edward’s briefly in 2008 to pursue his dream job of heading up a private Catholic secondary school, Martin’s trust never wavered. “Michael wanted to explore something new, and I wasn’t going to hold him back. I supported him all the way.”

A year later, Larkin reapplied for the hilltop advancement job. “Even though I’d gotten the job I had always wanted,” he says, “I realized it actually wasn’t what I wanted at all.”

And Martin re-hired him without reservation. “Why wouldn’t I bring him back? He’s clearly one of the most effective fundraisers in the country.” (Larkin and his team have brought home two national fundraising awards from CASE, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.)

Just as he did in his coaching days, Larkin also plans for future seasons. “Some of our goals might not even happen while we’re here,” he says. “But by building and strengthening relationships, we can make a much grander investment in the overall enterprise — the institution itself.”

Relationships are key, agrees Martin. “We know absolutely that success is driven by cultivation, cultivation, cultivation,” he says. “It’s amazing how friends find other friends and create opportunities to discover and rediscover St. Edward’s.”

And that’s a good thing. Because Martin and Larkin are just warming up — and they’re ready to hit another one out of the park.

On Feb. 20, President George E. Martin announced the public phase of the Campaign for St. Edward’s University. He and Michael Larkin, vice president for University Advancement, have quietly raised $70.1 million toward the campaign since 2007, with an ultimate goal of $100 million by 2017.
BEYOND THE HILLTOP

St. Edward’s University alumni are everywhere. Sure, the vast majority reside in the Lone Star State, but here’s a visual reminder that the university’s alumni association is gaining a worldwide presence.

ALUMNI AROUND THE WORLD

North America (excluding the United States) 213

Europe 66

Asia 229

Africa 22

Australia 10

South America 79

GET INVOLVED

Wherever you live, there’s a way for you to stay engaged and connected!

• Share exciting news about your professional life, volunteer work and personal endeavors.
• Serve as an alumni ambassador for your area.
• Participate in an on- or off-campus volunteer opportunity.

Email seualumni@stedwards.edu or visit think.stedwards.edu/alumni to learn more.

ALUMNI NOTES

BEYOND THE HILLTOP

J.D. GARZA ’93

Current home: Dallas
Job: Principal and managing director of The Marketing Consortium
Student involvement: Baseball team, Campus Ministry and various campus jobs
How he stays connected to the hilltop: Served as the Dallas alumni chapter president and is currently a member of the alumni association board of directors; attends events in the Dallas area, as well as the alumni baseball game on campus; keeps in contact with other alumni, especially baseball teammates; makes annual contributions to St. Edward’s, including a scholarship set up in his mother’s name, Aurora V. Garza
Favorite professor at St. Edward’s: “Mark Poulos taught me about integrity and character by not showing favoritism to me because I was an athlete. It was a tough lesson.”

MEGHANN BOLTON-FUENTES ’08

Current home: New York City
Job: Senior grant writer for a nonprofit organization
Student involvement: Alpha Phi Omega, Campus Ministry
How she stays connected to the hilltop: Stays in touch with New York–based college friends and has connected with more alumni through the local alumni chapter; visits campus when back in Austin; keeps up with professors via social media and email
Favorite professors at St. Edward’s: “The late Marcia Kinsey and the late Edward Shirley. They were both mentors and colleagues when I was a teaching assistant for Science and Theology.”

IN MEMORIAM

To Eileen McConnell ’95 and husband Derek Hummert, son Tristan Hummert, on Aug. 22, 2013


Brother Robert Hampton, CSC, of Austin, on Sept. 19, 2013

Brother Eagan Hunter, CSC, of Austin, on Sept. 24, 2013

Robert Connell Jr. ’50, of Houston, on July 24, 2013

Stanley Havelka hs ’50, of Georgetown, on Aug. 24, 2013
Burke O'Rourke ’51, of Houston, on June 15, 2013
Jesús Bosquez hs ’52, of Del Rio, on Sept. 18, 2013
J. Dixon Jr. hs ’53, of Austin, on Sept. 7, 2012
Albert Griffith Jr. ’53, of San Antonio, on June 28, 2013
Fred Hormuth ’54, of Newburgh, Ind., on July 13, 2013
William Koewler ’54, of Evansville, Ill., on June 2, 2013
Brother John Christian Kuchenbrod, CSC, ’54, of Valatie, N.Y., on Nov. 24, 2013

ALUMNI BY REGION

Michael O’Brien ’90
Current home: Dumfries, Va.
Job: Founder of O’Brien Consulting, which provides strategic IT consulting to nonprofit organizations
Student involvement: Columnist for Hilltop Views, Campus Ministry, Student Activities Council and Student Government Association
How he stays connected to the hilltop: Serves on the alumni association board of directors, attends local alumni events in Washington, D.C., and connects with college friends through Facebook
Favorite campus landmark: “To wax nostalgic, I loved the ReUnion (now the bookstore). It was a great place to get greasy pizza, spend time between classes, play pool and catch up with friends. Before it was renovated, it had a very hole-in-the-wall feel that made it unique and authentic.”

Allison Schaeffer ’03, MBA ’10
Current home: San Jose, Calif.
Student involvement: Communication Society and Student Orientation Leader
How she stays connected to the hilltop: Hasn’t missed a Homecoming since 2005 and co-leads the effort to restart the Bay Area alumni chapter
Favorite professor at St. Edward’s: “Can I say all of them? I mean that sincerely. I had so many wonderful professors in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. As an undergrad, the bulk of my interactions were with Communication professors. My teachers in the graduate program all had real-world experience doing what they taught, and it showed. That’s incredible.”
Favorite campus landmark: “Main Building. I loved walking up to that big beauty every day [while working in Alumni and Parent Programs], and I have to say: It has the best view on campus.”
CHAPTER NEWS

FROM HOUSTON

Members of the Houston chapter volunteered at the Houston Food Bank’s Portwall Warehouse on Oct. 19, 2013, in honor of Founders Day.

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Washington, D.C., chapter held a presidential reception on Oct. 17, 2013. More than 30 prospective students, parents, alumni and high-school personnel attended. President George E. Martin shared the latest news about the university, and Bill Clabby, associate vice president for Global Initiatives, discussed the university’s global programs.

FROM AUSTIN

Members of the Austin chapter volunteered at the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas to celebrate Founders Day on Oct. 12, 2013. Alumni sorted 6,000 pounds of frozen food, which was distributed to local nonprofits and hungry families.

More than 100 alumni, friends and family attended the annual alumni baseball game on Oct. 26, 2013, between the current Hilltoppers and alumni.

CLASS NOTES

1950s

Robert McCarthy ’58, of Austin, is now retired. After earning his master’s degree in Psychology, McCarthy became a drug and alcohol counselor for the U.S. military in Panama. He also served as the director of social services at Covenant House in Hollywood, Calif.

1960s

Brother Tom Maddix, CSC, ’68, of Vancouver, British Columbia, was part of an international conference organized by the Vatican called “The Child as a Person and as a Patient: Therapeutic Approaches Compared.” The conference took place at the St. Pius X Hall in Vatican City in June 2013.

1980s

Daniel Quedenfeld ’80, of Keenesburg, Colo., received the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials Registered Public-Safety Leader certification in 2013. John Ikard MBA ’81, of Littleton, Colo., was featured in an article in Colorado Biz magazine. Ikard is the president and CEO of FirstBank Holding Company in Lakewood, Colo.

Jim Brocato ’84, MAHS ’88, of Beaumont, was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the State Independent Living Council, which promotes and advances an independent living philosophy and advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Brocato is the executive director of the RISE Center for Independent Living.

Thomas O’Brien ’57, of Swartz Creek, Mich., on June 25, 2013
Rev. David Trosch ’57, of Mobile, Ala., on Oct. 12, 2012
Edward Kubala Jr. ’58, of West Lake Hills, on July 18, 2013
Bernal Nichol Jr. ’60, of San Antonio, on June 22, 2013
David Beach ’63, of Metairie, La., on Oct. 29, 2013
Fred Galus ’55, of Crystal Lake, Ill., on Sept. 13, 2011
Larry Maurer ’65, of Port Charlotte, Fla., on July 31, 2013
Ted Paulissen ’67, of Houston, on July 8, 2013
John Josephakis '88, of Santa Fe, N.M., was named vice president of worldwide sales for Cray Inc.

Pamela A. Reeder '89, of Sainte Genevieve, Mo., is the registrar at Mineral Area College in Park Hills, Mo.

1990s

Geronimo Rodriguez Jr. '90, of Austin, spoke at the Texas Leadership Education and Diversity Conference in September 2013. The event was hosted by the National Society of Hispanic MBAs.

Lawrence R. Taglieri '91, of Braintree, Mass., has been appointed principal of Quincy High School in Quincy, Mass.

Cole Holmes MAHS '92, of Salt Lake City, is an assistant professor in the Department of Management and director of the BBA program for the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah.

Larry Charles Howell '92, of Temple, is the executive marketing director for Associated Auctioneers LLC.

Michael Edward Twomey '92, of Austin, was named “Austin’s Best CFO of 2013” in the Austin Business Journal’s Large Private Company category. Twomey is the CFO for Newgistics Inc.

Theodore John Lukoski III '94, MBA ’95, of Austin, was named the head of the lower school for St. Gabriel’s School in August 2013.

Beatrice Rocha-Piatt ’98, of Horseshoe Bay, announced her intentions to run for the Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 office in the March Republican primary.

2000s

Angela Dawn Keller ’00, of Fredericksburg, earned a master’s degree in Community Counseling from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio in August 2010 and became a Licensed Professional Counselor in August 2013. She works as a counselor for a small nonprofit organization, where she sees low-income clients who are uninsured. Additionally, she sees victims of domestic violence in Gillespie County as part of an outreach program for the Kerrville battered women’s shelter.

Dylan Vitone ’01, of Pittsburgh, curated a collaborative exhibit called GREEN for the Silver Eye Center for Photography in Pittsburgh. The exhibit, which was open from Sept. 6 through Oct. 5, 2013, showcased a survey of contemporary aesthetics in photography, all connected by one common, purposely varied idea: green.

Bill DiGaetano '03, of Colleyville, is leading the Alamo Drafthouse franchise expansion into Richardson. DiGaetano was featured in D Magazine for his efforts.

Rev. Russell Dale Mowry ’04, of Sewickley, Penn., is serving as the associate pastor of Youth and Family Ministries at Sewickley Presbyterian Church.

Kim Paider ’05, of Costa Mesa, Calif., is enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program at Otis College in Los Angeles.

Sarah Elsey ’09, of Colorado Springs, Colo., completed her master’s degree in Educational Leadership in May 2013 at the University of Colorado—Colorado Springs. In July 2013, she began working for the UCCS Disability Services and Testing Center.

NEW DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND PARENT PROGRAMS

Please join St. Edward’s University in welcoming Karin Dicks, the new director of Alumni and Parent Programs. Dicks’ goal for the alumni association is to grow the next generation of alumni leaders through volunteer opportunities. “Our alumni have strong, positive memories of St. Edward’s,” she says. “I want to continue to develop innovative ways to serve alumni and utilize their skills and passion to benefit current students, the alumni association and St. Edward’s University as a whole.”

Previously, Dicks implemented AMD’s global philanthropic initiatives and managed the public relations and volunteer services department for The Salvation Army of Austin.
ALUMNI NOTES

Alberto Guzman '09, of Bastrop, is a varsity football coach and teacher at Bastrop High School.

Mark Maynard '09, of Missouri City, is a doctoral student in the Psychology department at the University of Houston. He had a paper published in the September 2013 issue of PLOS ONE.

2010s

Taylor L. Johnson '13, of Dripping Springs, has been signed by the Detroit Tigers.

SEND IN YOUR CLASS NOTES

Send your Class Notes and wedding or birth announcements to the Alumni Office at seualumni@stedwards.edu.

Learn more about upcoming events at think.stedwards.edu/alumni.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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A memoir written by former Assistant Professor Michele Kay '02, MLA '05 was published in November 2013 and is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble, as well as The Blue Awning Books, BookWoman and BookPeople in Austin. What Once Seemed Strange: A Memoir of Egyptian Exile from Cairo to Austin is taken from Kay’s thesis for her master’s degree and from dictation after she became ill from brain cancer. “Michele’s story stresses her experiences as a person without a home country, a person who always travels through the world as a kind of stranger,” says Professor of English Catherine Rainwater, who edited the book. Kay passed away in February 2011.

The Seton Hospital School of Nursing held its 50th and final reunion on Oct. 27, 2013. Student nurses enrolled in the two-year diploma program at Seton Hospital, which ended in 1963, and took their science and ethics courses at St. Edward’s.
Cassidy Schiltz ’12 had a plan if she ever won on The Price is Right. The former gymnast knew that she’d “scream and do a cartwheel.” She made good on her plan and spun across the stage when she became one of the biggest winners in the show’s history on Oct. 14, 2013. The enthusiastic blonde took home more than $100,000 cash and a BMW.

It was the dream-come-true that almost didn’t happen. The Theater Arts major had been living in Los Angeles for 10 months and pursuing an acting career when a friend got tickets to the show during its Big Money Week. They attended two tapings, two hours apart. After the first one, a crew member offered them seats at the second one. “I almost didn’t go because I had to walk my dog, but then I figured, when am I going to be here again?”

At the second taping, Schiltz’s name was called. She played 1/2 Off and correctly identified the prices of a yogurt maker ($59.95), can opener ($90) and hair dryer ($19.99), which left her to pick one of two boxes. She picked the box full of cash and won $100,000. “I turned to [host] Drew Carey and asked, ‘Is this real life?’” she says.

Next she spun the big wheel, winning another $1,000 and sending her to the Showcase round. She guessed only $328 lower than the price of her showcase, which included a BMW, a three-night stay in San Diego and $2,000 worth of massages.

Schiltz is in the process of getting an agent, attending auditions and taking acting classes with the ultimate goal of landing a role on a TV series or blockbuster film. To date, she has three movie credits under her belt, including Killer Reality (a Lifetime movie), Final Recourse (a TV movie) and Three References, which premiered at the Austin Film Festival. Her appearance on The Price is Right has inspired double takes at auditions and around L.A. “People approach me and say, ‘You look so familiar. Do I know you?’” she says. —Hannah Hepfer

**webextra**

Is This Real Life?

Watch Cassidy Schiltz ‘12 cartwheel across The Price is Right stage (we promise you won’t be able to resist smiling) at stedwards.edu/webextras.