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Keeping Kids Entertained with the Boyk Law Treasure Chest

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When Attorney Wes Merrill and his wife Steffenie were talking about what to get their son, Evan, for his 13th birthday, the discussion turned toward something more valuable than money could buy. Instead of an iPhone or the very specific Nike shoes that Evan was asking for, the parents decided to go with a gift of perspective – a trip to Honduras with their church, Cedar Creek, to serve the less fortunate and assist in “Centro de Desarrollo Infantil” (Children’s Development Center), a before- and after-school program that provides the participating kids with meals, homework support, and Sunday school type classes.

Last July, Steffenie and Evan traveled for 16 hours, 3,000 miles from the comfort of home to stay with a host family who spoke little English and lived in a home with concrete floors and a metal roof. They spent much of the week painting and reading classrooms, building homes, and travelling long distances by pick-up truck to provide groceries and supplies to families in need. “To see the housing conditions of some of the kids we had gotten to know was astounding,” Steffenie said. “Some were so far up the mountain that the trucks couldn’t take us all the way, and we’d have to hike – up mountains, across streams, and over make-shift bridges – to get there. It was amazing to see the reactions of mothers when handed a simple box of beans, rice, eggs and other staples. Tears and gratitude flowed out and touched us all. One special moment was when we surprisingly hiked up to the house of the gift that our family sponsors. Evan and I were able to meet her, her mom, her twin sister and her brother. On one wall was an old photograph of Evan, Ahmed, and Casen which we had sent her.”

We sat down with Steffenie and asked her to share with readers some highlights of the life-changing experience:

We are hoping to go back. Evan talks about it a lot. We have a family there, and it’s hard to think about not seeing them again someday.

What advice would you give to families or individuals who would like to make a mission trip like that or get involved but don’t have the ability to travel far from home? The kids are precious. It is life-changing for them to get a sponsor and have access to all the programs and services the Great Commission Church provides. It costs $45-50 per month to sponsor a child in La Ceiba. To find out more please visit: http://edarecords.tv/sponsor/

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How did the trip change your outlook on life? No matter where or who they are, people want a good life for themselves and their families. They want dignity and respect. Moms want to feed their children good food, and provide a before- and after-school program that provides the participating kids with meals, homework support, and Sunday school type classes. We are hoping to go back. Evan talks about it a lot. We have a family there, and it’s hard to think about not seeing them again someday.

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Employee Spotlight: Julia Benfield

What started out as an internship opportunity for Julia Benfield as she worked to complete her Nurse Practitioner degree from the University of Toledo quickly grew into a permanent position with the firm. She performs medical records reviews, lending her 25 years of nursing experience to our clients’ cases.

“Julia’s ability to recognize medical issues and translate them into a language that we can understand has been vital to the firm,” Chuck said. “Her expertise as an emergency room charge nurse has put her on the front lines of countless auto accidents and work injuries, which means that she can relate to our clients in a way that very few people can. We are very lucky to have her on our team.”

In between working two jobs and running a household of six, Julia still finds time to help her husband make and sell their (almost) famous homemade wine and travel to foreign countries to help those in need of medical assistance. We sat down with Julia to see what life is like for the busy mom of four.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

- I teach karate twice a week. We also own a new winery in Swanton that we are working on getting up and running.

Tell us about your family.

- I have been married to my husband Rob for 18 years and we have four kids. I work both for Chuck and the University of Toledo, and consider all my coworkers my extended family.

Favorite ice cream?

- Breyers Waffle Cone with Chocolatey Chips

Favorite hobby?

- Listening to music, karate, and being with family.

What book are you reading right now?

- The Heart Speaks, A Cardiologist Reveals the Seven Language of Healing by Mimis Guarnesi

Favorite movie?

- What Dreams May Come

What’s the farthest you’ve been from home?

- La Ceiba, Honduras

What is your favorite hobby?

- Listening to music, karate, and being with family.

TIPS Proud Student & Teacher of the Month: December

Winning student: Nick Baumgartner, Sophomore

Nomination by: Maya N安阳, Student

Reason for Nomination: “Nick gets excited - about everything - including school. He loves to learn, and while it often doesn’t come easily to him, he never gives up. At times he might struggle academically, but he’s persistent and willing to try anything. At our recent Halloween party, our gym teacher (a guy) taught Nick how to do a dance. That visual was one for the books, but Nick was overjoyed. He’d learned a new skill. He openly talks about the many surgeries he underwent when he was little, and he is totally candid about his obvious physical disability. Some kids would let that get in the way. Not Nick. He often comes charging into the room before school to show me something he’s done or something he got as a gift. He’s a grateful kid - no matter how large or small the offering. He always has a positive attitude and is well-liked by his classmates. In all probability, adult life is going to be a challenge for Nick, but given his outlook on life in general, he’ll be a winner.”

Winning teacher: Shelby McElroy, Toledo Technology Academy Math teacher

Nominated by: Maya N安阳, Student

Reason for Nomination: “I like that she does so much for the school. She has seventh graders twice a day, she has no planning period and she always finds time for us. She helps the kids who are farther ahead get more of a challenge than what the rest of the class is doing. And she runs that race for her school. When asked on camera to describe one thing that Mrs. McElroy has taught her that will stick with her for the rest of her life, Maya responded, “That’s really important to be kind to people.”

The TIPS Proud Student and Teacher of the Month contest is a joint effort between Charles E. Boyk Law Offices, LLC and Toledo Public Schools. Each month, one student and one student from one of TIPS’s high schools will be awarded with a $150 Visa gift card. Stay tuned for winners from next month’s school, Bowsher High School.

The University of Toledo Emergency Residency’s Global Health Outreach team in La Ceiba, Honduras.

Co-Workers At A Local Correctional Facility Were Attacked By Inmates, Suffering Serious Injuries

A dozen inmates were attacked in one correctional facility last week, and 13 correctional officers were injured.

Deadly Crash On Ohio Turnpike Leaves Client With A Fractured Neck & Grief For His Friend

One client was rear-ended in a fatal car accident that left him with a fractured neck and grief-stricken friend. The 30-year-old was the passenger in a car driven by a relative, both of whom were injured in the crash.

Dog Bite Leaves Two-Year-Old girl Scarred & Scarred

Three days after her second birthday, our client was bitten by a dog at a nearby park, causing the need for 30-40 stitches and narrowly missing the child’s eye.

RECIPE: Brianne’s Best Breakfast Skillet

INGREDIENTS

- 6 thick slices bacon
- ¾ small sweet onion, diced
- ½ cup maple syrup, chopped
- ½ cup green peppers, diced
- 8oz (one roll) hot sausage
- 3-4 small (farmers) potatoes, cubed
- 3 eggs
- ¼ shredded cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large cast-iron or oven-proof skillet, cook bacon until crisp then set aside. Remove half of bacon drippings and set aside in a small bowl.
2. In the same skillet, sauté onion, mushrooms, and green peppers until soft. Set aside cooked vegetables.
3. Cook hot sausage in skillet, breaking up into small pieces, until cooked through and brown. Set aside in bowl as well as vegetables.
4. Add reserved bacon drippings back into skillet and cook cubed potatoes until they pierce easily with a fork. Add sausage and vegetables back into the skillet and cook, everything until hot. Sprinkle cheese over the top of everything until melted.
5. While the mixture is cooking, crack eggs in a separate pan and season desired. (Most like them sunny side up).
6. Top skillet with cooked eggs and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with toast and orange juice.

The UTMC’s Global Health Outreach team in La Ceiba, Honduras.

WOMEN’S MARCH TRAVELED TO D.C. FOR WOMEN’S MARCH

On January 21st, attorney Leah Michael joined over 500,000 people in Washington, D.C. for the Women’s March, whose mission is to “Stand together as solidarity with our partners and children for the protection of our rights, our safety, our health, and our families – recognizing that our vibrant and diverse communities are the strength of our country.

Leah was joined by fellow Toledoans Carrie Russell Hartman, Brittany Moore, and Steven Spitler, who are all members of the Young Democrats in Lucas County.

“I am beyond proud that even with nearly triple the estimated number of participants expected, there was not one reported arrest in D.C., not one test or instance of property,” Leah said. “This is what a peaceful protest is supposed to be and I’m honored to have been a part of it. Many thanks to Rebecca Biro and Courtney Marklin for making this once in a lifetime experience a reality for many northeast Ohio people. Not only was this one of the most empowering events ever but I was lucky enough to do so next to my very best friends and get to make a lot more along the way!”
Co-Workers At A Local Correctional Facility Were Attacked By Inmates, Suffering Serious Injuries

When a local correctional facility was attacked and assaulted by inmates, one of the victims was an off-duty correctional officer, the other a prison guard.

Deadly Crash On Ohio Turnpike Leaves Client With A Fractured Neck & Scarred & Scared

Three days after his second birthday, our client was struck and killed in a head-on collision with a tractor trailer.

Dog Bite Leaves Two-Year-Old girl Scarred & Scared

Three days after her second birthday, our client was attacked by a dog who was supposed to be on a leash.

Helping The Local & Global Community: Honduras Service Trip Touches Lives of Boyk Law Family

Another thing that our students, Chuck Boyk and Julia Benfield did during their trip to Honduras was to assist in the education of our residents and to provide medical support to those in need.

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Julia Benfield is a practicing nurse at the University of Toledo Emergency Room and the Global Health Outreach team.

The University of Toledo Emergency Room's Global Health Outreach team in La Ceiba, Honduras

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Winning student: Nick Baumgartner, Sophomore

Winning teacher: Shelby McElroy, Math teacher

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INGREDIENTS

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- ½ small sweet onion, diced
- 1½ small russet potatoes, cubed
- 8oz (one roll) hot sausage
- ½ cup mushrooms, chopped
- 6-7 thick slices bacon
- 3 eggs
- 4oz shredded cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

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2. When the mixture is cooking, crack eggs in a separate pan to desired liking. (Most like them sunny side up!)

3. Cook hot sausage in skillet, breaking up into small pieces, until cooked through and brown. Set aside in same bowl as vegetables. Want to give your loved one something special this Valentine’s Day? Make breakfast in bed with this tasty (and filling) breakfast skillet.
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What was it like watching your son participate?

I was able to catch a glimpse of Evan’s soft heart, connecting with strangers to the point he didn’t want to leave them. As a mom, it was so rewarding.

How did the trip change your outlook on life?

No matter where or who they are, people want a good life for themselves and their families. They want dignity and respect. Moms want to feed their children good food, and provide a pathway to success. The tears of gratitude we experienced when delivering basic staples to these struggling families broke our hearts and opened our eyes. We are all so much alike.

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Steffenie Merillat (left) & Evan Merillat (right) with Honduran children

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