

MANHAPPENIN'

SPOTLIGHT

spring/summer '25

Humans of Manhattan

The people and stories that make Manhattan what it is.

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Tap to Togetherness

How a simple idea grew into a powerful community project, bringing people together through creativity and connection

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COOK OR BE COOKED

Behind the scenes with Powercat Motorsports, Kansas State University's cutting-edge racing team.

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Switch Wicked



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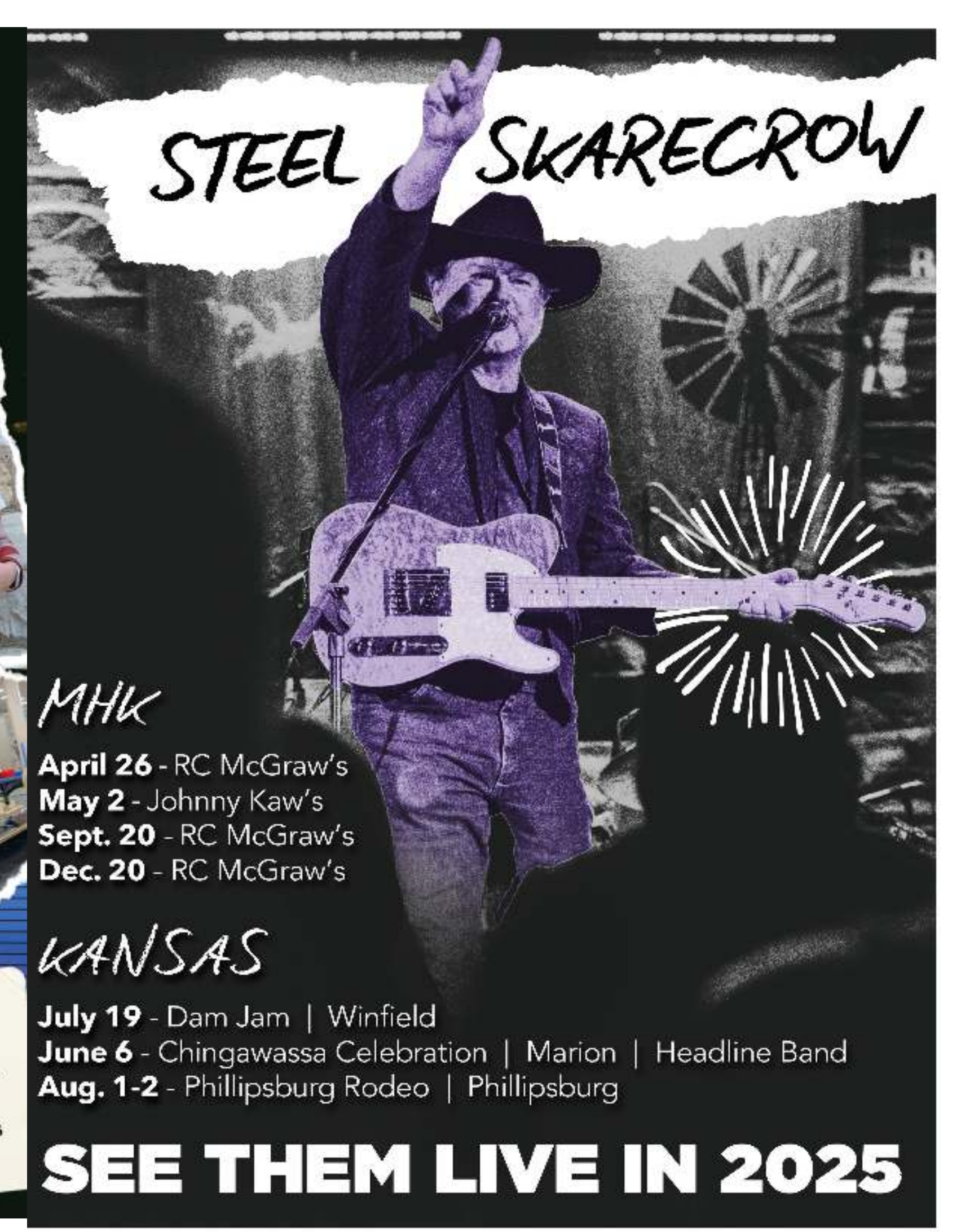


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letters from the EDITORS

Dear reader,

To start this letter, I want to introduce myself. My name is Kamryn Fleischer, and I have had the absolute pleasure of being the editor-in-chief of Manhappenin' for two semesters now. As for Manhappenin', we're K-State's student-run lifestyle magazine, all about capturing the moments, stories and creativity that make Manhattan, Kansas, what it is. Our team of writers, designer, and photographers work hard to bring each issue to life, and I can't wait for you to dive into this one!

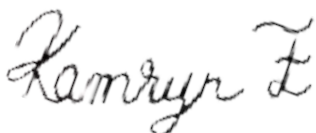
Watching this team grow has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my time at Manhappenin'. Every issue, I'm reminded of just how talented and passionate this group is—from writers and designers to photographers and editors, each person brings something incredible to the table. And while I'm beyond proud of what we've built, we're always looking for more voices to join us.

This issue was inspired by a simple yet powerful phrase from our amazing photo editor, Wittney Hammeke: "For the people, by the people." We wanted to create something that truly reflects the heart of K-State and Manhattan—the stories, the moments and the connections that make this place feel like home. Because at the end of the day, we're all living these moments together, and it's those shared experiences that bring us closer.

I hope you see yourself in these pages, just as much as we see you in this community.

With love,

Kamryn Fleischer



Dear reader,

Welcome back to another issue of the Manhappenin' Magazine! This one was so much fun to create; the photoshoots in this issue were some of my favorites we've ever done, and deciding on one photo for a cover was an impossible decision.

As I write this, we're in the process of finishing up the magazine, making everything perfect for you. Our staff and executive team have worked so hard this semester, and I'm so proud to see them grow with Kamryn and me.

Next semester, I'll be temporarily stepping down from my position as assistant editor-in-chief until Spring 2026, and although I'm going to miss Manhappenin' like crazy, I'm thrilled to see what this team creates and does next because I know they're going to keep getting better and make something amazing.

See you when I see you, Wildcats.

Love,

Zara Thomas



MANI



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YOUR PERSONAL HARVEST

*The Freshest Way
to Eat Local*



Eating fresh can be difficult as a college student. While the local farmers market is a great option for picking up fresh produce, it can require a certain amount of planning and prep that can discourage the less motivated. A&H Farms have a solution that does not require you to constantly organize to replenish your pantry. They have introduced a Farm to Table Box Subscription (FTB) that is a direct conversation between the community of Manhattan and what A&H plants. Their crop is planned around you. By signing up for their program you will not only receive in-season fruits and veggies grown in town, but also save time.

How does this work? At the start of the growing season, A&H Farm plants crops according to the taste of FTB subscribers. As a subscriber, you will receive a curated box filled with fresh, locally grown produce each week. These boxes include everything from apples, zucchini and peppers to more unique options like rhubarb or tomatillos. Selection can vary on what is ready each week, but freshness is always guaranteed. Customers have a choice between a six-week session for a short-term experience or can commit to the full 24-week season for consistent, farm-fresh ingredients.

With four sessions from May 19th to October 27th, you can expect a diverse selection of fresh produce. The best part is you will likely be receiving an item you have never cooked with before! Whether you are trying out new recipes, cooking with roommates or just aiming for healthier meals, this subscription adds variety and inspiration to your kitchen without the constant grocery store trips. Here is the extensive list of possible A&H products you might expect from the boxes:

Tomatoes, Zucchini, Kale, New Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Green Onions, Asparagus, Mustard Greens, Collards, Rhubarb, Onions, Cucumbers, Pickles, Watermelon, Cantaloupe, Sweet Corn,

Eggplant, Okra, Pumpkins, Yellow Squash, Winter Squash (acorn, butternut, spaghetti, etc.), Lettuce, Beets, Peppers (10 varieties), Apples, Blackberries and much more.

Pickup is easy! You can choose to stop by the farm or four different farmers market locations across Manhattan, Junction City, and Wamego. Plus, full-season members get an added 10% off in-store purchases. This is incredibly useful for picking up extra produce, local honey, milk and other homemade goods.

The best part? Beyond just providing fresh food, this program helps strengthen the local food scene and supports a family-run farm. A&H Farm is owned and operated by Andrea and Hugo, a couple who left their careers to start A&H. Committed to growing healthy food for the community, the farm continues to evolve each season. Their family also runs a farmers market stand, a bakery and The Grain Bin – a converted grain bin bar that serves “your favorite cold ones,” slushies and seasonal drinks.

If you are interested in fresh, locally sorted food without the hassle, consider looking into a Farm to Table Box Subscription and secure your spot for the season.

story by RACHEL SILHAN
photos by ERIN REIL
design by RACHEL SILHAN



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A Guide to

Color Analysis

Have you ever put on a gold necklace and felt it just was not working out? Or tried a pastel top that made you look washed out? The reason why some colors make you glow while others dull your shine is hidden in your undertones! Understanding your color analysis can help you choose the most flattering clothing, makeup and even jewelry. Let's break it down so you can accessorize with confidence.

Step 1: Determine Your Undertone

Your undertone is the subtle hue beneath your skin tone that remains the same year-round.

There Are Three Main Categories:

- **Cool Undertones:** Your skin has pink, red or bluish hues. If the veins on your wrist appear blue, then silver jewelry looks best on you.
- **Warm Undertones:** Your skin has yellow, peachy or golden hues. If the veins on your wrist appear green, then gold jewelry looks best on you.
- **Neutral Undertones:** A mix of both warm and cool tones, meaning you can rock both silver and gold.



Step 2: The Jewelry Test

Not sure which metal suits you? **Try This!**

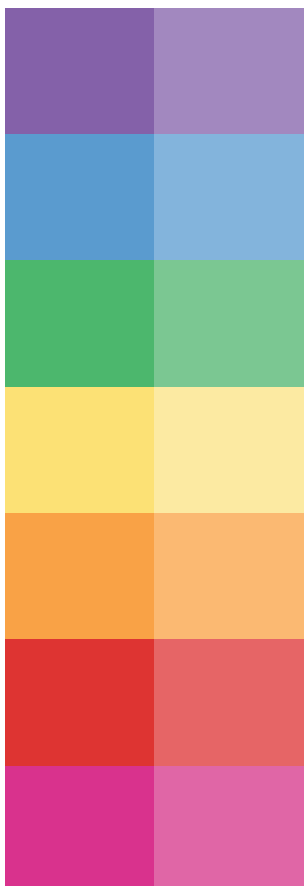
1. Hold a piece of silver and a piece of gold jewelry up to your face in natural light.
2. Which one enhances your complexion and makes your skin look vibrant? That is the match.
3. If both look equally good, you are the lucky ones who can wear both metals effortlessly.

Gemstones that Enhance Your Glow

Pairing the right gemstones with your undertone can elevate your look even further:

- **Cool Undertones:** Sapphire, amethyst, emerald and blue topaz enhance your radiance.
- **Warm Undertones:** Citrine, amber, ruby and peridot bring out your golden glow.
- **Neutral Undertones:** Diamonds, pearls and moonstones are universally flattering.





Step 3:

Complementing Your Seasonal Palette

Color analysis divides undertones into four season categories, which influence both your jewelry and clothing choices:

- **Winter (Cool & Deep):** Best with silver, platinum and white gold. Stick to jewel tones like emerald green, royal blue and deep reds.
- **Spring (Warm & Light):** Gold jewelry is your best friend! Opt for warm, light colors like peach, coral and soft aqua.
- **Summer (Cool & Soft):** Silver or rose gold enhances your delicate cool tones. Choose pastels and subdued colors such as powder blue, dusty rose and lavender.
- **Autumn (Warm & Rich):** You shine in gold, bronze and copper jewelry. Earthy tones like mustard, olive, rust and deep teal are perfect for you.



story by MENA WALKER
photos by WITTNEY HAMMEKE
style by MENA WALKER
model MIA WALTERS
design by LILAH WILLIAMS
& KYLIE PHOMMASACK

Fashion is not about rules—it is about finding what makes you feel your best. Whether you are drawn to bold statement pieces, delicate jewelry or a mix of everything, understanding your colors gives you the power to elevate your style. Experiment, mix and match and most importantly, wear what makes you feel radiant. Your best color is the one that makes you feel unstoppable.

Now Your Color Analysis is Complete!

A Guide to Owning

College Pets

Committing pet care time as a college student



owning a pet can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Many students have found that pets in college can provide emotional support, improve their mental and physical health and help with their time management skills. There is nothing like coming home to a loyal companion after a grueling day of classes. Before you rush to adopt, this article is your go-to for owning a pet in college.



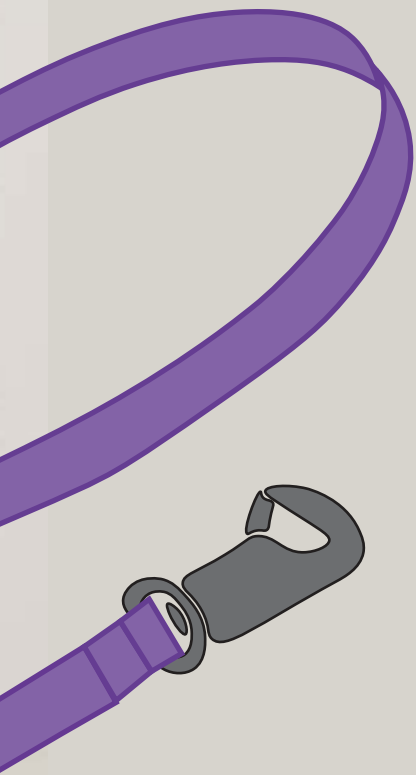
Consider what is right for you

You are coming home from an 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. back-to-back classes on Wednesday. You come home to greet your new puppy, and open the cabinet to feed him - just to realize, you are fresh out of dog food. The last thing you want to do is rush to PetSmart to get food. Pets require constant care: feeding, exercise and attention. What kind of time commitment can you keep up with?

If you have less than five hours a week, a low maintenance fish like a Betta fish, snails, most small rodents, reptiles or hermit crabs will work best with your schedule. These animals do not require as much attention and care as larger animals, making them the perfect starter pet. Cats, birds, ferrets, guinea pigs and rabbits are good middle level pets, taking less than 10 hours a week to care for. These animals are more likely to want to play, cuddle and receive affection. If you have more than 10 hours a week, you might be interested in getting a high-energy dog like border collies or more energetic cats.



story by TAYLOR HAYES
photos by TAYLOR HAYES
models AIRYN & FELIX WAUGH
design by TAYLOR HAYES



Budget

Pets are typically not cheap. Beyond initial costs, like purchasing or adoption costs, you will need to set a budget for food, vaccinations, grooming and emergency visits. A single vet bill can easily cost hundreds of dollars. Many college students already struggle to pay rent and groceries. Can you add a pet to that list?

Small fish, snails and hermit crabs can cost up to \$150; while small rodents, reptiles and some birds can be up to \$500. Larger rodents like rabbits, bearded dragons, other exotic birds, cats and some breeds of dogs can be up to \$1,000, but medium to large dogs can cost up to \$5,000 after all is said and done. These numbers include adoption fees, habitat setup and basic vet care. Costs can rise significantly depending on medical needs, food quality and unexpected expenses.

Travel and Housing Restrictions

Not every housing arrangement allows for pets, many on and off-campus apartments have strict policies, expensive deposit and pet rent requirements. Does your current housing allow for it? Are you planning to move? If you are planning on having a pet, you will have fewer housing options and incur extra fees. There is the added stress of deciding where to house the pet over break and whether you can bring the pet home or not. Some pets do not do well with frequent relocation, like cats.

Alternatives to Pet Ownership

If you crave interactions with pets from home but live too far to see them frequently, consider volunteering with a local shelter, like Manhattan's own Purple Power Animal Welfare Society or foster!

Owning a pet in college can be a wonderful experience, but it is a decision that requires careful thought. If you have the time, financial stability and housing to provide a loving home, a pet can be an incredible companion. If you are already struggling to balance responsibilities, it might be best to wait until after graduation. Are you ready for this responsibility? If the answer is yes, then you will have a rewarding experience in front of you!

Opinions on Owning a Pet in College

Owning a pet in college can be a trying experience, but as freshman Airyn Waugh puts it:

“ I wholeheartedly recommend having a pet in college especially as a freshman having a pet to keep you company when you are away from home for the first time can be really comforting ”



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Tyler Cramer

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Expectations v Reality of Greek Life

For some, Greek life is a major part of the college experience. Some people have dreamed of being a member of a sorority or a fraternity for as long as they can remember.

They dream about making great friends, being involved on campus, giving back to their community and many other events that take place throughout the year. Sometimes, we can set too high expectations for the future or it can turn out to be exactly like we hoped.

Expectations of Rushing

For those who are dreaming of rushing, it tends to be the only thing on their mind the summer before coming to college. Yes, they are also dreaming about moving to Manhattan, starting classes and making new friends, but the majority of their thoughts are consumed with the question "What is rush like?"

"Rush was way more stressful and emotional than what I ever expected it to be, but little did I know it would help me to open my eyes to help others that struggle like me as well and give back to this community in a way that I never thought of before," Erin McVey of Kappa Gamma said.

Rushing the week before school starts is the traditional way to join a sorority but it is not the only option. Continuous open bidding (COB) allows you to join a sorority even after the semester has started. This is the perfect opportunity for someone who thought sorority life was not for them but soon realized that it may be exactly what they need.

"I didn't go through regular recruitment because when coming to college, I was very anti-sorority," Karody Kadel of Pi Beta Phi said. "Then I saw how much fun my roommate was having and how many friends and connections she was making through the sorority and realized I wanted that too. I soon decided to COB and that is one of the best decisions I ever could have made."

Sorority Surprises

Even though you think you know what to expect, you are bound to be surprised at some point. Some surprises may come out right away but others may come later.

One thing that surprised many is the unexpected relationships they build with each other in the sorority. Many shared that they were surprised at how well they were able to connect with others and what each relationship looked like.

"I have a lot of different friends that I can go do different things with, like if I want to go to a movie I have a group and if I want to go out I also have a group for that too," Karley Moore of Alpha Chi Omega said. "It just amazes me that there is not one friendship that is the same."

Kadel and Emily Hansen of Pi Beta Phi agreed that they also have made many different friendships within their house that they never thought was possible.

"There are 38 girls in our pledge class and I can honestly say that I can sit down in the kitchen or wherever with any of them and have an easy, genuine conversation with them," Hansen said.

Fears of isolation are soon dissipated as the year goes on.

"At first I was kind of worried that I wasn't going to make friends," Kadel said. "These girls aren't necessarily forced to be your friends so I wasn't sure what would happen, but I know now that I have found my people who I truly click with."

Reality Check

Being in this situation, you expect to love being in a sorority but sometimes reality does not quite live up to your expectations.

When does it feel like you are where you should be? There is no right answer to that question. Some people may think it is bid night—others may think its chapter, initiation or living in the house.

It may take some time to realize that you truly do love being in a sorority, but that aha moment is something that will stick with you forever.

"Once I had my first chapter, I realized how much fun this was going to be and how much I was going to enjoy it," Kate Kline of Kappa Delta said. "Chapter wasn't as formal as I thought it was going to be so I realized it was an opportunity to get to know everybody that lived out of the house while having a good time and discussing important issues."

It is important to understand, though, that sororities are not for everyone, and if at some point you realize you're not going to enjoy it, it is okay to not stick around.

Sleepovers

A worry for many people is having to live in the sorority house. Many people worry that they will not have much room, no "me time" and will have to live with a lot of people.

Those worries soon go away once you move in, get settled and develop a routine, though.

"I love being under the same roof as all of my friends because I have the opportunity to talk to them whenever and go do fun things all the time," McVey said. "There truly is never a dull moment."



story by LOGAN LEE
photos by LIV TUBBS
styled by HALEY SMITH
model HALEY SMITH
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story by EMMA BAKER
photos by LAURA ARMBRUSTER
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Tap to TOGETHERNESS

How tap dance fosters growth in children and families

The Origin and Growth of Tap to Togetherness

Tap to Togetherness is more than just an initiative—it is a heartfelt mission that began with a personal journey and has since blossomed into a powerful community effort. Its story is about care, accessibility and a commitment to making meaningful connections across diverse populations.

It all started with Julie Pentz's experience in the Parents as Teachers program. When her first child was born prematurely, their journey through early childhood services began. The child was otherwise healthy, but a speech delay was identified early by Janice Schroeder, a parent educator who became instrumental in their journey. As they navigated through free services such as Parents as Teachers, Infant Toddler Services, Speech Therapy and preschool, Pentz and her husband were struck by the system's dedication to helping children transition smoothly into kindergarten. The experience left a profound impact, fueling a desire to give back.

With a background in dance, Pentz performed interactive tap routines for Parents as Teachers sessions. Recognizing the potential to create something even more impactful, she teamed up with Schroeder to launch Tap to Togetherness. The goal? To use the arts as a medium to foster family engagement, learning and joy.

As the program grew, so did its scope. Tap to Togetherness evolved into Tap to Togetherness Across Populations, extending its reach far beyond the initial group of families. The initiative began working with a variety of communities, including home-schooled families, military families at Fort Riley, residents in senior living communities such as Meadowlark and individuals with Parkinson's disease.



Accessibility and Free Programming

A cornerstone of Tap to Togetherness's philosophy is that its programming remains completely free to participants. The team is deeply committed to ensuring that no individual ever has to pay for the services. However, delivering this programming comes with costs. For example, 2025 saw the program move to the Douglass Center, which incurs rental fees. Funding sources such as donations from Parents as Teachers and partial grants from the Greater Manhattan Community Foundation have played a crucial role in covering such expenses.

In 2025, the program introduced a Juniors Program to accommodate participants aging out of Tap to Togetherness's primary sessions. Aimed at children aged nine and up, the program allows these "junior" participants to assist with setting up sessions, learn what it takes to run them and even help deliver the sessions themselves. Following their contributions, they receive private instruction from undergraduate tap mentors. This initiative, too, is offered at no cost to participants and is supported by innovative approaches to funding and mentoring.

Children's Books and Research Studies

In addition to its sessions, Tap to Togetherness has ventured into publishing to support its participants. The team self-published two



children's books: "Tap Tap Tap Your Toe" and "Tap Tap Tap Like a Rhinoceros." The first book focuses on movements practiced in sessions, offering families a way to continue the experience at home. The second book incorporates physical literacy characteristics, breaking down scientific definitions of movements into accessible terms for children and parents. Both books were made possible through grant funding, allowing the program to distribute them free of charge.

The program's approach to physical literacy extends beyond publishing. Its research leadership has garnered national and international attention. Physical literacy, which integrates anatomy, movement understanding and technique, is a key element in the program. Dance programs at Kansas State University, for example, are engaging with physical literacy concepts, offering students a deeper appreciation of how movements happen and why they matter. This anatomy-based approach to dance aligns with Tap to Togetherness's philosophy of understanding movement through both scientific and accessible lenses.

The program's research efforts have generated remarkable findings. In its first study, researchers analyzed the impact of screen time during sessions. Graduate and undergraduate students coded participant behavior, revealing a dramatic decline in screen usage from around 21 minutes at the beginning of the year to just 30 seconds by the end. Remarkably, this shift occurred without any deliberate changes in the program, emphasizing how the sessions naturally foster family engagement.

In a subsequent study, the program collaborated with Kinesiology experts to measure participants' activity levels. By equipping adults and children with accelerometers, researchers tracked the physical activity during sessions and gathered valuable data. This study demonstrated that Tap to Togetherness not only reduces screen time but also promotes significant physical activity among participants. These findings laid the groundwork for further research into physical literacy, connecting each study to the next in a continuous cycle of discovery.



Overcoming Challenges and New Horizons

The journey of Tap to Togetherness has not been without its challenges. For instance, sessions held at the Douglass Center, a venue chosen to make the program more accessible to underprivileged families, have not garnered the expected attendance. This discrepancy has led the team to reexamine its approach, underscoring their commitment to adaptability and continuous improvement.

On another front, the program's integration into schools has opened exciting opportunities. Collaborations with kindergarten teachers at Marlatt Elementary School have expanded the program's reach, enabling interactions with nearly 70 kindergarteners. While these sessions pose unique challenges, such as securing parental permissions and managing logistics, they have proven to be deeply rewarding. Stories like that of a young participant overcoming hesitation to interact illustrate the program's profound impact on children's development.

Tap to Togetherness thrives because of its community-driven nature. Rather than relying on a single individual to deliver sessions, the program is structured around a collaborative team. This includes undergraduate students, junior participants and board members, like Janice. By design, this approach reflects the core belief that community is essential. Together, these individuals create an inclusive and dynamic environment that embodies the program's mission.

The program also benefits from its talented team of students and juniors. Their dedication and collaboration illustrate the program's community-focused mission. While not a traditional dance class, the program utilizes tap dance as a vehicle to engage children's minds and bodies, fostering joy and personal growth. Pentz's choice to wear sneakers instead of tap shoes reinforces inclusivity, showing participants that tap dance and engagement are accessible to all, regardless of attire or ability.

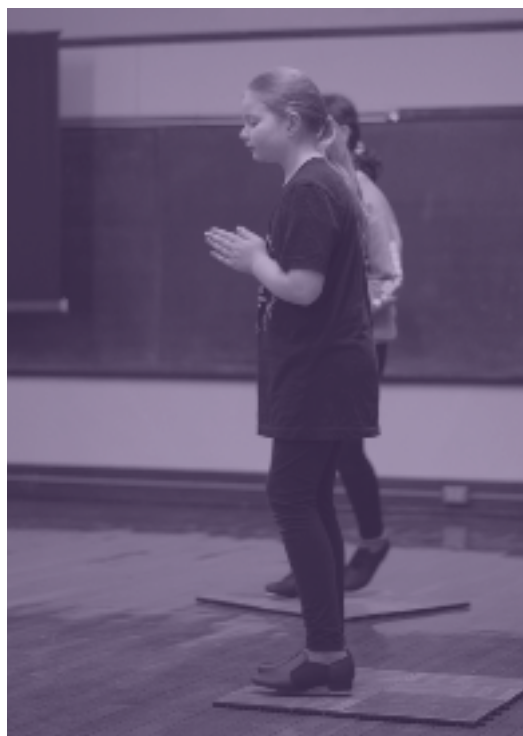


Additionally, Tap to Togetherness has extended its reach beyond the local community, delivering its programs internationally in locations such as Ghana and Waite City. With plans to present at Oxford University this summer, the program is making a global impact while staying rooted in its mission of fostering connections through the arts.

Looking Ahead

As Tap to Togetherness continues to evolve, the team remains focused on accessibility, expansion and innovation. With the addition of the Juniors Program, ongoing research efforts, new initiatives in schools and international collaborations, the program is poised to make an even greater impact. Plans for a future performance promise to celebrate the dedication of all involved, while continued research aims to further validate the program's effectiveness.

Tap to Togetherness stands as a testament to what can be achieved when passion meets purpose. It touches lives across generations and abilities, serving as a reminder of the transformative power of the arts to unite people and create lasting connections.





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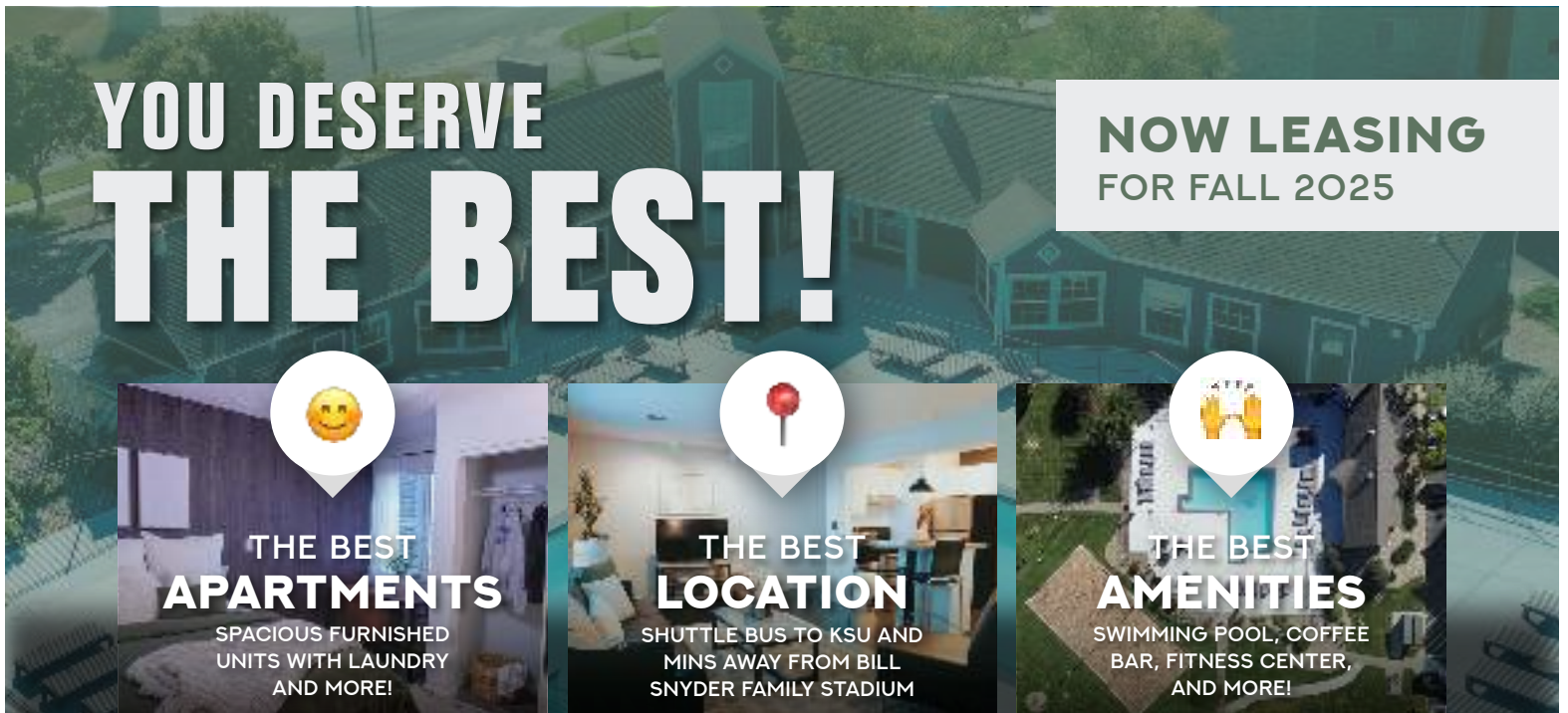


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150

Years of the K-State Gardens



story by LOGAN LEE
photos by HALEY SMITH
& ZARA THOMAS
design by LIV TUBBS



As many people know, Kansas State University has a beautiful garden located on the northwest corner of the campus by Denison Ave and Jardine. What people may not know is how long those gardens have been around. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the university gardens.

The gardens were first established in 1875 and were located where Justin Hall and Bluemont Hall currently stand. Due to the expansion of campus, they were forced to move farther north which allowed them to expand as well. Today the gardens are 19 acres and have over 2,000 different types of plants and flowers.

The gardens are a great opportunity for everyone in the Manhattan area. It gives horticulture students a chance for a hands-on learning experience, and allows any student to volunteer to take care of the garden. Additionally, for the community members of Manhattan, it creates a space for people to go for walks, sit and observe and makes a great place for celebratory pictures, like graduation photos.

Over the years, the gardens have allowed themselves to be a place for people to go when life is great, hard, sad or anything in between. When people go to the gardens they tend to feel better afterwards. They offer a sense of peace, calmness and clarity in this world of chaos.

The gardens have held a special place in many people's hearts for the last 150 years. In honor of that, the director of the K-State gardens, Scott McElwain, along with the Friends of the Gardens committee has decided to make a year-long anniversary celebration.

The committee has organized an event to take place each month of 2025. The events have a wide range of activities so everyone of all ages can participate and enjoy what the gardens have to offer. For more information or to learn how to get involved please visit their website at <https://www.k-state.edu/gardens/>.



How ChatGPT Saved My Life

other uses for the popular AI

Over the past several years, artificial intelligence (AI) technology has become a very well known topic. Many people have mixed emotions about AI products; many find it dangerous and feel uneasy knowing that anybody can have a robot write and design things for humans. Although, there may be some value in being assisted in brainstorming, writing and creating projects.

A big AI product with many emotions surrounding it is ChatGPT. Many people believe that ChatGPT is only used by students to cheat on homework or by professionals to avoid doing their jobs. This should not be a concern if ChatGPT is being used the right way. Many students and professionals use ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas for their projects so that they can then create something unique and original.

ChatGPT can assist people in a school setting and in the workplace, it can also be beneficial to people in their personal lives as well. There are many ways that ChatGPT can help make your daily life better, you just have to know how to properly use it.

To properly use ChatGPT, you have to first understand what it is and how it works. ChatGPT is an AI product that takes a prompt that is sent by the user and responds to that prompt. It has the capabilities of having conversations, summarizing text and answering questions.

Now that we all understand how ChatGPT works I am going to share with you some ways that ChatGPT has saved my life. Below you can find some prompts that I have sent into ChatGPT myself under each category.

Recipes

Prompt: Give me dinner recipes that use ground beef.

Responses:

1. Classic Beef Meatballs
2. Cheeseburger Casserole
3. Beef Stroganoff

Prompt: Give me football tailgate recipes.

Responses:

1. Buffalo Chicken Dip
2. Pulled Pork Sliders
3. Jalapeno Poppers

Workouts

Prompt: Give me a lifting workout split for 4 days.

Response:

- Day 1: Upper Body Push
- Day 2: Lower Body
- Day 3: Upper Body Pull
- Day 4: Lower Body

Texts

Prompt: Write me a text for my grandpa's birthday

Happy Birthday, Grandpa!

I hope your day is filled with all the love, joy, and laughter you bring to everyone around you. You mean so much to me, and I'm so grateful for all the wisdom, stories, and memories you've shared over the years. Wishing you a wonderful year ahead full of happiness, good health, and plenty of smiles.

Enjoy your special day to the fullest!

With love,
[Your Name]

BOOST *Your Socials*

Enhancing campus presence, how the Student Creative Services helps clubs stand out

Student Creative Services is a reliable resource that provides free design services to all K-State recognized clubs and organizations. Staffed by talented students specializing in graphic design, social media, marketing and other related majors, SCS offers services for any brand-related task, from Yung Gravy promotional posters to flyers for student senate elections.

"I think that it provides a professional appearance for all student organizations, and that's something that is essential for student organizations, especially now," Riley Scott, SCS student lead and strategic communications major, said.

This is because, with an increasing number of student organizations, it takes more advertising and social presence to make a club stand out.

"It's a much bigger market you are competing for; you have to be able to have reels that are reaching people, a logo that looks interesting and professional," Scott said.

All these promotional services are offered to every organization on campus for free by SCS. Not only is SCS useful to its clients, but it also allows the student employees to work on their skills.

"For our student employees, we are an applied learning opportunity that allows for skill development, hands-on learning opportunities, and collaboration techniques. For student organizations, SCS provides high-quality media design and branding strategies to help clubs attract and engage more effectively across campus." Audrey Taggart-Kagdis, Union Assistant Director and director of marketing, said.

SCS was founded in 2012, originally with the name Student Design Center. In the beginning, SCS was focused primarily on graphic design services. Throughout the years, and with new funding from Student Government Association, SCS has been able to offer more and more services, providing support for a wider demographic of students.

"SCS has existed for over a decade, and we've had the opportunity to support the campus community in a lot of ways, and now we are getting to help in a completely new way," Scott said.

They can offer an entirely new experience for clients, with social media support and better graphic design services. The Union marketing office is located on the ground level of the K-State Student Union in Room 053. They are always happy to help and will get the job done well and in a timely manner.

The process of employing SCS services is relatively simple. First, you should submit a request for a consultation, describing your wants/needs, your brand strategies and social media requests. Once your form is received, SCS will assign the task to one of the student employees, and they will be in contact to schedule an in-person consultation. The design process takes an average of three weeks, depending on the project.

To get started, scan the QR code below, or visit union.k-state.edu/creative.



story by KATE ELLWOOD
photos by STUDENT CREATIVE SERVICES
design by ESTHER KILISHEK



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LATE NIGHTS and

The Little Apple music scene may not be known as an iconic staple of the area, but there are hidden gems all throughout Manhattan.

For those who have spent time exploring the various venues in Manhattan, it is clear there is a local passion for open mic nights and small but well-seasoned artists gracing The Hat in Aggieville. The city provides a varied set of artists, from rock to country to indie.

Manhattan prides itself on its sense of community. Despite the challenges that come with being a smaller city, local musicians find a way to make it work. A college-heavy population means that audiences are constantly moving and audiences drastically change with the seasons. Local musicians make the city feel like a close-knit environment. Social media has a large impact on the opportunity for artists and local audiences to interact.

Braxton Keith is an example of country artists that regularly perform at the Hat. The bar-feel of the venue is the right balance between being large enough to hold a crowd and allowing for close interactions that larger shows would not have. Bar venues also still offer meet-and-greet opportunities, tour merch and a good size crowd.

Another location for live music, Auntie Mae's Parlor, also located in Aggieville, brands itself as the "Home to live music, art, culture and weirdos." Intimacy is key at Auntie Mae's, as they attract a large jazz crowd, but keep the cozy and welcoming atmosphere. Entry is often

free, making it an accessible option for college students and residents seeking something new to do.

Local coffee shops also host live music, giving artists the opportunity to perform in an intimate setting. Pictured below, Paul Hunt, retired K-State trombone professor, serenades the Saturday morning crowd at Flight Crew coffee.

As Manhattan grows and evolves, the music scene does as well. These low-key, small sessions make live music a hidden gem of Manhattan culture.

If you are just visiting Manhattan for the weekend, it is worth it to go to a live show. With the combination of venues that focus on welcoming all and passionate artists, Manhattan's local music scene is more than just a hub for college students; it is for everyone.



TS Live Music

Exploring Manhattan's local music scene, with small stages and big talent.

story by MENA WALKER &
TAYLOR HAYES
photos by WITTNEY HAMMEKE
design by ESTHER KILISHEK &
KELSEY CHELLBERG





new year, NEW TRENDS

2025 styles to spice up your closet...

As the spring season approaches, now is the perfect time to do some spring cleaning and a wardrobe refresh. The best way to do this is to look for the upcoming fashion trends. With spring fashion shows already inspiring new fashion and styles, it is time to get ahead of them and redefine your own style. We put together a guide of our predictions of trends for this year, so you can see what aesthetics and styles we will continue to see this season.

The biggest trend that is making a comeback is maximalist over minimalist style. "Clean Girl" aesthetic had a big moment, but it is predicted that upcoming trends will lean more on the maximalist side, opening up limitless possibilities. More people are choosing to use a wider range of colors, textures, silhouettes and patterns in their outfits instead of a more minimalistic look. Among the other trends, futuristic style is a standout, with its silver accents and edgy silhouettes. Denim is having another moment, proving again, that it is a timeless piece. Edgy Boho is another one, mixing flowy designs and edgy accessories. Animal print will also not be going anywhere and will most likely become a more popular trend. Of course, bold and loud colors, patterns and textures are on the rise. Another significant trend that is everywhere is thrifting and sustainability. Right now many people are choosing to thrift clothing instead of purchasing new pieces, causing a retro revival.

One trend emerging is futuristic outfits. These outfits style metallic accessories and distressed pieces together to create a dystopian look. If you enjoy unique, standout looks then this trend is for you.

Edgy Boho is the perfect fit for spring with the style consisting of flowy tops and lots of lace and ruffles. The color palette mainly consists of soft neutrals, pastels and earth tones. The style is similar to a 2000s boho-chic aesthetic but it includes an edgy twist. The flow of the boho is contrasted with leather details and accessories, including the pairing of boots and jackets. This creates a visually interesting look that is perfect for spring.

Maximalism is back! This trend is all about expressing yourself unapologetically and fully. With it being the opposite of minimalism it encourages the mix of multiple patterns, textures and styles. It also includes bold and bright colors that create an eye-catching outfit. Lots of accessories are also a must have for this style, from sunglasses to purses, the more the better. A nod to 80s maximalism has also been seen recently by a few different celebrities, cementing that maximalism will be here to stay.

A fabric that is making its comeback this year is denim, a true classic. Whether it is pants, jacket, shirt or even denim on denim, it is sure to give you a stylistic edge. Make sure to stay on top of this trend and show off your denim.

Whether it is leopard, cow, snakeskin, zebra or even giraffe print, it is sure to add a bold statement to your look. Animal print is the perfect way to add a unique addition to any outfit. As it is very versatile it can be used on blouses, pants, shoes and even purses.

Trends change quickly between seasons but hopefully based on these predicted trends you can prepare for the upcoming ones and give yourself a well deserved closet refresh!

story by LEILA SCHENKE
photos by WITTNEY HAMMEKE
styled by MENA WALKER
model ELLIE STAHL, GEORGIE FRASIER
& GRACE THOMAS
design by KELSEY CHELLBERG
& ERIN REIL



COO

story by MENA WALKER
photos by WITTNEY HAMMEKE & ERIN REIL
models TYLER CARLGREN, WYATT HAUG,
ANISH SRIVASTAVA & TYLER WEBER
design by KAMRYN FLEISCHER & ZARA
THOMAS



LOOK OR BE KED

K-State Motorsports team among best in the world

At Kansas State University, the K-State Motorsports team is where engineering meets competition. This student-run organization designs, builds and races a formula-style car each year, putting their skills to the test against other collegiate teams. Competing in major events across North and South America, they have consistently earned top 10 finishes, proving their place among the best in the field.

"Every single year... we go and compete in two competitions," Tyler Weber, aerodynamics lead and president, said. "Two a year—at Michigan International Speedway and Formula Wheat at the Manhattan Spillway. This year, we placed in the top 10 in North and South America."

The process starts long before the car ever touches the track. It is a year-round effort, beginning in the summer with research and computer modeling.

By fall, the team is securing sponsorships and refining designs. When spring arrives, the real magic happens—manufacturing the car from the ground up, with 95% of the work done in-house using aluminum, steel, carbon fiber and titanium.

"Aluminum parts, steel parts, titanium exhaust system, carbon fiber, design on SolidWorks," Tyler Carlgren, drive chain lead, said, emphasizing the level of precision and skill required.



These students are not just learning in the classroom; they are applying engineering principles in real-time, developing expertise in SolidWorks, fabrication and problem-solving under pressure.

The team names their car after a different wildcat every year and decides the name at the very first team meeting, setting the tone for the months of relentless preparation that will follow. This year's car is Sphinx, representative of power and balance, and named for the Greek and Egyptian mythical creature.

The team's motto, "Cooked or be cooked," is also printed on the back of their car, further demonstrating the never-ending work they do together, and a phrase that is well deserved.

Every detail, from the aerodynamics to the chassis design, is a result of collaboration, mentorship and innovation.

"Year-to-year, to win competitions, we keep pushing the team to get better and better, trying to develop each other as engineers," Weber, whose signature is shown on the next page, said. "Giving hands-on experience on a cool project like this helps them become a lot stronger."

This team is much more than just a competition entry—It is a tight-knit community that works together 50 weeks a year, welcoming new members with an open-door policy.

"Just show up to meetings; someone will be in the shop every day," Carlgren said.

Knowledge transfer is key—veteran members document their work to ensure future students build on their progress, making each year's car better than the last.

"We are trying to document information to transfer onto the next generation," Weber said. "It's a year-long process. I start over the summer by doing research and modeling cars on the computer. First semester is handling everything with sponsors. Second semester is manufacturing."

Fueling their success are legacy sponsors and alumni, many of whom were once in the same workshop, fine-tuning their own cars.

"Sponsors include legacy sponsors who founded companies. Sponsors reach out through social media, and a lot of the time, they want to recruit directly from the team," Anish Srivastava, business lead, said.

These sponsors do not just support the team; they actively recruit from it, knowing that K-State Motorsports produces some of the best engineers in the industry.

With every turn of a wrench and every lap on the track, this team is pushing the limits of what is possible.

"(We were) founded in 1997, and the first car was completed in 1999, so only five years (one) hasn't been built," Srivastava said.

Each season presents a fresh challenge, another chance to refine their craft and an opportunity to prove once again that K-State Motorsports belongs at the forefront of student-driven innovation. Sphinx may be their latest build, but for this team, the race to improve is never over.



Tyler Leiker

*Tyler
Cordman*

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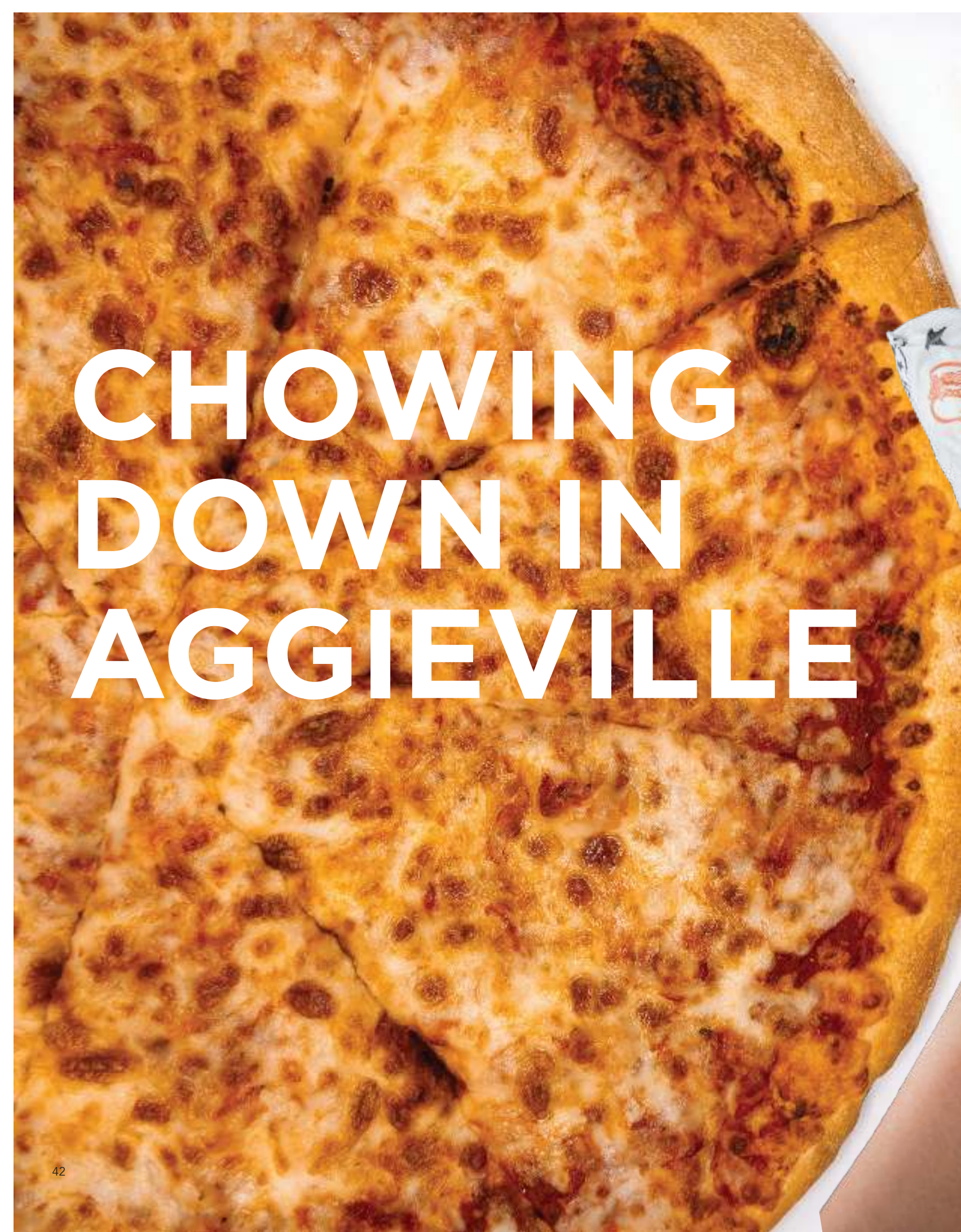
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CHOWING DOWN IN AGGIEVILLE

Best After Bar Food Spots

After a night of bar hopping in Aggieville, many find themselves with a case of the munchies. Whether it is the excitement of the nightlife or the inevitable effects of the night's festivities, there is no shortage of cravings.

Luckily, the late-night scene in Manhattan offers a variety of options to satisfy those post-bar hunger pangs.

For many, the go-to spots after a night out are D.P. Dough, the Varsity Truck and Abelardo's. These places have earned a loyal following among Aggieville regulars thanks to their delicious food and late hours. Whether you are in the mood for a warm doughnut, a quick taco or a filling burrito, these spots have you covered.

If you are looking for something a little more traditional and budget-friendly, a quick trip to McDonald's or Jimmy Johns can help ease the aftermath of a long night out. Both offer affordable prices and fast-food options are a perfect way to soak up the drinks while making your way home.

Although it is located on the opposite side of campus as Aggieville, Pizza Shuttle is also a popular choice for a weekend midnight meal. Pizza Shuttle also offers deliveries, which is a smart choice if you do not have a sober ride to get there.

However, if you are feeling adventurous, be sure to designate a sober driver or take a ride-share to make your way to these spots safely.

No matter what you are craving after hitting the bars, Manhattan's late-night food scene has got you covered even the most intense midnight munchies.



story by LOGAN LISNER
photos by WITTNEY HAMMEKE,
HALEY SMITH & ZARA THOMAS
design by ZARA THOMAS



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YOU BELONG.

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We are the **HUMANS** of *Manhattan*

Manhattan, Kansas is full of people with stories that make this place feel alive in a way you would not expect. It is not just a college town; it is a mix of people balancing school, side hustles and passion projects. Whether it is turning everyday moments into meaningful work or running a flea market stall, there is a little something for everyone here.

In the following pages, we are introducing five students who do things their own way. From the artist capturing the spirit of college life to the small-town girl who turned basketball dreams into a reality at K-State, a lot is happening. You will also meet the agriculture student bridging tradition and innovation and the student who took home the title of K-State's version of The Bachelor.

These are just a few of the people making Manhattan more than just a stop on the map.

story by KAMRYN FLEISCHER
design by MADISON COULTER



GIVING BACK TO THE *Earth*

Picture this: a never-ending expanse of rolling green fields from east to west, north to south; no cracked ground and malnourished soil; All crops are flourishing and reaching maximum production. This is what 20-year-old Taylor Soehner, an Agronomy and Environmental Sciences dual major, envisions when she dreams about the future of agriculture.

Growing up on a farm near Colby, Kansas, she has always had a strong connection with the outdoors and farming. Although, it was not until she took a course in soil microbiology that she really began to learn what her true interest was: dirt.

"Honestly, I never knew that dirt could be so interesting," Soehner said. "People ask me why I study agronomy and why I study soil and dirt, but it is so much more than just dirt."

She has a significant interest in regenerative farming, so this past summer she pursued an internship with Elevate Ag—a company selling biologicals.

Biologicals are any agricultural product that is created from natural materials or living organisms that help promote the health of crops. They specialize in helping farmers reduce their use of synthetic

materials and improve microbial populations within the soil, which helps with nutrient cycling.

Of course, many farmers are skeptical of this new alternative. Some have even used the term "snake oil" to describe it, implying it is a scam. Hopefully, people will come around to the new idea because Kansas soil is in desperate need of a solution.

With an ever-growing population, farmers need to produce more than ever, but the soil quality is putting a damper on that. Pressure is steadily increasing on farmers to improve production while the resources to do so are depleting.

"We need to find a better way because, yes, we can produce food, but is the food nutritious? Is it sustainable? Are our practices sustainable?" Soehner said. "Our soil is being completely depleted. What are we going to do to give back to the Earth and save it?"

Soehner is not alone in her studies, as many other people are working towards the same goal. The Earth has done so much for us and it is time we pay our respects. Whether it is through regenerative agriculture or simply by buying a reusable water bottle, we can all do our part to keep Kansas fields vibrantly green.



story by KATE ELLWOOD
photos by WITTNEY HAMMEKE
& ESTHER KILISHEK
model TAYLOR SOEHNER
design by MADISON COULTER

Small Town HOOPER

The K-State Women's Basketball team has had an amazing season. From being ranked third in the Big 12 to having a record of 28-7 currently, these ladies run the court.

Players like Ayoka Lee, Temira Poindexter and Serena Sundell have made a name for themselves; but let's talk about someone you might not know as well: Taryn Sides.

Growing up in the small town of Phillipsburg, Kansas, Sides never thought she would become a Division I athlete. One day, everything changed.

Sides grew up with two older brothers. Wanting to be like them, she pursued every sport they played. She fell in love with both basketball and softball but chose to focus on basketball because she felt more confident with it.

In the seventh grade, Sides participated in a K-State Women's Basketball camp; her basketball coach at the time was the son of an assistant coach for the team and suggested she attend.

The assistant coach's wife noticed Sides' abilities and asked her to join a travel team called Ohlde Elite. While on this travel team, Sides felt herself developing into a college-level athlete. She felt she was finally getting the experience and coaching she needed to become the Division I athlete she is today.

While on this team and her high school team, Sides was rated No. 64 in the nation by Blue Star Basketball, was a four-time Kansas Basketball Coaches Association All-State recipient, earned first-team honors her sophomore through senior years and achieved many other accomplishments throughout her career.

After all she had accomplished in her high school career, she was offered an athletic scholarship to play at Kansas State University her dream school. During her freshman season, she played in all 34 games, accumulated 115 points, set a school record of 2.79 for the assist-to-turnover ratio and was named part of the Big 12 Academic All-Rookie Team.

Now as a 19-year-old sophomore, Sides has never felt more confident. She is crushing expectations on and off the court and proving that even small-town athletes can make a big impact.

story by EMMA BAKER
photos by ERIN REIL
& PAYTON LEE
model TARYN SIDES
design by MADISON COULTER



Curating a DUST COLLECTION

Manhattan, Kansas is known for its lively community activities and events for college students and locals.

One true local favorite is The Little Apple Vintage Flea, open once a month with fun themes and unique finds, crowds are drawn in time and time again. The aisles come alive with color, creativity and a perfectly curated blend of styles.

Amongst the stalls, there is one booth that stands out with displays of retro and one-of-a-kind K-State gear for the next game day: Vintage Cats.

One of the owners behind it all is Trevor DeLong, a junior at K-State studying construction science. DeLong is a creative and entrepreneurial mind who has turned a small flea market booth into a thriving fashion business.

Vintage Cats quickly became a favorite amongst students for its large collection of classic K-State purple gear. When asked what the most fulfilling part of owning a thrift brand was, Trevor stated that it was when he or his business partner Jayce Khols saw their products being worn on campus, at the Bill Snyder Stadium and around Aggieville.

Vintage Cats has been open on Depop for over a year and a half and has expanded to in-person shopping. Most of their profit comes from sales at The Little Apple Vintage Flea Market and other markets in Kansas and Missouri.

Trevor's idea for growing the business is to expand to more events in Kansas City and other states. The brand focuses on K-State gear that is fashionable and unique. They also sell other items like workwear such as vintage Carhartt, Levis and Dickies, which has become very popular.

The business style is strongly influenced by Trevor's own style which he explains as "streetwear with a lot of Y2K influences baggy jeans, hoodies, beanies." Since Vintage Cats is so heavily based on the owner's style it has created an ever-cycling closet for him.

"Yeah, it's kind of fun to wear them a couple of times and then possibly get rid of them later down the road," Dulong said.

To be able to have a successful resale business it is important to always have a constant stock cycling through. How do they get these pieces that are so beloved?

"We do a lot of our outsourcing at our hometown through garage sales, estate sales and connecting with people who are trying to get rid of clothes," Dulong said.

He mentioned that often friends and family help in this process and find new pieces for him. Vintage Cat's mission is to connect with their customers, the students in Manhattan and create a welcoming environment.

"We liked to keep our face out of the posts so it focuses on the K-State community."

One example of how Trevor does this in his company is by creating connections with his customers and getting to know them and their styles. This allows him to help his customers search for the perfect item and create a memorable experience.

Part of what makes The Little Apple Vintage Flea Market so popular is its sense of community. The event provides a space for friends to explore, shop and connect with other creative-minded individuals. This is not possible without the small company booths that put in hours of work for every event.

What many attendees may not realize is that the vendors themselves form a close-knit community. After March's event, for example, a group of vendors hiked the Konza Prairie and took pictures.

"We usually go out and get food together and it's a great time we have grown pretty close," Dulong said.

Vendors also collaborate on sourcing products and marketing strategies, further enriching the experience for everyone involved.

The connections between vendors and customers keep people coming back to The Little Apple Vintage Flea Market month after month. Creative entrepreneurs, like Trevor DeLong, are leaving a lasting impact on Manhattan, fostering a thriving vintage fashion scene and strengthening the city's vibrant arts community.

story by LILAH WILLIAMS

photos by ESTHER KILISHEK

design by MADISON COULTER



Everything was **CREATED** by Words

Art can be defined by many terms, though, it cannot be confined to one. NanaBa Ascolee, also known as Gabriel Dwomoh, has created his own definition of art in which he is able to create change within the world around him.

In his work, he highlights the importance of human stories, ranging from families and friends to injustices and heartaches. He tells stories with his artwork, made from materials with their own past.

Being a graduate student at Kansas State University, Dwomoh has become an astounding artist with both a complicated and intense style. While his art is seen and admired, the question still stands: "Who is Gabriel Dwomoh?"

Dwomoh grew up in Ghana, surrounded by his family. He described his childhood life to be a bright, encouraging environment filled with creativity.

"I grew up in a family where music was very present...", Dwomoh said.

His uncle positively impacted his musical interests by playing instruments like guitar, drums and even a trumpet around their home. Dwomoh began dancing as a young child and has no plans of stopping.

"I just feel that it was a cool way to live a life," Dwomoh said. Inspired by his family's love for music and dance, he quickly found that he was drawn to movement. One of the beauties of life is the way that the world moves. Dwomoh began his artistic journey by creating drawings; he carefully watched the world around him interpreting each movement, learning how to capture and preserve them in a still frame. By watching the people around him, he is able to read body language and convert it into intense images of emotion.

"Life isn't about only you, it's about everyone around you," he said.

Other parts of his work are inspired by his dreams. Dwomoh describes how specific parts of his work originally appear to him through his dreams, staying with him in his mind until he is

able to bring them into reality. Dwomoh's art is a powerful expression of himself and others, as well as an incredible representation of moving art.

Blood on the Dance Floor and Here Comes Trouble, two of Dwomoh's pieces, were recently featured at the Manhattan Arts Center. Created by using a combination of recycled clothing, yarn, acrylic and oil paints, he established pieces of artwork, in which stories of real people can be heard. Dwomoh translates stories such as children playing in the streets, families in heartache, protests, the persecution of minorities and much more. Most figures within his work have written words within their heads; Dwomoh feels that the importance of the story lies within words.

"Everything was created by words. For something to happen, a word must be spoken or written to create something," he said.

Dwomoh uses his platform, not for outreach, but to express the things he sees and feels. By using recycled materials, he feels that he can give them new life while expressing the art within them. He describes how the movement of growth, swaying in and out of clothing sizes, is an art in itself.

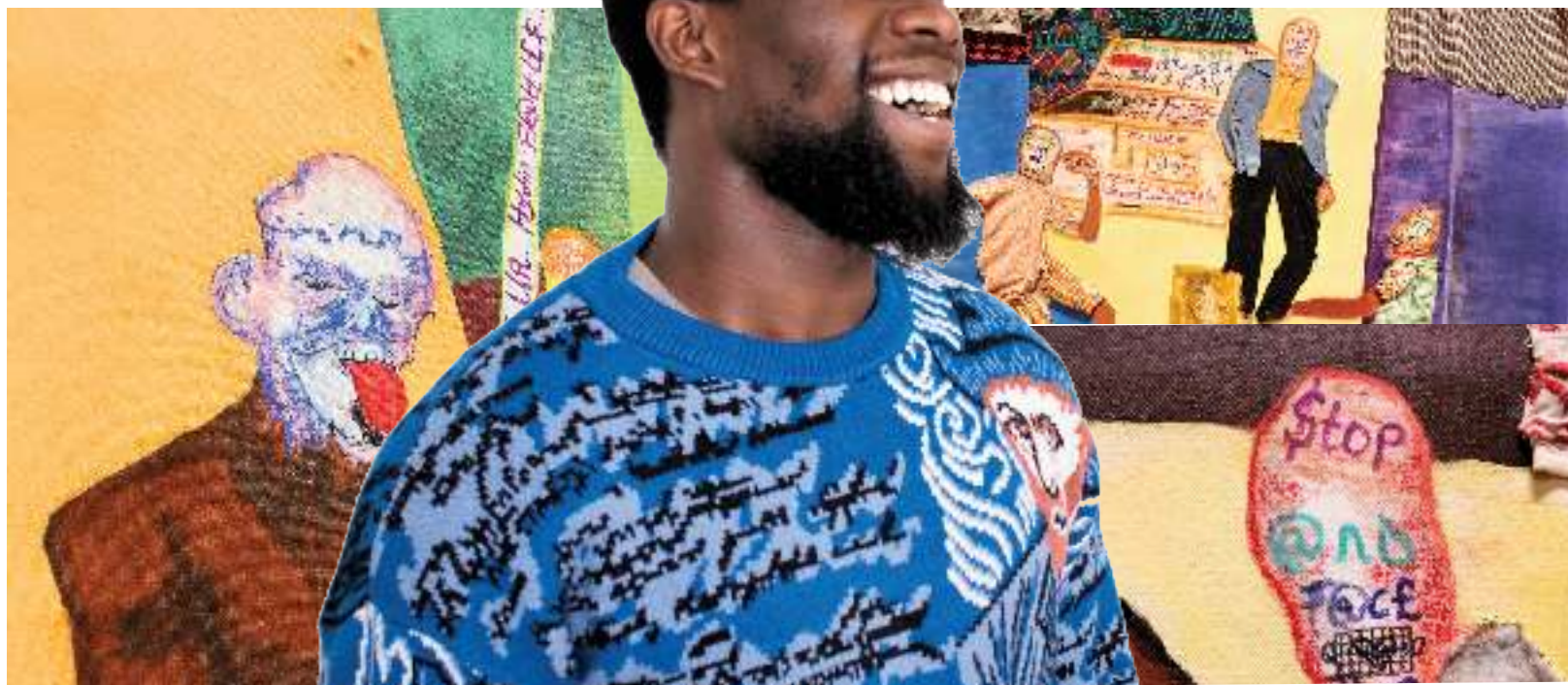
Dwomoh is inspiring. His work authentically demonstrates his perspective of the world and that is his only goal. He pushes himself through art and creativity to tell those around him about his life and the lives of others.

"I'm not seeking to necessarily make change, but if people see it and feel the need to change, that is what it's for," he said.

Dwomoh's mindset is something to be admired. He sees life for what it is and finds ways to appreciate everything.

"If you know what you want, put your mind to it and you can do it," he said. "Believe in what you want, see your dreams as reality, and make a change in your own life."

story by ERIN REIL
photos by ERIN REIL
model GABRIEL DWOMOH
design by MADISON COULTER



FRATCHELOR

meet your

The fourth annual Fratchelor competition hosted by K-State Chicks Instagram, becomes a fun tradition at Kansas State University. In a bracket-style showdown, fraternity members compete, with students voting based on weekly prompts. What starts as a lighthearted, social media-driven event quickly turns into a memorable experience for the contestants. For this year's winner, AJ Dimino, the journey was surreal from start to finish. What began as a simple nomination turned into an exciting, whirlwind experience he never saw coming.

"First and foremost, it's an honor, but I can't lie—it's also very strange and doesn't feel real," Dimino said. "It's been really fun to meet new people during the process. To be honest, I have a bit of imposter syndrome when I think about it too much. It was definitely not on my radar before I was nominated."

Dimino's entry into the competition came as a surprise when his friends nominated him.

"I never thought

I'd participate, but my friends nominated me," he said. "I promised if I was selected, I would enter. I didn't know everyone nominated was selected to enter, so I kept my word and did it. Now here I am."

As the competition progressed, Dimino quickly realized it was more than just a contest—it was a platform to connect with people from all over campus.

"Every week brought something new, something unexpected. The competition was a constant cycle of surprises, from the prompts to the recognition and the results each week. It was an experience unlike anything I've had before."

Dimino also experienced recognition on campus.

"A lot of people I know have said things to me when they see me around town or on campus. Their reactions are always super fun," he said.

When asked for advice, Dimino emphasized the importance of staying true to yourself.

"Be you! As I mentioned in one of my last answers in the competition, being yourself truly is enough and the right people will respond to it well."

Looking back on the experience, Dimino realized the journey was about more than just winning the title—it was about the connections he made and the incredible support he received.

"This has been such an awesome experience, and it's all because of you guys."

Stay safe, be kind, and go 'Cats!"

Being yourself
truly is ENOUGH

story by MENA WALKER
photo by ZARA THOMAS
styled by MENA WALKER
model AJ DIMINO
design by MADISON COULTER

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Fix for the Future

Here's what is shaping the future of fitness and how to stay ahead of the curve

Fitness is no longer just about hitting the gym or following the same old workout routine.

People are redefining what it means to stay active, prioritizing efficiency, personalization and long-term health over quick fixes. With evolving technology and a growing emphasis on holistic wellness, the way we move is undergoing a major transformation.

People are seeking workouts that fit their lifestyles, focusing on movements that not only strengthen the body but also support mental health and longevity.

The shift is clear—fitness is becoming smarter, more accessible and tailored to individual needs. Whether it is leveraging technology, prioritizing recovery or rethinking traditional workout methods, the industry is evolving to meet the demands of a new generation.

Recovery is the New Workout

Forget the “no pain, no gain” mindset. Athletes now know that recovery is just as important as training. Stretching, mobility exercises, cold plunges and infrared saunas are becoming staples at gyms and studios. Why? Because taking care of the body ensures longevity and better performance.

The Power of Group Workouts

Working out is more fun—and effective—with others. Group fitness classes, from Spin to High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), continue to gain popularity as people seek motivation, accountability and community. Boutique studios and gym chains alike are expanding class offerings to meet this ground demand.

Strength Training for All

Strength training is not just for bodybuilders anymore—it is a must for anyone looking for a way to improve overall health. More people, especially women, are trading endless cardio for weightlifting, seeing benefits in metabolism, bone health and body composition. Whether in the gym or through guided virtual programs, resistance training is now a key pillar of fitness.

Wearable Tech and Smart Fitness

Technology is revolutionizing how we stay fit. Smartwatches, fitness trackers and AI-driven apps that provide real-time data are helping people optimize workouts and monitor progress. Virtual workouts from platforms like Peloton and Apple Fitness+ allow users to train anywhere, making fitness more accessible than ever.

Fueling with Smarter Nutrition

Fitness is not just about exercise—what you eat plays a key role. The trend is shifting towards high-protein meals, plant-based diets and hydration-focused strategies. Meal prep services, smoothie bars and on-the-go nutrition options are making it easier than ever to fuel your workout properly.

The Rise of Low Impact Workout

Pilates, Barre and functional movement exercises are trending for a reason. These workouts focus on core strength, flexibility and control, providing a low-impact yet highly effective alternative to high-intensity routines. Whether in a reformer class or on a yoga mat at home, people are turning to these workouts for sustainable, long-term fitness.

Why do all these trends matter? Fitness is no longer just about looking good—it is about feeling strong, staying healthy and active along with improving your quality of life. Whether you're lifting weights, stretching through a Pilates class or tracking progress with the latest tech, today's fitness trends are designed to help you move better and be the best version of yourself. Find what moves you, embrace the change and take your fitness to the next level.

story by MENA WALKER
photos by ESTHER KILISHEK
styled by MENA WALKER
model MOLLY BROWN
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Mental Health Issues

We had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Stephanie Jacobs, Associate Director of Lafene Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), to learn more about what K-State is doing to help with mental health issues. She gave us an insight into how students may struggle with mental health issues, as well as what K-State offers for students' mental health needs.

Understanding Mental Illness in College Students

Mental health issues are often misunderstood or stigmatized, with many people associating them exclusively with severe, chronic conditions like schizophrenia. However, mental health concerns encompass a wide range of issues, including anxiety and depression, which are increasingly common among college students. It is crucial to recognize that mental health struggles can affect anyone, and understanding their manifestations can help in addressing them effectively.

College students face a variety of mental health challenges, with anxiety and depression being the most prevalent. Anxiety has become more prominent in recent years, often exacerbated by academic pressures, social expectations and the transition to adulthood. At Kansas State University, about 5% of the student population seeks counseling, and many more students may be dealing with mental health issues but have not yet reached out for support.

The demands on students' time and energy have grown significantly, contributing to rising levels of stress and anxiety. Social media, for instance, can be both a supportive tool and a source of negative self-image and stress. Balancing the pressures of social media, work, school, family and friends can be overwhelming, making it essential to recognize and address mental health concerns.

Recognizing The Signs

It is essential to be aware of the signs that indicate mental health issues. Notice when symptoms are interfering with your daily life, such as preventing you from attending classes, causing you to isolate yourself from friends or leading to risky behaviors like increased substance use or unsafe sexual practices. It might be time to seek help. Additionally, if basic tasks like showering, eating and sleeping are affected, it is important to recognize that these struggles go beyond typical stress.

When observing friends, similar signs can indicate that something might be wrong. If a friend suddenly stops texting back, misses classes, drinks alcohol more than usual or avoids contact with family, it could be a sign of mental health struggles. While isolation is one of the worst things a person can do, it is also a common response to mental health issues. Understanding these signs can help you support your friends and encourage them to seek help.

Taking Action

If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, it is crucial to reach out for help. Mental health resources are available on most college campuses, and seeking support can make a significant difference in managing and overcoming these challenges. Kansas State University is a Health Promoting University, offering various resources such as Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the Family Center and the Morrison Family Center for Student Well-Being.

The Morrison Family Center provides well-being advising and support, helping students find strategies to improve their mental health. If initial steps like improving sleep, eating regular meals, moving your body and connecting with friends and family do not alleviate the symptoms, professional counseling services are available through CAPS and the Family Center.

K-State's approach to mental health resources follows a "no wrong door" policy. Whether you visit Lafene Health Center to see a physician, CAPS for counseling or another campus resource, the goal is to find the support you need. If the initial point of contact is not the right fit, they will refer you to the appropriate resource. This ensures that students can always find help, no matter where they start.

It is important to recognize that seeking professional help is a sign of strength, not weakness. "Understanding your needs and advocating for yourself can make a significant difference in your mental health journey," said Dr. Jacobs. Counseling does not have to be a lifelong commitment; sometimes, a few sessions can lead to substantial improvement. Similarly, discussing medication with a medical provider does not mean you have to take it forever, it is all about exploring your options.



Introducing *Therapy*

Counseling can make a significant difference, but sometimes people are uncertain about what therapy entails. K-State has introduced a new group called Therapy 101, designed to demystify the process and set clear expectations. Therapy 101 is a rolling group where students can join at any session. The group covers:

1. **What is therapy?** - Dispels myths and sets expectations.
2. **Setting goals** - Encourages intentionality in therapy.
3. **Building a relationship with the therapist** - Explains the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship.
4. **Navigating the therapeutic process** - Helps understand the ups and downs of therapy.

Therapy 101 sessions are held on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to noon, and students can join at any time during the semester. The group is led by a licensed counselor, a grad student and an undergraduate peer mentor, providing a comprehensive support system for students curious about therapy.

Words of Encouragement

We live in a challenging time with numerous demands and expectations. It is natural to feel overwhelmed, but accessing the available resources can help you navigate these challenges successfully.

K-State is committed to supporting its students, providing a variety of resources to ensure their well-being and success.

If you are feeling completely overwhelmed, take a moment to stop, breathe and identify your needs. Whether it is food, a hug, support, tutoring or financial assistance, recognizing and addressing your needs is crucial. Remember, unmet needs can lead to greater struggles, so do not hesitate to seek help.

Mental health struggles among college students are a growing concern, and recognizing the signs and seeking help is crucial. "By understanding and addressing these issues, students can achieve their potential and take better care of themselves, ultimately leading to a healthier and more fulfilling college experience. K-State's commitment to its students' well-being is evident through its extensive resources and supportive environment," said Dr. Jacobs. Do not hesitate to reach out and make use of the available resources to live your best life.

story by EMMA BAKER
photos by ERIN REIL
model HALEY DAVIS
design by RACHEL SILHAN

*the student
becomes the*

M A S T E R



story by LOGAN LINSER
photos by ERIN REIL
model ZOE SCHUMACHER
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the transition from

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As college prepares us with the proper education to enter a field requiring such expertise and mastery that we have forged at our place of study, the reality of stepping into the workforce may not always align with the idealized version we once imagined.

The culture of college compared to the workplace varies greatly, depending on your company's structure and goals. While college offers a clear set of directions, assignments and objectives, a full-time job may not offer these as clearly as expected.

"In college, everything is a deadline, with a grade and a clear path. But in the real world, it's just about figuring out the next steps without direction," said Emily Grace, an alumna now working as a graphic designer.

Another major shift lies in the social experience. In college, you are typically surrounded by peers of a similar age, often sharing common goals and interests. The workplace, however, introduces a more diverse environment, with colleagues often spanning various age groups, backgrounds, and life experiences. This can make socializing feel more limited or formal, especially in high-pressure settings.

Making friends as an adult can be even more challenging than during college, where social opportunities are built into daily life through classes, dorm living and extracurricular activities that present themselves. In the workplace, it requires effort and intentionality. Start by engaging with colleagues during lunch breaks, participating in their lives. Joining professional organizations, attending networking events or pursuing hobbies outside of work can help expand your social circle.

"Campus is a place built for socialization with everyone surrounding you being like-minded and sharing similar interests, but the office will be different," Grace said. "There also will be a contrast between work and life, which may pose a challenge."

Beyond the logistical differences, the psychological adjustment from college to career is equally significant. Entering an unfamiliar work environment can trigger feelings of discomfort and self-doubt. Psychological studies have shown that stepping into a new, challenging space often evokes anxiety, but these feelings typically diminish as you build confidence and establish routines.



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