FAIR FOOD
Social justice takes root when students explore the global food economy
In the rural Minnesota town where I grew up, pickups overflowing with fresh-picked corn on the cob popped up on street corners every July, when the kernels were sunshine-yellow and as sweet as cotton candy. My mom would pull the car over at her favorite stand on sticky late afternoons, and I'd slide out from the front seat and hand over $2 for a brimming bag of late-summer corn.

Decades later, my kids, dog and I and walk the 1 mile to the country club that hosts a suburban farmers market every Wednesday night during the summer. Tables are overflowing with organic greens, handmade soaps and gourmet salsa. There are food trucks selling wood-fired pizza and Greek food. It’s barely an echo of the one-man farmers markets of my childhood.

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This year, freshmen at St. Edward’s are exploring the theme of food justice. Before arriving on campus, they poured through Kelsey Timmerman’s *Where Am I Eating? An Adventure through the Global Food Economy*, a book that traces how the common foods we eat get to our tables. Students have participated in activism, watched documentaries, written essays, traveled to farmers markets and had deep discussions about sustainability, farmworkers’ rights, animal rights and more. It’s part of the university’s Common Theme: Students connect to the university’s mission by thinking critically about a complex social-justice topic.

And in this issue, we explore both the topic of food justice and the impact of the Common Theme on our students. The stories are about passion and purpose and the courage to take risks and the shared human experience.

Before reading *Where Am I Eating?*, I had never given more than a passing thought to the corn we’d inhale nightly for six weeks each summer. At first glance, it was the epitome of eating local, but migrant
workers, many from Texas, traveled north for the summer harvest. Whose hands had picked it? What were conditions like for them in Minnesota? What were their lives like?

Questions like these — the ones students are asking every day at St. Edward’s — are about more than examining an issue. They’re part of a process of finding out who you are meant to be. They’re a part of discerning what matters to you. And for many students, they’re the beginning of a lifelong quest.

Happy reading.

Frannie Schneider
Editor
Curious Minds
Want to Know

Whether student researchers are working on a class project or an independent study, they're investigating topics they care about and making new discoveries. Here are four of the projects we've been following this school year.

**Researchers:** Assistant Professor of Sociology Rachael Neal and Sociology major Rebecca Darling ’18

**The project:** Neal is interviewing people in Austin who identify as white and as anti-racist, meaning they are actively working to advance racial justice in their communities and workplaces, and analyzing their answers with Darling to find common themes.

**Observations:** “We’re trying to find out their motivation — which might suggest how other white people could become anti-racists,” says Darling. “A lot of people have mentioned it’s a way to restore their humanity and connect with people more deeply.”

**Researcher:** Taylor Hill ’19, Forensic Science major

**The project:** Hill is examining whether mitochondrial DNA, which is often present when nuclear DNA is not, could be used to identify the animal — and, by extension, a suspect.

**The big picture:** If Hill’s technique is successful, the research might also be used by pet shows to confirm dogs’ pedigrees.

**Researchers:** Emily Miller ’17, Biology major; Hong Ly ’18, Medical Laboratory Science major; and Associate Professor of Biological Sciences Patricia Baynham

**The project:** Miller and Ly analyzed plant extracts obtained from the National Cancer Institute to find new antimicrobial substances to combat resistant bacteria.

**Big questions:** Antibiotics and antibacterials work by killing bacterial cells, but they can target a variety of different parts of the cell — and sometimes scientists don’t know exactly what parts. Meanwhile, bacteria are developing resistance to known antibiotics, resulting in thousands of deaths each year.

**Observations:** Researchers can combat antibiotic resistance by finding new pathways in the cell that haven’t yet been targeted by antibiotics. Plant extracts that inhibit bacterial growth could be developed into new antimicrobial drugs.

**Researchers:** Meggan Archey ’16, Behavioral Neuroscience major, and Associate Professor of Behavioral Neuroscience Jessica Boyette-Davis

**The project:** Archey is examining whether cytokine expression — pro- and anti-inflammatory response in the immune system — is affected by casual use of alcohol or marijuana. Her hypothesis is that binge drinkers will have increased inflammatory responses compared with both recreational marijuana users and abstainers, despite the fact that alcohol is legal and marijuana is not.

**The big picture:** The research could show how drugs and stress affect immune function.

—Robyn Ross
Welcome Days
Every semester begins with Welcome Days, a lineup of events designed to help students make friends and find their niche in their new home. In the fall, Welcome Days begins on move-in weekend with a block party, welcome barbecue and Mass and culminates in Hillfest, a party featuring food trucks and fireworks.

Medallion Ceremony and the University Seal
All new students attend this academic convocation, where a professor gives them a medallion bearing the university seal. Students are encouraged to wear the medallion to other important events like the university ring ceremony and commencement. Out of respect for the founders, students also walk around — not over — the university seal on the ground of Holy Cross Plaza.

Legacy Walk and Hilltop Send-Off
In the Legacy Walk, freshmen leave the Medallion Ceremony and process through the iconic red doors into the heart of campus, marking their entrance into the St. Edward’s community. At the end of their senior year, they make this journey in reverse at the Hilltop Send-Off. Seniors walk through Main Building, out the red doors and onto the front lawn for a champagne toast. Between the Legacy Walk and Hilltop Send-Off, students refrain from entering and exiting through the red doors.

Father Foik’s Nose
Need good luck on a test? Students visit Father Paul J. Foik, CSC, a former university librarian, professor and dean immortalized in a bronze plaque outside the Munday Library. Legend says fortune smiles on those who rub his nose, the one shiny spot on the otherwise weather-worn plaque.

Battle of the Saints
St. Edward’s maintains a friendly rivalry with St. Mary’s University in San Antonio. The Battle of the Saints pits the two schools against one another for the entire year, awarding points for a win in each sport. At the end of the year the school with the higher tally wins the battle.

Annual Celebrations
Every October, Founders Day honors the Congregation of Holy Cross with a day off, followed by a service project. In December, the Festival of Lights illuminates campus and includes holiday reflections and music. Hilltoppers give back to the Austin community in The Big Event, the university’s biggest annual day of service in April.

Homecoming and Family Weekend
In the spring, Student Homecoming Week includes the crowning of homecoming royalty and the Topper Cup Competition, in which teams compete in events like dodgeball and a cardboard-boat regatta. It’s followed by Homecoming and Family Weekend, complete with Casino Night, tailgating and athletic events, and a Sunday Mass and brunch.

Rooting of the Ring
At the ring ceremony inside Mabee Ballroom, the official university rings are blessed and seniors put them on for the first time together. Then the group processes to Sorin Oak for the Rooting of the Ring: Each student walks up to the tree and taps his or her ring to it, to symbolize being rooted in the university and its values.

— Robyn Ross

What’s Your Favorite Campus Tradition?
Campus scenery may change with every new construction project, but it’s the traditions that connect today’s Hilltoppers with those who came before them.
Fear the (Digital) Goat

AN ANIMATED TOPPER RUNS through campus. His mission? Defeat grackles and win back stolen acorns for guitar-playing squirrels. In Topper Goat, a mobile game created by Connor Gill ’16, an Interactive Games Studies major, players can be the hero, too.

Inspired by the Topper mural he saw near the softball field, Gill created the first digital image of Topper in 2014 for an assignment in his Business of Gaming class. For the past two years, he’s worked on completing the game in his spare time, with a goal of it being available to download on iOS and Android phones soon.

Topper Goat is an infinite-runner game, which means that to advance the action, Topper must jump over or run through obstacles (think Donkey Kong, Super Mario Bros. and Flappy Bird rolled into one). Since the backdrop of Topper Goat is St. Edward’s, players also learn about the university.

“Each time someone plays, a fact about the university pops up,” Gill says. “I want someone who has never heard of St. Edward’s to learn about it — or, if they know about the university, come to appreciate it through another medium.”

Gill spent time in the Munday Library archives, looking at historical photos to create authentic digital versions of campus buildings. As Topper defeats his bird-enemies, he jumps onto the roofs of Main Building, Andre Hall and Holy Cross Hall, among others, and users can learn things like who founded St. Edward’s (for those not in the know: Father Edward Sorin, CSC).

Gill says building Topper Goat has helped him gain experience creating digital media and integrating art, animation and music. He plans to use his business and digital design skills to develop games in Austin. “There’s a growing community of indie gamers here, and the opportunities are amazing,” Gill says.

—Erica Quiroz
We think that even the standard classes at St. Edward’s are thought-provoking and compelling, but some go several steps beyond the norm. Whether they take an off-the-wall approach, dig deep, or dare to examine complex and controversial subjects, here are five classes that stood out during the 2016–2017 school year.

—Lauren Liebowitz

### Art and Ethics: Van Gogh’s Ear, Blended Goldfish, Burning the Flag and Beyond

**Who’s teaching it?** Mary Brantl, associate professor of Art; Jack Musselman, associate professor of Philosophy

**Why we love it:** How can you not be drawn to a course with a title like that? This Honors class asks big questions about the ethics of art in the late 20th century. How do we define art? Should we define art? Can we assert that art can be ethical or unethical? And how do we feel about an art piece designed to protest the brutality of the world — by inviting the viewer to choose whether or not to use a blender on a live goldfish?

### Journalism and Religion

**Who’s teaching it?** Eileen Flynn DeLaO, adjunct instructor of English

**Why we love it:** It combines two things that are important to us — job readiness for students and an understanding of diversity. Journalists need to be able to write about religion because it influences so many aspects of society, including public policy, world affairs, education and culture. Students learn about some of the world’s belief systems, assess how the media cover these religions and then try their own hand at writing about religion.

### Hormones and Behavior

**Who’s teaching it?** Katherine L. Goldey, assistant professor of Behavioral Neuroscience; Raelynn Deaton Haynes, assistant professor of Biology

**Why we love it:** Behavioral endocrinology (hormones and behavior) is an emerging, interdisciplinary field, which makes it perfect for a liberal arts school. This new class brings together students and professors from the Schools of Natural Sciences and Behavioral and Social Sciences to examine how hormones and behavior interact related to competition, sexual behavior, parenting, stress and metabolism. There’s also a lab component where students use human saliva to measure hormones such as testosterone to investigate human mating behavior.

### Income Inequality and Tax Policy

**Who’s teaching it?** Louise Single, professor of Accounting

**Why we love it:** Honors classes don’t just ask philosophical questions. This one is as relevant to the real world as it gets. Students volunteer for the Foundation Communities Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (at least 30 hours of service over the semester!) and read and discuss both tax policy and social justice literature. By the end, they understand current and proposed tax policy solutions to the problem of income inequality in the United States — and, perhaps, their own role as they use their future professional practice to effect a more just world.

### Global Water Challenges/Water Transfer Disputes Between and Inside Sovereign Nations

**Who’s teaching it?** Charles Porter, visiting assistant professor of University Studies; Mity Myhr, associate professor of History; Christie Sample Wilson, associate professor of History

**Why we love it:** Upper-level Cultural Foundations classes follow the university’s mission by engaging students in understanding global issues, both historical and contemporary. This one calls on students to act as participants in moot mediations of real-world water disputes, such as those between the Jats and the citizens of Delhi, India, over a canal supplying the city and between Mexico and the United States over the Rio Grande. As Porter says, “Mediation settles 80 percent of all civil lawsuits in Texas. Using the mediation process to settle water disputes is the future, for us all.”
On Teaching

Just like no two people are the same, no two professors teach the same way. Here, four popular professors share a bit of their philosophy of how they work with students.

**Bill Kennedy, professor of Photocommunications**
Teaching is about conversations. It’s about relationships. This is the art of teaching, not the science. It’s not discussed or celebrated the way it should be; we’d rather talk about how to construct a syllabus. But this is what matters most.

**Kristy Ballard, associate professor of Kinesiology**
I always wanted to be at a place where teaching is the big focus. I like watching people get that really big “ah!” moment: not necessarily the moment they understand a concept in class but instead when they realize, “This is what I want to do with the rest of my life.”

**Tricia Shepherd, professor of Chemistry**
I never wanted to be the sort of professor who stands in front of 500 students and lectures. I love to ask questions, and I love to work individually with students. My role as the instructor is to guide students, facilitate discussion and provide context for the material.

**Teri Varner, associate professor of Communication**
I perform for my students — literally. In my presentational speaking class, I always start the semester with a speech. By delivering speeches, I remind my students that I’ve done what I’m asking them to do. I know where they’re coming from. They see what I expect.

Make ’em Laugh

Luxy Banner ’18 (right) stands in the middle of a circle, surrounded by students waiting for her to challenge them in a verbal race of “bippity boppity boo.” Banner slowly walks by each student and catches one off guard, shouting boo before he can. They switch places, and the warm-up activity starts over.

Laughter and games are a big part of how members learn improv in Box of Chocolates, a student organization formed last year after Banner and Kate Axelsson ’18 (left) met in a speech class. The friends share a love of sketch comedy, and they wanted an on-campus outlet where they and other students could be funny together.

The fledgling group has about 30 members who meet weekly to practice in a classroom, or wherever they can find an open space.
InstaWorthy Spots On Campus

1 The Red Doors
It’s no surprise that students, their families and alumni want their photos taken in front of the iconic red doors to show they’re a part of the Hilltopper family. Fun fact: The red doors appeared on an episode of The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon during his “Thank You Notes” segment about graduation gowns in 2015.

2 Downtown View Outside of Main Building
The view from the hilltop is a perfect backdrop for fireworks during Hillfest and graduation selfies, and when facing north, you can often catch portions of both the sunrise and sunset. Plus, new buildings are springing up downtown, so the view never gets old.

3 Third Floor of Fleck Hall
Specifically, the Fleck Hall bathrooms. The bathroom mirrors reflect natural light from large windows, and you can see a little of South Congress and the hills in the background. A bonus? The seating in the building’s common area showcases another angle of downtown, the Munday Library and Main Building. — Erica Quiroz

Axelsson learned improv at her Holy Cross high school in Maryland and spent a month with The Second City, an improvisational theater troupe in Chicago, during the summer. Banner picked up improv at her Austin high school through games and acting classes. Both guide Box of Chocolates using the improv approach of “yes, and,” which encourages participants to continue and build on scenes. The premise behind “yes, and” is that it helps scene partners accept each other’s ideas.

“A person’s first instinct is to say ‘no’ because it’s an easy defense,” Axelsson says. “When you agree to a reality someone has established and get comfortable with being ridiculous, you can’t make a mistake.”

Embracing a “yes, and” mentality has taught Axelsson to try new things, be a better listener and be more spontaneous — all skills she has used in her Communication major and a semester studying abroad in Angers, France. “If I get off track in presentations, I can fall back on my improv skills to get back on point,” Axelsson says. “I’ve learned to trust my ability to converse and be relatable.”

Banner, who is an Acting major, says improv has made her a better performer who thinks faster, commits to her acting choices and is less self-conscious.

When new members join Box of Chocolates for rehearsal, Banner gives them advice to overcome their nervousness: “Don’t think about being funny; we’re all a team; and commit to ‘yes, and.’” she says. “For one hour they can do the stupidest things and no one will judge. It’s magical to watch.”

— Erica Quiroz
Reasons Austin Is the Best

1. **Austin’s startup and tech scenes serve as real-life classrooms.**
   St. Edward’s has partnered with Capital Factory to provide memberships for 10 students in the School of Natural Sciences and The Bill Munday School of Business each semester, giving them access to some of the city’s top entrepreneurs, investors and startup resources. And the business school’s partnership with the Austin Technology Council gives students access to workshops and mentoring from local tech leaders.

2. **The city (and St. Edward’s) care about air quality.**
   School of Natural Sciences Dean Gary A. Morris and Visiting Assistant Professor of Science Paul Walter have launched several specially instrumented weather balloons from campus this year to study ozone pollution. The project was funded by the Capital Area Council of Governments and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

3. **Art is everywhere.**
   *Letterscape*, a large-scale outdoor sculpture by Assistant Professor of Graphic Design Jimmy Van Luu, is part of the City of Austin’s permanent public art collection. In addition, students in Associate Professor of Art Alex Robinson’s Installation Art class have put together medium- and large-scale exhibits across campus and the city — at Up Collective, PUMP Project and ATM Gallery; in the East Austin Studio Tour; at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum; and more.

4. **Service opportunities connect students with the heart of the city.**
   Approximately 70 students participate in S.E.R.V.E. Austin each semester, which coordinates ongoing weekly commitments at locations like Central Texas Food Bank, Casa Marianella and Keep Austin Beautiful. S.E.R.V.E. 1 Day brings together approximately 100 students from St. Edward’s one Saturday each month to volunteer at five different sites across the city.

5. **Cultural events give students an up-close look at history.**
   Texas Civil Rights Project founder Jim Harrington spoke to the university’s first-ever Leadership Living Learning Community last fall about César Chávez’s United Farm Workers march to the Texas Capitol in 1966 — and several students participated in Austin’s 50th anniversary re-enactment of the event.

6. **The city has a diverse ecosystem.**
   Professional Science Master’s in Environmental Management and Sustainability students Lexington Belyeu ’17, Andrew Horvath ’17 and Danica Metlay ’17 are partnering with Wild Basin Creative Research Center to study deer density with an infrared-equipped drone. —Stacia Hemstrom MLA ’05
Andrea Ojeda ’17, Political Science major from Houston
After a summer internship in Washington, D.C., at the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, I realized I want to help drive national conversation and policy objectives. I plan to move back to D.C. and continue working on policy that helps provide resources for others. I've been inspired by many professors at St. Edward's, and I owe many of the growth opportunities I've had to Caroline Morris, the director of Fellowships. She has consistently challenged me to pursue my dreams.

Owen Ziegler ’17, Theater Arts major from Austin
I've been taking acting courses with fantastic teachers, and I have gained valuable experience performing in Equity plays on stage at the Mary Moody Northen Theatre. Together with the student-run Transit Theater Troupe, I've also helped put on dozens of plays to raise money for charity. This campus has always been brimming with culture. From the exceptional international students to the diverse on-campus events, and the well-rounded liberal arts curriculum, I certainly feel more cultured coming out of St. Edward's than I did coming in.

Owen and Andrea join thousands of students whose St. Edward's experience would not be the same without scholarships, innovative programs, alumni volunteers and general support of the university’s distinctive education. Their stories prove: Hilltoppers will take every opportunity you give them and find new ways to make the world a better place — simply by applying the skills and values they develop here.

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Learn how other students have flourished through the $100 million Campaign for St. Edward's University, and make your own contribution to the student experience at stedwards.edu/giving
Just Food

By Robyn Ross
Photography by Whitney Devin ’10
Each year, freshmen at St. Edward’s delve into a theme that connects to the university’s mission. Along the way they learn to think critically about a complex topic — and that, when it comes to issues of social justice, there are no easy answers. We followed three freshmen from across the country as they moved to Austin, adjusted to college life and began to investigate what food justice means to them.

The brown cardboard box was waiting on the front steps when Alejandro “Alex” Torres ’20 stepped outside on Saturday morning. It must have been delivered while he was still eating breakfast. As he eased the book out of the package, Torres stared down at the photo of the smiling, sandy-haired author on the cover. Where Am I Eating? An Adventure through the Global Food Economy by Kelsey Timmerman was Torres’ first assignment for St. Edward’s. He and the other 863 members of the freshman class would read it as part of the 2016–2017 Freshman Studies Common Theme, food justice.

The August heat was thick and damp in San Benito, 8 miles from the Rio Grande, and Torres brought the book inside. The house wasn’t big, but now that Torres’ brother had moved out, he had his own room for the very first time. Torres sat down at his desk and started reading.

Timmerman hailed from Indiana, but he was a world traveler asking a serious question: Who produces the food Americans eat? The book began with his quest to find the farmer who grew the Starbucks Colombian roast he drank every morning (spoiler: the Colombian farmers had never heard of Starbucks). He traveled to Ivory Coast, where he met a cocoa farm worker whose story suggested he was enslaved, and to Nicaragua, where he met men disabled by the dangerous lobster-diving trade. Throughout his travels Timmerman met farmers who had sacrificed everything for their job and received very little in return.

The stories were new, but Torres recognized the characters. After immigrating from Mexico years before, his parents had become migrant farmworkers. Born in Washington, Torres moved with his family to the Valley at age 6, when his grandmother was diagnosed with cancer. But his father would return to the Pacific Northwest to pick apples, cherries and asparagus. Sometimes a year or two passed between his father’s visits to San Benito. More recently, while working in a cotton gin in the Valley, his father had cut off his middle finger — an injury that rendered him unable to work for a year. His mother, a healthcare provider for the elderly, started picking up extra shifts. Torres would wake at 5 a.m. to have breakfast with her and sometimes stay up until 10 p.m. when she came home.

The summer before his junior year, Torres visited his father in Washington, hoping to work with him in the fields. The elder Torres told him no: Alex was too good of a student, an AP Scholar who would enter the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at St. Edward’s with a year’s worth of college credits. He needed to focus on his biology studies and his plans to become a pediatric dentist.

Torres finished the book by dinnertime. Later that week, he got an email from St. Edward’s: Timmerman was coming to campus that fall. Immediately, Torres opened Twitter on his phone and sent Timmerman a direct message:

Good afternoon, Mr. Timmerman, I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed reading your book. … I come from humble beginnings. My parents are migrant workers and they have picked and cultivated crops for most of their lives to provide for my education. Thank you for sharing farmers’ hard work so that people understand the pride of being a farmer and show respect to their hard work.

Within minutes, Timmerman replied:

It was my honor to tell these stories... You are a testament to the sacrifice and hard work your parents put forth! Congrats on being at such a great school and having such a bright future. Hope I get a chance to meet you when I visit SEU.

Flying home to California after visiting family in Chicago, Sally Moceyunas ’20 opened her copy of Where Am I Eating? Timmerman’s travels reminded her of the trip her Bay Area church took each summer to Tijuana, where the parishioners
met people who worked in factories for electronics companies like Panasonic. Moceyunas, a bilingual education major, was fluent enough in Spanish to understand that the workers weren’t earning a fair wage, and that the company had given them a house, but three families had to share it. Now she’d learned a similarly sobering backstory about food. She stared out the window at the Midwestern grain fields below. *Everything we buy affects other people,* she thought.

Sprawled on her bed on a Saturday afternoon, *Miranda Higgins ’20* shook her head at Timmerman’s account of the brutal conditions faced by banana harvesters and cocoa farmers. Each day that week she, too, had harvested crops at one of the many small organic farms near her home in New Hampshire. Since the beginning of the summer she had arrived at the farm before 8 a.m. to pick green beans, twisting the leafy plants back to pluck handful after handful. She snapped Swiss chard leaves from their stems and untangled wayward tomato vines. The farmer hired teenage staff partly to ensure enough labor for the harvest and to impress upon them all the effort that goes into farming.

The work was hard, but the weather was nice, and sometimes Higgins got to taste the vegetables. The farmers Timmerman met had no such luxuries. In fact, Higgins thought, unlike herself, they didn’t get to choose whether to farm, or under what conditions. *I’m glad the author traveled so many places and met these farmers,* she thought, *because most of us don’t stop to think about where our food comes from.*

The Common Theme is a shared educational experience for every freshman, regardless of major or residence hall, and one that introduces them to the university’s mission. Food justice is a particularly expansive topic, says Director of Freshman Studies *Alex Barron.* “It encompasses justice for farmworkers and all the people who bring food to you. It touches on the idea of fair trade and compensating people ethically for produce. But it’s also about: Is your food local? Is it organic? If there are animals involved, how are they treated? And it ties in to hunger and scarcity and food deserts.”

And it’s something everyone can relate to: *Everyone eats.*

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*In early October, Torres and Timmerman met face to face when the author visited campus. Timmerman visited a class and attended a reception in his honor before speaking to the entire freshman class.*

The Hunt Hall cafeteria was crowded as Torres, Timmerman and two other students searched for a table. “The food service sources as much produce as possible from local farms,” Torres explained. “And we compost our leftovers so they don’t go into the landfill. It makes St. Edward’s literally part of the community.”

Timmerman nodded. “Great idea.”

“Austin is a very sustainable city,” Torres added. “It’s one of the first things I noticed when I moved here.”

That afternoon, Moceyunas waited to chat with the author at a reception. The Honors student wanted to ask Timmerman a question that had been gnawing at her. Several of her high school friends had paid attention to what they ate, trying to minimize their diet’s impact on the environment. But they were all vegetarian or vegan, a commitment Moceyunas respected but wasn’t willing to make herself.

When it was her turn to talk with Timmerman, she asked if he was vegetarian; to her surprise, he said no, adding that there were other ways to be a conscious consumer of food. “That really emphasized that you don’t have to be vegetarian or vegan to be food aware,” Moceyunas said. “So I could still be conscious about what I eat or buy, but in an even greater sense because I’m being conscious about how it’s affecting people as well as animals and plants.”

As darkness fell, the Class of 2020 streamed across campus and into the Recreation and Convocation Center. Higgins arrived early. As the seats filled around her she skimmed her copy of *Where Am I Eating?* and considered how she could apply it to her life. She’d been a vegetarian for two years, since a high school teacher had asked her class to consider whether they thought eating meat was acceptable. *I really don’t think it’s okay,* Higgins realized, *so I should just stop doing it.* Now she lived in an apartment with her sister Kasey, a junior at St. Edward’s and a vegan, and cooked most of her meals: frozen veggie burgers, rice, potatoes, vegetables. They bought groceries at Walmart because of the low prices, but Higgins started to reconsider. Maybe she could buy produce at an Austin farmers market, like the ones in New Hampshire.

Timmerman strode onto stage. “The worst place I’ve ever visited is the dump in Phnom Penh, Cambodia,” he told his audience. “I was visiting the garment factories in Southeast Asia for my first book, *Where Am I Wearing?*, and one of the locals took me there. It’s pile after gigantic pile of trash, some of it burning and emitting toxic fumes. People were picking through the dump, looking for things that had value, for $1 a day. Most of them were former farmers, which made me wonder: What’s going on at the farm that makes the dump a better opportunity?”

That question led to *Where Am I Eating?*, for which Timmerman traveled the world but continually returned to concepts he’d studied in college liberal arts classes like anthropology and sociology. “Don’t lose sight of the fact that [education] can inspire curiosity and change the way you see the world,” he said.

“I leave you with a question,” he finished. “What will your impact be?”

When the applause had died down,
Higgins, an English Literature major, walked to the microphone. “You have a passion for traveling and meeting people, and there are other products you could write about,” she said. “Are you writing another book?”

“Not right now,” Timmerman told her. “I cofounded The Facing Project, where writers help people in their community tell challenging stories. Are you a writer?” Higgins nodded. “We need writers and editors. Check out our website.”

She scanned it on her phone as she stood in line for Timmerman to sign her book. It might be a good pursuit for next summer. The line inched forward, finally bringing her face to face with Timmerman, the first author she’d met in person. He thanked her before opening the book and writing the words she would carry with her: Keep writing. Stories can change the world.

In addition to Timmerman’s visit, freshmen watched documentaries, participated in a march for farmworker rights, attended a play and visited a local farm as part of the Common Theme experience. In May, the students in a food-focused literature class and a section of the American Experience will travel to Costa Rica for a trip that revisits concepts from the book.

The aromas of coffee and hot waffles drifted through Republic Square in downtown Austin, along with spirited strains from a klezmer band. Moceyunas, Higgins and 10 other freshmen wandered through the dozens of booths at the Sustainable Food Center’s farmers market, a weekly panorama of local produce, crafts and prepared foods.

The group had carpooled from campus to the market for a Saturday adventure. After getting breakfast and exploring the booths, they would travel to the source of some of the produce sold there: the Urban Roots farm on the banks of Boggy Creek in east Austin. When the students arrived at the farm they were greeted by A.J. Ragosa ’12, the farm’s program manager. “Welcome to Urban Roots,” she began. “We grow 25,000 pounds of vegetables each year, and we hire 30 high school interns, but” — she gestured to the couple dozen people bent over the rows — “most of it is harvested by volunteers.”

Ragosa led the students inside the shed where onions and garlic dry for several months after harvest. She explained the drip irrigation system that deposits water close to the plants’ roots, a conservation measure that fascinated Moceyunas, who hails from...
drought-stricken California. Ragosa pointed out the hives where 60,000 bees lived, and she picked garlic chives for the visitors to taste, straight from the ground.

"Now let's weed one of these rows of Swiss chard," Ragosa said, gesturing to a long row of the reddish leaves. Higgins knelt and began tugging stray plants from the damp soil. Before long she had slipped into a meditative state, just as she had while weeding on the farm in New Hampshire.

At the market Higgins and her sister, who tagged along on the trip, had bought vegan pastries for breakfast and carrots, broccoli and kale for the week's groceries. In the car they'd tried one of the carrots. "This is what food is supposed to taste like," Higgins told her sister. "It's so much more intense than a carrot you'd buy at Walmart." She redoubled her commitment to shop at the farmers market instead. "It's worth the extra money," she said. "I want to support local farmers instead of big companies."

Mocseyunas had noticed that, while she continued to refine her definition of food justice, she had few opportunities to apply it. She'd taken a picture of the labels in the appendix of Where Am I Eating? — logos that marked foods as fair trade or organic — and kept it in her phone for trips to the grocery store. But, as a Dujarié resident, she seldom shopped for food, save for the dried fruit labeled “USDA Organic” sold in the Quick Dip. "I haven't bought much food since making this revelation, so it's hard for me to say, 'Yes, I'm an active participant in being food conscious,'" she said. "But I think I should try."

The Thanksgiving spread at the Higgins home accommodated the household's various diets with a real turkey, tofu turkey, veganized sweet potatoes and other sides. Back in Austin, Higgins had started to cook just a bit more: kale chips, vegetable wraps. And she had fulfilled the challenge she'd set herself. For the past two months she had purchased all her vegetables from farmers markets. Because they cost a little more than at Walmart, she had made sure to cook them all instead of letting them waste away in the refrigerator. About a third came from the Urban Roots booth at the farmers market; the farm visit had made such an impression, she even focused her last assignment for speech class on how other students could get involved.

"My definition of 'food justice' has changed to reflect morality a lot more," Higgins said. "I started out thinking of it as a society where people are treated equally for their work, and everyone appreciates one another's work and rewards it. But I've also realized how big of a connecting factor food is morally. You have to realize where it comes from, and who makes it, and that those are people too. And, potentially, that can turn into a really cool relationship you have with those people."

7,500 fair trade products are sold in the U.S.
It’s been three years, but Megan Aust ‘16 still remembers the sound of her flip-flops sinking into the mud as she made her way into Korail, the biggest slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Saturated and sticky from a heavy rain the night before, the narrow road was impassable for the bus carrying her and 16 other students. So they got out and walked the last quarter mile, Aust slipping deeper with each step. And with each pull of her foot, the mud flew off her flip-flops and onto her shins. Squish, smack. Squish, smack.

Although her legs were soon coated, there was nothing to do but keep going. The group eventually reached the edge of the slum and had stopped to talk to their guide when a woman came out of a nearby shack pieced together from tin. She approached Aust, a blue plastic pitcher in one hand and a towel in the other, and began cleaning the mud off Aust’s legs.

Aust did the only thing she could think of: She said thank you. In that moment, she says, a fundamental human truth came to life for her. “No matter how much or how little we have, we are all capable of kindness and empathy,” she says. “We all want to better our condition, and there’s so much we can do for each other.”

The 17 students traveled to Bangladesh in August 2014 as part of the university’s first trip associated with the Freshman Studies Common Theme — that year, human rights. All 791 freshmen spent the fall semester studying the theme, and the trip was a chance for students to see how concepts from the classroom translated in a developing country with millions of citizens living in poverty.

Over the course of the week, Aust saw the themes of collaboration and kindness emerge again and again: Women in a village joining together to talk openly about domestic abuse. A group of midwives working to decrease infant and maternal mortality. A town hall meeting on improving sanitation. Recovering drug addicts counseling child addicts.

“Experiencing the beauty and flaws of other cultures — their vision for what their communities want and need and how they make it happen — has given me the courage to do things I never thought possible,” says Aust, now a senior applying to PhD programs in Sociology. “Seeing their fearlessness has made me more fearless.”

For Aust and fellow seniors Andrea Ojeda ’17 and Alex Robertson ’17, the human rights theme has carried across their chosen disciplines and across the world. And the empathy they’ve developed for other communities and conditions comes down to one basic idea, says Aust. “You can study how people live and have opinions about their culture and how they should solve their
problems. But until you share in someone’s experience firsthand, you can never truly know it.”

**Canada and the Crimea: Recording History**

Aust found herself seeking such knowledge again last summer as she walked out of the Jane Station metro stop in Toronto, Canada, and stared at Google Maps on her phone. She rolled her shoulders to shift the weight of her St. Edward’s cheerleading backpack and headed east, peering at blue street signs and consulting her phone to make sure the names matched.

She stopped in front of a heavy glass door tucked between a hair salon and a weight-loss center and headed up the stairs to the office of the Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society. Aust had no idea who would be there or what she would say, but she knew what she wanted to accomplish — a series of interviews with immigrants to find out how Russia’s invasion and annexation of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula had changed their lives, particularly in terms of gender roles.

Half Ukrainian, a quarter Mexican and raised in Los Angeles, Aust knew much about her family’s Mexican heritage and traditions. But she knew less about her Ukrainian side. When a History and Global Processes class piqued her interest, she crafted a research project that would take her to the country with the largest population of Ukrainians outside Ukraine and Russia. Undaunted when her emails to several immigrant-focused aid organizations went unanswered, she flew to Toronto anyway, ready to make the researcher’s equivalent of a cold call.

And this was it. She approached two women huddled around a stack of papers and a laptop. She made her pitch. And the women started talking, momentarily putting aside the case files they had been discussing and telling Aust their own stories. Soon, the administrative assistant pulled up a chair and joined them.

Two hours later, Aust headed back to Jane Station, her phone’s voice recorder full of the women’s comments on the conflict, must-read book titles and names of people to talk with next. Over the next 12 days, she interviewed 10 people, including an accountant who trains therapy dogs for Ukrainian soldiers and a librarian at the St. Vladimir Institute, a residence and cultural center for Ukrainian immigrants.

What she learned is that women lead a majority of Toronto’s Ukrainian support groups. They have learned that they can’t trust leaders back home to honestly appropriate the funds they collect, so they send supplies instead. Along with this near-constant work, many women must take low-wage jobs to support their families because their Ukrainian academic and professional credentials don’t translate in Toronto workplaces. The women must also learn English, and many enroll at Canadian universities to earn (or re-earn) degrees. All of these changes, primarily the result of the men fighting on the front in Ukraine, have challenged traditional gender roles and family structures.

“The women I talked with have led a movement in Toronto to bring awareness about the conflict, but they’re also immigrants struggling with their own assimilation,” she says. “They may be far away from their home, but it’s still close in their hearts. They want to be able to influence what happens there.”

Now, the Sociology major is turning her interviews into a research paper to submit with her PhD applications and present at the Pacific Sociological Association this spring. She is working on a senior thesis about the international response to the war in Ukraine for her Capstone class — a section focused on human rights that includes five others from the 2014 Bangladesh trip. Aust has also applied for a Fulbright Study/Research Award so she can continue her project at the University of Toronto.

Perhaps the biggest takeaway from her experiences in Bangladesh and Canada is “how much you can’t learn in a classroom,” says Aust. “A classroom can prepare you to have an open mind. But getting out in the world, seeing what’s happening and figuring out what part you can play in the solutions — that’s up to you.”
The Power of Education, from Peru to the Potomac

Like Aust, Andrea Ojeda ’17 understands that the most effective way to change her perspective is to change her geography. After Bangladesh, she headed to Canto Grande, part of Peru’s most populous district, for a two-week International Immersion through Campus Ministry. The brightly painted houses — pink, peach, purple — dotting the mountainside contrasted with parts of the district up in the mountains with little to no running water or electricity.

As she volunteered in two schools and ran an after-school program for kids in Canto Grande, Ojeda began to look beyond the obvious infrastructure needs to the emotional needs of the children she met. Besides helping the kids cut and glue construction-paper houses and practice English vocabulary words — roof, door, window, garden — Ojeda became the de facto disciplinarian for a group of rowdy boys as one of only two fluent Spanish speakers in the group of St. Edward’s volunteers.

She taught them to make pipe-cleaner flowers. She helped them braid plastic string into friendship bracelets. She quizzed them on their multiplication tables. A black-haired, bright-eyed 8-year-old boy kept getting the answers right, even as she moved from the easy threes and fives to the harder eights, nines and twelves. Even though she had trouble reconciling his crazy behavior with his obvious intelligence, she recognized that he was acting out because he was bored.

He reminded her of her father, today a successful bodega owner, who quit school in third grade, moved to the United States from Mexico when he was 13 and ran away from home shortly thereafter. “I saw in this little boy what my dad’s childhood must have been like,” she says, “and I wondered how my dad’s life might have been different if someone had taken the time to tell him he was smart and that they believed in him. I felt like I needed to deliver that message.”

She did just that on the last day, as she handed the boy a picture of their group. He smiled — an acknowledgment, she hoped — and he galloped off to play.

Ojeda hasn’t seen the boy since, but she’s seen plenty of kids just like him. After the Peru immersion, the Political Science major began shadowing an Austin ISD bilingual education teacher, volunteering as a reading and writing aide, and working as a substitute teacher. “In nearly every classroom, I see the same pattern — smart kids whose needs are overlooked by a system that lacks the resources to serve them effectively. I always want to say to those kids, ‘Do your best; please do your best. You’re really smart and ambitious, but other people won’t recognize your strengths if you don’t show them.”

So Ojeda is working to change the system that’s ill equipped to help them. She studied education policy through a yearlong Austin Chamber of Commerce internship and spent last summer interning with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics through the U.S. Department of Education. This semester, she is working at the Texas Capitol as a legislative aide and Mexican American Legislative Caucus fellow. And she hopes to be back in South America after graduation on a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Brazil.

“When I say out loud that I’m committed to a more just world, I think of the people I’ve met in Bangladesh and Peru and D.C. and Austin. They make my words real,” says Ojeda. “There are lots of problems we can work together to solve by
channeling our energy into action — and change can start with something as small as a conversation.”

**Language, Limerick and Starting with Empathy**

After Bangladesh, Alex Robertson ’17 headed to Turkey funded by a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship. Even with the intense language immersion — nine hours of class every weekday for two months at Ankara University TÖMER, plus hours of homework and meetings with a native speaker — she still needed to consult her English-Turkish translation app for more complex conversations.

The kinds of discussions Robertson was having — about the emotional openness of the Turkish people contrasted with the government’s emphasis on cultural assimilation — required concepts and words well beyond conversational basics.

“Turkey is the quickest place I ever made a friend. It’s a very social, welcoming culture and they have no qualms about asking anything,” says Robertson. “You get very close very fast.”

So when she found herself sitting down at the beige Formica table to eat with her host father, Yaşar, she brought up the Syrian refugees she had seen in Ankara. When Robertson was there in the summer of 2015, Syrians fleeing the civil war in their home country were flooding into Turkey and were met with a dearth of social services. “I recognized the same tensions I’ve seen in the United States, the conflict between people who have already put down roots and those who would like to but aren’t given the opportunity to belong,” she says.

As she struggled to find the Turkish words to ask her questions, she and Yaşar pushed aside the bread and cheese tray, then the boiled eggs, then the olives. They passed the yellow pocket dictionary back and forth, back and forth. Immigrant. Göçmen. Policy. Siyaset. Compassion. Şefkat.

“It was painstaking for me,” she remembers, “as we unraveled each other’s sentences. Most of the time he was jovial, but he wasn’t lighthearted about this. Both he and my host mother thought there wasn’t enough being done to help the immigrants by any governments.”

As the crisis in Syria continued to spread across borders, Robertson’s two-month program ended and she left Turkey to spend the fall semester at the University of Limerick in Ireland. By day, the English Writing and Rhetoric major studied literary modernism in a cavernous auditorium with a hundred other students. Outside the lecture hall, she turned again to conversation as a means to decipher the culture.

One of the people she interviewed was a graduate student researching sobriety in Ireland. In the course of that conversation, the woman told her, “‘No one is going to trust you unless you have a pint with them,’ and I quickly realized what a social lubricant alcohol was there. As my taxi driver said, ‘There’s not much to do but drink.’” Rather than partake, Robertson tried to understand how alcohol might be a coping mechanism for the high poverty and crime rates that, in the 1990s, earned Limerick the nickname “Stab City.” She talked with neighbors over dinner and trivia games. She discovered Limerick Suicide Watch, a group of volunteers who patrol the River Shannon looking for jumpers.

Her conclusion: “There are pressing problems everywhere — Bangladesh, Turkey, Ireland, Austin — but with the right infrastructure, both physical and social, people in a community can find their own solutions,” she says. “It starts with empathy. What would you do if the shoe were on the other foot?”

Now, Robertson is looking for her next international conversation. She’s waiting to hear if she received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to South Africa — “I wanted something culturally different from what I’ve been able to experience so far.” No matter where she lands and what she learns, she knows the truth she wants to commit her life and career to: “We all have a responsibility to help others live as good of a life as human dignity demands.”
A PLACE AT THE TABLE

By Robyn Ross | Photography by Morgan Printy
FOOD IS MORE THAN SUSTENANCE:

It’s a sensory delight, the focus of social gatherings, a reminder of home. It connects us to the earth and to one another. But the production of food can strain the land, the animals it comes from and the people who harvest it. In developing nations as well as in the United States, access to healthy food can be a privilege rather than a human right. We talked with St. Edward’s University graduates who have pursued a calling in food: its flavors and textures, its sustainable production, its ethics and accessibility. Together, their stories show just how complex the world of food is — and how there’s room at the table for both epicurean pleasures and the quest for justice.

FOOD AS EDUCATION

On a sunny September day, Caitlin Coghlan ’15 led a class of kindergartners outside to the garden behind their school in Kalispell, Montana. After explaining the life cycle of the plants in the garden, Coghlan led her charges through a yoga lesson to help them understand.

“Let’s start as a seed,” she called out, and she and the children crouched down. “After you’re planted, you grow” (they stood up slowly). “Then your leaves come out” (they raised their open palms), “and then the flowers” (jazz hands), “and then the fruit” (fists), “and then the fruit turns into seeds and goes back to the earth” (fingers fluttering downward).

“Now,” Coghlan said, “let’s go see where our plants are in their life cycle.” The children explored the garden, where Coghlan pointed out ripening tomatoes and tore off a few leaves of lettuce for the class to eat.

Coghlan is a service member with FoodCorps, a national organization that connects kids in disadvantaged communities to healthy food. When it’s warm outside, she teaches the students how to garden; when it’s not, she leads cooking and nutrition classes.

It’s almost as though Coghlan, who majored in Environmental Science and Policy, was preparing for her FoodCorps job throughout her time at St. Edward’s. “I can trace what I’m doing now back to my Freshman Studies class, Ecology and the Environment, with [faculty members] Bill Quinn and Peter Beck,” she says. “They encouraged us to look at our impact on the earth, and that served as the jumping-off point for four years studying my environmental impact and looking at sustainability issues, social justice, and the intersection between the environment, economics and people.”

She took Associate Professor of Philosophy Jack Musselman’s Environmental Ethics course, in which the class debated whether it was right to eat animal products. Through Students for Sustainability, she volunteered at the campus garden as well as local farm Johnson’s Backyard Garden, which supplies the St. Edward’s dining facilities. Coghlan studied abroad in Costa Rica, where she visited coffee and cocoa farms, and she witnessed food security issues firsthand during an Alternative Spring Break trip to a hospitality center that serves the homeless in Phoenix and an International Immersion trip to an orphanage in South Africa.

“Those trips opened my eyes to social justice issues,” she says. “My passion was always focused on the environment, but I found that food is connected to social justice.” In fact, it was Associate Director of Campus Ministry Liza Manjarrez who suggested that Coghlan apply to FoodCorps to connect her interests in social justice and the environment. Coghlan also wanted to tackle another food-related challenge: the rise of obesity and related health problems among children.

“We’re looking at all these global food concerns, but we also have a whole bunch of issues in the food system domestically and locally,” she says. “That’s really driven me to work in schools and with children.”
FOOD AS EMPOWERMENT

When A.J. Ragosa ’12 arrives at the Urban Roots farm on summer mornings, she walks beneath a green canopy formed by trees that line the path to the fields. Dew clings to the grass, sparkling in the sunlight, and the coos of white-tipped doves fill the air. By early afternoon their songs have given way to the whirr of cicadas, which rise in volume as the temperature climbs. “The magic of the farm is that it’s really close to central Austin, but you don’t feel like you’re in a metropolitan area at all,” she says.

Ragosa is the program manager at Urban Roots, a 3.5-acre farm in east Austin that teaches young people leadership skills through farming. Each year Urban Roots grows about 25,000 pounds of vegetables, 40 percent of which it donates to food banks and shelters. In the summer farm internship program, 30 high-school students from all over Austin learn how to grow vegetables and sell them at area farmers markets, while studying social justice issues, leadership, public speaking and money management. Although some of the youth are interested in farming, Ragosa says that “what tends to draw them to our organization is the opportunity to build community and to use their voice in a way they haven’t before.”

The Psychology major earned a master’s degree in Social Work at UT–Austin and learned about Urban Roots when its founder, Max Elliott, an alumnus of the same program, spoke to one of her classes. She then volunteered at the farm, feeling a connection to the place and the community after only a few hours. Now she spends her days developing curriculum, mentoring youth and digging in the dirt. Both the students and staff get to take home as much produce as they want. “It’s made a big impact on me as far as my own connection to food,” says Ragosa, who struggled with an eating disorder in high school. Working at the farm has taught her to savor foods that are local and in season. She loves harvesting root vegetables like beets and carrots; in the summer she’ll pluck figs from the farm’s trees for a snack, or let a sweet sunburst tomato, warm from the vine, melt in her mouth.

Ragosa says many of the Urban Roots youth don’t have access to healthy, nutritious food in their own communities — a situation they, as emerging leaders, could help rectify someday. “One thing we talk a lot about in our programming is this difference between charity and social change,” she says. “We ask the youth, ‘What are some of the challenges that you’d like to be part of tackling within your community?’ Empowering them to use their voice and giving them the skills to make a difference is really meaningful.”

FOOD AS COMFORT

Shortly after graduating from St. Edward’s, Briana Valdez ’00 moved to Los Angeles. The first time she went out for Mexican food, she ordered queso and was dumbfounded when the server brought her a bowl of shredded cheese. She soon learned that staples of her Texas diet — breakfast tacos, migas, Frito pie, even flour tortillas — just weren’t served in Los Angeles, where flavors are influenced by Baja California rather than other states in Northern Mexico. So she decided to bring those foods to her adopted city. Today, her tiny restaurant Homestate, tucked into the Los Angeles neighborhood of Los Feliz, serves those Texas foods Valdez missed, along with Topo Chico and Cuvée coffee. The most popular item, by far, is the Trinity taco: eggs, bacon, potato and cheddar on a homemade flour tortilla.

Only three years old, Homestate has been named one of “18 Essential Taco Spots in Los Angeles” by the food and dining website Eater Los Angeles, and Valdez is set to open a second location in nearby Highland Park.

“Homestate is telling an untold story, and that is the story of Texas through food,” Valdez says. “My mission in life is to be the best ambassador of that.”

While she uses top-quality ingredients, Valdez suspects that what really draws her customers is the warm welcome they get from the staff. “I like to think that we serve hospitality first, with food second,” she says.

Recently Valdez was working in the kitchen near closing time and overheard a woman at the front counter ask if Homestate sold “real Texas queso.” The woman had moved to Los Angeles from Austin and had been craving the Texas staple. She ordered queso and tacos and returned the next day.

I LIKE TO THINK WE SERVE HOSPITALITY FIRST, WITH FOOD SECOND.

BRIANA VALDEZ ’00
with a friend from Austin, both of them elated to have found the taste of home.

“That story plays out so often, and it’s one of the more gratifying experiences for me,” Valdez says. “I know the feeling of being in a town where you don’t feel totally settled or connected, and finding queso is not just finding a menu item — it’s a grounding moment where you’re like, ‘OK, I’m going to be fine.’”

FOOD AS ART

In May 2015, food photographer Dina Avila ’04 spent an entire day at Kachka, a trendy Russian restaurant in Portland, Oregon. She and a team of writers and videographers from the food and dining website Eater PDX documented everything that happened from before the restaurant opened (at 4 p.m.) until the staff left (at 12:47 a.m.). To showcase Kachka’s menu, she and her editor arranged plates of every dish on the restaurant’s wood floor, and Avila shot them from above. Once guests arrived, Avila wandered through the dining room taking informal shots and then arranged portraits of diners in the backroom. She took pictures of individual cocktails, the kitchen’s tubs of fresh herbs, and the plates and drinkware. Those images were paired with a written account of the night and statistics like the number of shots of vodka the restaurant served and the number of steps the staff took (as captured by pedometers). The multimedia package, called “One Night: Kachka,” won the 2016 Visual Storytelling award at the James Beard Foundation’s annual dinner in New York. “It’s like the Oscars of the food world,” Avila says. “Even just to be nominated is an incredible honor.”

The Photocommunications major started her career as a wedding photographer, but in 2007, while she was working at Whole Foods in Portland, her boss asked her to take some photos of food for local advertisements. Immediately, Avila knew she’d found her calling. “It ignited the flame inside of me, and I realized this is my niche, and this is what I want to do,” she says. She threw herself into her new career, taking a class, starting a blog and shooting for Eater PDX.

“I’ve always been sort of a late bloomer, so it took me a while to find what I would excel at,” she says. “I absolutely love what I do, and I’m so happy and so honored that I’m able to do this for a living.”

FOOD AS EXPENSE

Every summer, Yesenia Bustos ’14 and her family left their home in the Rio Grande Valley to do migrant farmwork. When she was 8 years old, she started hoeing cotton fields in Arkansas. When she was 12, her family began traveling to Michigan, where Bustos picked blueberries and processed them in the packing house alongside her parents. Her fingers would be stained dark blue for days. “I didn’t understand why I had to work in the fields while everybody else enjoyed their summer vacation,” she remembers. “As I got older I started to understand why I was working, but at the time I hated it.”

A student in CAMP, the College Assistance Migrant Program, Bustos completed her Capstone project on “Child Labor in Agriculture: Loopholes in the Fair Labor Standards Act.” Her research helped put her own experiences in context. She realized that because child labor regulations are different in agricultural and nonagricultural settings, she had passed through one of those loopholes herself.

The summer after she graduated with a Global Studies degree, Bustos traveled to North Carolina to intern with Student Action with Farmworkers. She and several colleagues crisscrossed the state, documenting housing conditions for farmworkers — mostly Latinos and Haitians — and interviewing them to determine whether they were victims of labor trafficking. Before her internship was over, Bustos had gotten a job with the farmworker division of Legal Aid of North Carolina. A year later, she became the lead coordinator for the farmworker grassroots nonprofit NC FIELD, and in July 2016, she was promoted to executive director.

“It’s very hard being away from home,” says Bustos, whose family is still in Texas. “But I haven’t moved back, because I can see the difference our organization is making.”
FOOD AS ADVOCACY

Maybe it was reading Charlotte’s Web, or watching Disney’s Bambi, and worrying about their animal protagonists. Maybe it was the pain of her family breaking up after her parents’ divorce. But something made Lauren Ornelas ’93 decide as a child not to eat animals. “I didn’t want to be responsible for anyone’s death, or for separating family members from each other,” she remembers.

She became vegetarian at age 16 and got involved with animal-rights activism while in high school. By the time she was 18 she’d learned more: how dairy cows see their calves taken away immediately after birth so that humans can drink that milk instead, and how male chicks, of no use to the egg industry, are suffocated or shredded alive. Ornelas went vegan and enrolled at St. Edward’s to learn how to advocate for animals through speaking, writing and policymaking. She started the St. Edward’s Animal Rights Society, which eventually became Action for Animals Austin, a citywide organization still active today.

After college Ornelas became the national coordinator for In Defense of Animals and campaigned against animal testing by companies like Procter & Gamble. She then worked for animal-rights organization Viva! (Vegetarians’ International Voice for Animals) USA, where she investigated factory farms and documented instances of animal cruelty. When she discovered that some duck farms were running filthy and abusive facilities, she pressured Whole Foods to stop carrying duck meat. While not immediately successful, Ornelas started a dialogue with CEO John Mackey that eventually led him to become vegan.

In 2006, Ornelas decided she needed to broaden her focus. The suffering of nonhuman animals in the food system was connected to other problems — environmental degradation, lack of access to healthy food and injustice against farmworkers, which she’d learned about during college from classmates who were part of CAMP at St. Edward’s. “How could I encourage people to eat more fruits and veggies and ignore the plight of farmworkers in the field?” she says. “How could I talk about vegan chocolate bars and not recognize that child labor and slavery are taking place right now? I realized I needed to start an organization that talked about all of these issues together and figure out a way to fight for all of them.”

She started the Food Empowerment Project, which encourages people to go vegan — but also works to expand access to healthy food in low-income communities. It campaigns against grocery stores that close inner-city locations and use deed restrictions to prevent other grocery stores from opening there. It supports farmworker-led boycotts of companies that treat migrant laborers unfairly. The project also creates tools to make it easier for people to “eat their ethics,” such as a list of chocolates that Ornelas’ team has vetted for avoiding both animal ingredients and slave labor. “To me these forms of oppression are all tied together,” she says. “We can do something about them as individuals by adjusting our own food choices, as well as using our collective voices to try and change unjust systems.”

FOOD AS SCIENCE

Iron is the most common nutrient deficiency in humans — in fact, it affects 30 percent of the world’s population, particularly women and children. Because iron is used to transport oxygen to the body’s cells, iron deficiency anemia can lead to severe brain and developmental damage. People in the United States are at a lower risk because they have easy access to meat, which offers a form of iron that’s readily assimilated into the body. But in the rest of the world, which eats a mostly plant-based diet, it’s harder to get iron, partly because most plants are iron deficient.

That’s because the form of iron that’s present in the soil is difficult for plants to take in. Now, scientists — including Gretchen Kroh ’13, a PhD student supported by a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship at Colorado State University in Fort Collins — are trying to help plants become more efficient at absorbing and regulating their iron.

“Right now, very little is known about how plants economically use their iron when they are deficient,” Kroh explains. Understanding how plants respond to iron deficiency is a first step toward developing biofortification of iron in crops: increasing the iron in the parts of plants that humans eat.

Kroh credits her interest in plant biology, which has important implications for human
health and nutrition, to her freshman General Biology class with Professor Bill Quinn. Quinn connected her with a U.S. Department of Agriculture internship at the Children's Nutrition Research Center in Houston, where she researched nutrient deficiencies in crops like rice and beans and studied how they could be corrected to help people in developing countries. Kroh interned at the lab for two summers during college and, after graduation, was hired as a full-time research technician.

To feed a growing world population, farmers and scientists need to find ways to increase crop output. In the long term, Kroh’s work may help to ensure that crop quality increases along with quantity. “It’s really important that we focus on increasing the output of crop production without sacrificing nutritional value,” she says.

**FOOD AS EXPERIENCE**

First came a platter of steamed mussels bathed in a red curry coconut broth. Then the Korean barbecue-style lamb ribs garnished with pickled cucumber slaw. Then the sautéed kale and Brussels sprouts salad with walnuts. By the time the chefs introduced the New Bedford sea scallops, the 12 diners — and their Instagram feeds — were full. But there were still two more courses to go.

The dozen guests at downtown Austin restaurant The Bonneville were members of the Taster’s Table Club, the epicurean venture of Matt Wolski ’13 and Max Kunik ’13. The two started the club in July 2015 to monetize their favorite hobby: trying new restaurants and recommending them to friends. Members pay a flat monthly fee that entitles them to a six-course dinner with other club members at one of four upscale Austin restaurants (the options change monthly). Unlike a tasting menu, which might showcase experimental dishes, Taster’s Table Club spreads consist entirely of regular menu items. “The goal is that you experience it and next time, when you go back, you can recommend to your friends and family what you liked the most,” Wolski says.

Wolski, a Bioinformatics major, and Kunik, an Entrepreneurship major, met their freshman year in Teresa Hall. As seniors, they began venturing into Austin’s exploding culinary scene, visiting as many local restaurants as their thin pocketbooks would allow. “We wanted to be able to taste the whole menu at places and not spend an arm and a leg, so we’d get six people together and go try restaurants,” Kunik says. “Taster’s Table Club became our formal way of doing that and making a business out of it.”

Now 40 members strong, Taster’s Table Club has an ever-changing selection of restaurants to visit; new spots open every month, and some places the club visited last year have already closed. “Just being average in Austin is no longer acceptable,” Wolski says. “People are always looking for the new thing. You get 60 days to be the hot new place, and by then a dozen more have opened.”
Taking Pride in His Past

By Lauren Liebowitz
Photography by Whitney Devin ’10

A passion for art helps a student in the College Assistance Migrant Program find his way to a better future and social change.

Gerardo Silguero ’16 — Jerry — is a small child the first time he picks up a pencil to draw. It starts with Dragon Ball Z. His brothers print out screenshots of this cartoon at the library and give the best pictures to the winner of their pick-up soccer games. Silguero, the youngest, always gets the leftovers. For a kid obsessed with the cartoon’s larger-than-life figures who save the world in epic battles, this isn’t enough. He wants good pictures.

So the next time the cartoon comes on television, he puts a piece of paper over the screen and starts tracing the images. He doesn’t realize this is similar to using a light box, a common artist’s tool.
Even in elementary school, his artistic eye stands out. He gets frustrated when other kids color apples with red crayons. “You need all these other colors,” he says. “You need orange. Pink. Purple.”

In middle school, he has an art teacher, Ms. Gaona, who recognizes his talent and teaches him the fundamentals. As a freshman in high school, his art teacher, Mr. Martinez, gives him a set of Prismacolor Scholar colored pencils. They’re a huge step up from the crayons and Crayola pencils he’s been using. Mr. Martinez tells Silguero to draw whatever he wants, as long as he takes good care of the pencils. Silguero does. He shows Mr. Martinez what he’s worked on, and Mr. Martinez gives him something even better — a set of real Prismacolors, not the Scholar pencils for students, but the more expensive ones designed for professional artists. Silguero knows it’s a remarkable gift and falls in love with how easy they are to control. He can bring to life the finest details.

Mr. Martinez finds art contests for Silguero to enter, which keeps him busy. Illustrating exactly what he sees bores him; he prefers surrealism. Painting his own vision of the world is more satisfying and seems more important somehow. He isn’t quite sure what he wants to say with it, but he will figure that out, when he’s older.
For as long as he can remember, Silguero has shared a bedroom with his brothers in a small home in Brownsville. But every summer his family leaves Brownsville to pick fruits or vegetables in different locations around the country, most often Indiana. They work alongside people from Mexico, the Philippines and Honduras, as well as other parts of the United States. Some of the farmworkers have college degrees from back home. All of them work long hours in the hot sun to make a better future for their families. His parents bring the children with them, three sons and a daughter.

Silguero hates it. Everyone else at school celebrates summer because it means vacation, but for him, it means traveling to someplace he doesn’t know, far away from his friends. But worst of all, the harvest often stretches from late summer into the fall semester, meaning that he starts each new school year someplace different.

His family stays on the outskirts when they travel for migrant work, far from everyone else. Kids at each new school always ask him why he lives so far away — “all the way out in Australia,” they tease. He’s never sure how to answer because he doesn’t want to seem different. The reason is that his family’s summer housing is close to the fields.

But he always returns to Brownsville, and that is where his favorite art teachers live. All told, he probably attends nine schools over the years, maybe more. He’s not really counting.

Often Silguero has to complete summer school to make up what he missed or stay late every day to finish two semesters of work at once. For him, it’s all right — he loves school, he loves learning, he loves to read. It’s harder on some of the others in his family.

His older siblings graduate from high school one by one. His brothers both start families. One joins the Army, and his sister works at the local HEB.

Silguero is a junior in high school when he hears about the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at St. Edward’s. His best friend’s older sister’s best friend works as the CAMP admission counselor at St. Edward’s. Her name is Rosie Rangel ’06, and she was part of CAMP herself.

One of his first reactions when he hears about CAMP is sadness — that his brothers and sister didn’t know about it and couldn’t take advantage of it themselves. He resolves to do what he can to seize the opportunities presented to him.

His family surprises him with a big box as a graduation present, to celebrate that he’s going to college. Oh, holy crap, they got me a TV, he thinks. He takes the box from them and is surprised by how light it is. Inside is something even better than a television: his very own laptop.

He decides not to study art at school. He wants to do something practical, something that will lead to a successful career. If he’s learned anything from his parents, it’s that you need to be prepared to work hard and make sacrifices to reach your dreams. Animation is off the table. He hears it’s cutthroat. So he settles on graphic design to pay the bills, and he plans to continue art as a passion project.

All CAMP students attend a day-long literal summer camp to get to know others in the program before school starts. Silguero stays in a cabin and swims in the lake and goes through team-building exercises. More significantly, though, he is among kids who are just like him.

All his life he has tried to be quiet about his experiences because he doesn’t want to be treated differently. He doesn’t want to be “that migrant kid.” But here, his classmates understand his struggles because they’ve been there themselves. And it creates a bond he never realized how much he wanted.
CAMP comes with a few other perks: For the first time, Silguero has a room to decorate as he pleases. He’s given a stipend to cover expenses. He mowed lawns for spending money as a kid, but he’s never had an allowance before.

One of his classmates, upon hearing about CAMP, scoffs. “If I knew I could have gotten a scholarship like that, I would have worked on a farm myself.”

Silguero tries to explain to him what it’s like to have your whole life upended every few months, to try to make up missed work while still keeping up with your day-to-day assignments, to spend every summer in school in an effort not to fall behind. He explains that CAMP is trying to make things right for kids who are put in a tough situation through no fault of their own. That it doesn’t give them an advantage; it just tries to eliminate a disadvantage.

He doesn’t know if his classmate really hears him. He doesn’t know if his words make a difference, but it feels good to try.

Silguero has worked hard for years to develop skills on his own, but unlike many of his classmates, he didn’t grow up with his own computer and dedicated graphics software. Adobe InDesign and Illustrator and Photoshop make his head spin. After a lifetime of excelling at art, he finds that starting over is frustrating.

He tries another way. He draws the initial designs with a pencil, just like those early cartoon sketches, and then scans them in and finishes the projects digitally.

Though he has chosen Graphic Design as his major, Silguero still has room in his schedule to enroll in a few art classes. He picks up shortcuts on drawing human figures and learns a new technique for painting. He also reads every art book he can get his hands on. He loves shopping on Amazon for old art books and classic animation texts.

Not all of his classes have to do with art or design, and some of these have the biggest impact on him — like American Dilemmas: Civic Engagement, taught by Jennifer Jefferson, visiting assistant professor of University Studies. Her boundless energy and enthusiasm for service fire him up. The energy you give off is the energy that bounces back to you, he thinks. He resolves to be more engaged himself.

Inspired by Jefferson, he signs up to volunteer at Casa Marianella, an Austin-area shelter for recent immigrants and asylum seekers. Being bilingual is a plus, and one semester quickly turns into several years.

Serving people motivates him. He loves seeing how, in some small way, he can make a difference for people who need it. But in his heart he feels that it’s not enough. If he can translate the energy that Jefferson has given him into artwork that really speaks to his audience, can he create change? And, if so, what change should he seek?

The answer comes the summer after his junior year.

Through CAMP, he connects with Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF), an organization that supports farmworkers and promotes justice in the agricultural world. Students from all across the country spend their summer helping in many different capacities. Silguero gets involved with the farmworker division of Legal Aid of North Carolina.

Along with a group of students and a supervisor, Silguero rides out into very rural parts of the state, so secluded that there’s hardly any light to see by at night.

Silguero’s group is responsible for helping farmworkers make sure they are being paid fairly. Too often their paychecks show that someone is holding money back, and when that happens, Silguero and the others gather information so that a legal case can be made. Sometimes they also teach ESL classes. Often, they check on the
condition of the farmworkers' housing to make sure it meets the legal requirements for habitation.

At one camp, they find that the overseer is withholding the migrant workers’ Social Security cards and selling them on the black market. Silguero’s group does some undercover investigating and visits the camp under the guise of giving an ordinary presentation. As they talk to the workers about the situation, the workers start to get rowdy and angry, and they want justice.

But when Silguero’s group returns the next time, the overseer is there. Everything is dramatically different. The workers keep their heads down and say very little. The change in their behavior is uncomfortable to see, but what makes Silguero even more uncomfortable is that the overseer is just like the rest of them — an easygoing man who also comes from the migrant community. When he talks to Silguero, he lights up at the thought of Silguero’s generation making a difference for migrant workers. But why, Silguero wonders, is he hurting that same community?

Then the man pulls out photos of his kids, who are in college, and explains that he needs extra money to send them to school. That’s why, Silguero thinks. This man owes more to his children than to his community, and he’s willing to hurt other people to help his own family. It is an emotionally draining discovery.

Silguero won’t ever know how the situation turns out, because its resolution — or lack thereof, as the case may be — is confidential. He can only hope. Silguero’s supervisor tells him to focus on the people they do help, not on the setbacks.

As a kid playing on his Game Boy, drawing pictures from Dragon Ball Z, arguing with his brothers and playing soccer, he never got angry. Now he is angry. If he knew then what he knows now about workers’ rights, things could have been so much different for his parents. They retired from farmwork while Silguero was in high school, and now they work for the city of Brownsville, but many other people are still in the fields. Silguero wants to fight for them to be paid better, treated better, not discriminated against.

For his senior graphic design show, over the six months following his return from SAF and North Carolina, he produces a series of paintings and mixed-media illustrations.

One painting is of Santo Toribio Romo González, the patron saint of migrant workers and immigrants. His eyes and the shape of his face are implied, but inside of him is a horizon and a figure walking. Clouds fill his eye sockets, and his tears are the rain. The journey of an immigrant, as told by the farmworkers in North Carolina.

The exhibit opens in January 2016, and Silguero listens to what people say as they appreciate his artwork. First they talk about the art from a technical perspective — the color choices, the design or the details. But then they read the description of each piece and something changes.

Afterward, his friends talk to him about his art. So many of them don’t realize what life is like for farmworkers, for migrants, for immigrants. Some of them don’t realize that the struggle continues today. Now they know.

Any shame he felt as a kid is gone. He is proud — proud because his parents have helped feed an entire nation. “If you’ve ever eaten an apple or a strawberry, that’s my parents,” he tells people.
And yet farmworkers like his parents are still paid low wages, still working in sometimes inhumane conditions. He wonders what could bring change. If every farmworker sat down in protest, would the country listen?

Make noise, Silguero thinks. Make noise somehow, and they will hear you.

On September 11, 2016, during his final semester at St. Edward’s, he joins a 50th anniversary commemorative march for farmworkers’ rights, following in the footsteps of César Chávez and 10,000 others who walked to the Texas Capitol from St. Edward’s to raise awareness and demand better treatment. He starts off in the front, where older marchers have formed a line setting the pace for the rest of the group. But in the back, he can hear drums.

He gravitates toward the music — toward the younger participants who sing, who cheer and chant, who play guitars and drums with an electrifying energy.

He shouts with them, with others who understand, who care.

Let this not just be a remembrance. This message resounds throughout the crowd. They are marching not just to honor those who came before — but to carry on their living tradition for justice.

Later, as he walks back from the Capitol, strangers stop him when they see his red shirt from the march. The people he speaks to listen, and they hear him. He can see the change in their faces.

His December graduation looms on the horizon. Ever practical, Silguero has his sights set on a graphic design position at a major advertising firm in Austin. Something that will pay the bills.

But that’s only half of his dream for his future. Art remains foremost in his mind and in his heart. He is working up the courage to submit work to the Mexic-Arte Museum in Austin. The thought of rejection stings because he has poured so much of himself into his paintings — but that is precisely why he needs to do it. These paintings are his stories and the stories of so many other people. They must be shared, and they must be heard.
Chapel of Love

The connections made at St. Edward’s University are lifelong, especially for the couples who say “I do” at Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel. We asked two couples to share how they met and why the chapel is special to them.

Stan and Danica Dailey Frampton ’86, MAHS ’94, who is the director of Institutional Research at St. Edward’s, met through mutual friends.

Danica: Stan worked with two of my former classmates at the Texas Department of Economic Development. Philip Rocha ’87, whom I met as an undergrad, told him about me, and my friend from graduate school, Victoria Jacques MAHS ’92, said she had someone I needed to meet. Vicki introduced us over lunch at Guero’s Taco Bar, and Stan and I had our first date two days later.

Stan: After that lunch, I told Phil, “I’m going to marry that girl.”

Danica: The chapel has always been a part of my life. My mom (faculty emerita Virginia Dailey) taught at St. Edward’s, and I, along with six of my siblings, are graduates. There’s no question about where we wanted to get married. It’s the place I had attended baptisms, weddings, funerals and confirmations.

Stan: I grew up Southern Baptist but converted to Catholicism, and the chapel is where I got confirmed. I considered it “my chapel” from that point on.

Danica: To us, the chapel felt like coming home to a big embrace.
Tony: I noticed Christy in class, but it took a while for me to get the courage to talk to her. She would sit in the Doyle courtyard, and eventually I started going to her table to bug her while she studied because I wanted to talk to her. We spent a lot of time there talking.

Christy: We wanted to get married in Austin. Tony’s from Dallas, and I’m from Houston. We moved back here to start our life. St. Edward’s felt like home to us because of how much time we spent in the library studying and in the courtyard. Plus, the chapel is adorable. We asked Father Lou Brusatti, who was my twin sister’s boss when she worked in the School of Humanities, to marry us. He’s funny and a familiar person, so we wanted him to do the ceremony.

Tony: Our initial spark started at St. Edward’s, and it felt right to get married here. —Erica Quiroz

Share your St. Edward’s love story and read others: #LoveontheHilltop
Class Notes

SEND IN YOUR CLASS NOTES
Send your Class Notes and wedding or birth announcements to the Alumni Office at bit.ly/AlumniUpdateForm (address is case sensitive).

1970s
Criss Hobbs-Melchior ’75, of Athens, Georgia, is a video producer at Video Creative Center Digital.

1990s
Margaret Gómez ’91, MLA ’04, of Austin, is the county commissioner for Precinct 4 in Travis County.
Christina Gindratt ’96, of Temple, is an attorney with the United States Department of Defense.
Elisa Fogle ’99, of Helotes, is the director of special events at Ryan Sanders Baseball.

2000s
Elena Herrero ’01, of San Francisco, California, is an art supervisor at Giant Creative Strategy.
Mike Helfmann ’02, of Chicago, Ill., is a teacher at the German International School in Chicago, Illinois.
Alethea Pollack ’02, MBA ’08, of Beaverton, Oregon, is a project manager at Nike.

1970s
Nicholas Canedo ’03, of Austin, is the development director at the Center for Public Policy Priorities.
Martin Ezell ’05, MLA ’07, of Rose Hill, North Carolina, is a teacher and football coach at Duplin County Schools.
Kelsey Friedman MAC ’07, of Pacifica, California, is the director of family violence and prevention services at Jewish Family and Children’s Services.
Charles W. Carver ’08, of Austin, has opened a general practice law office, operated out of a vintage Airstream trailer.

2010s
Michael Smith ’12, and Catherine Smith ’11, of Dallas, opened Sleek Modern Furniture.
Elia Norton ’16, of Chicago, Illinois, is a marketing and training coordinator at 4C Marketplace and Environmental Conference.

Jessica Propst MSOLE ’16, of Phoenix, Arizona, is a philanthropy adviser at Make-A-Wish America.

See more Class Notes at stedwards.edu/alumni

MARRIAGES

Lisa Woods ’97 to Becky Bauknecht, of Fitchburg, Wisconsin, on July 9, 2016
David Ancira ’03 to Virginia Blend, of Austin, on May 2, 2015
Benjamin Orozco ’04 to Brenda Cornejo ’05, of San Antonio, on May 15, 2016
Ilse Carrizales ’07 to Joe Salazar, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on Sept. 9, 2016
Kyle Green ’07 to Alyse Barrera ’08, of Chicago, Illinois, on Nov. 14, 2015
Rosemary Galvan ’08 to Victor Vargas, of Austin, on Jan. 15, 2016
Aisa Cruz ’09 to Samuel Burgos, of Austin, on June 4, 2015
Alberto Guzman ’09 to Marissa Thome ’13, of Bastrop, on June 17, 2016
Timothy Hansen ’09 to Laura Pacheco ’09, of Los Angeles, California, on Nov. 7, 2015
Diego Menchaca ’10 to Andrea Cuellar, of Austin, on April 30, 2016
Alejandra Pena ’10 to Juan Carlos Loredo ’11, of Elgin, on Oct. 14, 2016
Krystal Lopez ’11 to Jonathan Pisana ’13, of San Antonio, on Nov. 5, 2016
Tony Dutcher ’11 to Christy Amador ’12, of Austin, on May 21, 2016
Amarette Edmonson ’12 to Raymond Remieri, of Bryan, on May 30, 2015
Morgan Greaves ’16 to Mitchell Maples, of Austin, on May 21, 2016

BIRTHS

To Victoria Gutierrez Pineda ’00, MLA ’04 and Richard Pineda, daughter Francesca Rose on Nov. 10, 2016
To Brooke Endres Jones ’07 and Kyle Jones, daughter Lena Everly on Dec. 18, 2015
To Nicole Henke Laird ’07 and Casey Laird, son Bryce Joseph on April 17, 2016
To Ryann Matthews ’07 and Ryan Granzow ’07, son Arrow Granzow Matthews on Oct. 6, 2015
To Megan Davenport ’08 and Christopher Davenport, son William Edward on Sept. 29, 2016
To Alanna Fraase ’08 and Keith Fraase, daughter Adeline Clare on Jan. 21, 2016
To Heather Rubio Ibarra ’13 and Emanuel Ibarra ’12, daughter Violet Elian on Jan. 4, 2016
To Jemma Perry Macharia ’13 and Eliud Macharia, daughter Kathryn Makena on July 1, 2016

Brother Romard Barthel, CSC, passed away Dec. 7, 2016, in Austin. He taught physics and mathematics at St. Edward’s for over 40 years. He also advanced the Holy Cross mission through many leadership roles, including as the First Assistant General of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Baptized as Paul Joseph, he took the religious name of Romard and later professed his final vows at the University of Notre Dame, where he earned a physics degree in 1947. When he began graduate studies at the University of Texas–Austin, he also began teaching at St. Edward’s. “Brother Romard was never happier nor more fulfilled than when he was teaching,” say Brother Donald Blauvelt, CSC, and Brother Richard Critz, CSC. “Keen on equipping his students with deeper understanding, he taught them not only how to solve a problem, but how to know how to solve it.”
The 2017 Alumni Awards recipients and Athletics Hall of Fame inductees united for a celebration of success during Homecoming and Family Weekend. See how these outstanding Hilltoppers earned their selections on the Awards & Honors page at stedwards.edu/homecoming

IN MEMORIAM

Herbert Moller '39, of Wichita Falls, on July 22, 2016
Frank Bailey Jordan '40, of Denison, on March 27, 2016
Edward Block '50, of Key West, Florida, on Aug. 16, 2016
James Sullivan '51, of Bellaire, on July 17, 2016
Peter Benet '54, of Weatherford, on July 24, 2016
Joseph Pessarra '54, of Georgetown, on Aug. 12, 2016
Mitchell Tomaszkiewicz '56, of Lemont, Illinois, on March 14, 2016
John Davis hs '58, of New Braunfels, on March 26, 2016
Michael Ardoin '59, of San Francisco, California, on March 27, 2016
Emile “Bubba” Laperyrouse hs '59, of Galveston, on May 1, 2016
James Sanderson '60, of San Antonio, on March 11, 2016
Thomas Jones '63, of Evansville, Indiana, on Feb. 16, 2016
Athanasius Njoku '64, of West Columbia, South Carolina, on July 30, 2016
Alberto Antonio Balp hs '66, of Wilmington, North Carolina, on Feb. 17, 2016
Earl Chandler '66, of Evansville, Indiana, on July 24, 2016
Thomas Winkley hs '67, of Austin, on Oct. 17, 2016
Neil Divers '68, of Fairfax Station, Virginia, on July 14, 2016
Michael Crowley '69, of Austin, on Sept. 23, 2016
Robert Fogliano '69, of Somerville, New Jersey, on Sept. 18, 2016
Philip Reideringer '69, of Boerne, on Sept. 30, 2016
Edward Daeger '73, of Rockford, Illinois, on June 2, 2016
Robert W. Strong '73, of Blanco, on Sept. 21, 2016
Dalton Hartnett '74, of Fort Worth, on March 24, 2016
Albert Burks '77, of Pflugerville, on May 27, 2016
Robert James '77, of Florence, South Carolina, on Aug. 9, 2016
Brien Dunn '78, of Bayside, on June 10, 2016
Rev. Mary Self-Sager '78, of Austin, on Sept. 9, 2016
Norman Leger '79, of Austin, on Aug. 18, 2016
Terry Horan MBA '82, of Pflugerville, on Aug. 13, 2016
Cheryl Moseley '88, MBA '91, of Georgetown, on Sept. 24, 2016
Nancy Seher '88, of Woodward, Oklahoma, on July 6, 2016
Daniel Lambert '89, of Elgin, on May 21, 2016
Edward McNight '96, of Fairhope, Alabama, on July 1, 2016
Brant Butler '98, of Arlington, on March 13, 2016
Joshua Lee Hernandez Prince '98, of Austin, on June 27, 2016
Patricia Ann Boulton '02, of Cedar Park, on Aug. 17, 2016
Patrick Jonathan Ellis '03, of Austin, on Sept. 1, 2016
Angela DeAngelo '05, of Copperas Cove, on July 11, 2016
Ricky Berggren '07, of Austin, on March 4, 2016
Michelle Dawn Hailey-Magness '08, of Portland, on July 30, 2016
Eric Thomas Weeks '09, of Collevery, on Sept. 5, 2016
Eric Polson '10, of Odessa, on Jan. 6, 2016
Joseph Borja MLA '15, of Kyle, on June 7, 2016
Jerry Cannon MBA '16, of Austin, on Sept. 4, 2016
Bin Wang, associate professor of Economics, of Austin

ALUMNI AWARD SPOTLIGHT

The 2017 Alumni Awards recipients and Athletics Hall of Fame inductees united for a celebration of success during Homecoming and Family Weekend. See how these outstanding Hilltoppers earned their selections on the Awards & Honors page at stedwards.edu/homecoming
5 Ways to Make the Most of LinkedIn

By Ray Rogers, Director of Career Services

It’s no secret that employers are using LinkedIn to help vet candidates during the hiring process. Even if you’re happily employed now, you might be in a different situation next year or next week — so you should always maintain your online presence as though employers are looking at you as a potential hire. Here are tips for making the best impression on LinkedIn.

1. **Complete your profile.**
   That means adding a professional headshot, writing descriptions of all your work experience and including a summary. I was impressed with the profile of Brent Johnson ’12. He has thorough descriptions of past positions, as well as his current role, which conveys to employers that he’s ready for new opportunities.

   **Takeaway:** Unfinished or incomplete profiles on LinkedIn can suggest to employers that you don’t finish projects that you begin, so keep your profile hidden until it is complete.

2. **Choose a creative headline that highlights your skills.**
   Mike Rozelle ’08 does this well with “Digital Wingman & Marketing Consultant.” A headline that showcases your skills, career focus or even an aspirational goal may be more relevant than your current professional title. The protocol for LinkedIn is different from the rules for résumés, where you need to list the specific title you have at your current job.

   **Takeaway:** Make it easy for prospective employers to identify your skill set or the professional role you play, rather than focusing on a job title that falls outside the field you’re looking to enter.

3. **Write a skimmable summary.**
   This should convey your area of expertise. Rozelle’s profile continues: “I’ve worked in most capacities in the marketing department, so I’m accustomed to and quite comfortable wearing many hats within an organization.”

   **Takeaway:** Focus on the concrete, rather than subjective descriptors like “self-motivated” or “detail oriented,” unless you can illustrate them with specific examples. And write in first person. It’s more personal.

4. **Share your professional expertise via posts.**
   This positions you as someone who’s current in your field. Amanda Beck ’05 has written several posts based on her experience in the nonprofit sector, like “A guide to social media for nonprofits,” and “How to grow an annual giving program from scratch.”

   **Takeaway:** Be sure to attach the posts to your profile so that prospective employers see them.

5. **Include certifications, skills and recommendations.**
   These add legitimacy to your résumé items. Beck has listed 34 skills and has been endorsed by at least 45 people for her top three. She also includes recommendations from colleagues or supervisors at six organizations where she’s worked in the past.

   **Takeaway:** Endorsements and recommendations provide context for skills and experience, raising the level of credibility of your profile.

You’re an expert, too. Join the St. Edward’s University LinkedIn Career Network and Hilltoppers may ask for your career advice. Get started at bit.ly/SEUcareernetwork

Nearly 1,500 students, alumni and parents converged on the hilltop for Homecoming and Family Weekend, Feb. 17–19. Thanks to everyone who joined together to make it such a wonderful weekend. See more photos at flickr.com/seualumni. If you missed out this year, join us next year, Feb. 23–25, 2018.
Great Growing

More hardhats. More bulldozers. More growth! If you’ve been on the hilltop in the past 10 months, you’ve seen (and made a few detours around) hefty construction activity happening across campus.

Main Building is wrapped tower to toe in scaffolding. Its big unveiling in April will reveal brand new windows and roofing, and a freshly restored limestone exterior. Holy Cross Hall is receiving major repairs to its roof, windows and masonry, and a completely redesigned interior. On the northwest corner of campus, a new operations building is in the works.

Most dramatic of all, The Pavilions, a $33 million apartment complex for upperclassmen, is stirring up plenty of excitement (and yes, a little dust). The apartments pave the way for St. Edward’s to guarantee on-campus housing for freshmen and sophomores.

The Pavilions broke ground just south of the John Books Williams Natural Sciences Center at the former site of Woodward Office Building on Moody Drive. The facility’s innovative design features four ultra-modern buildings connected by elevated walkways. At the center of this 184,000-square-foot complex, a large courtyard and shaded alcoves provide gathering areas where students can relax and socialize. Each furnished apartment includes a full kitchen and has easy access to laundry rooms, computer labs and study areas, comfortable lobbies and lounges, and a grab-and-go café. Move-in date: Fall 2017.

Follow the progress of The Pavilions and other campus improvements underway at stedwards.edu/hilltop.

—Camille Saad