

extraordinary WOMEN

presented by

THOMAS J HENRY

Extraordinary Women Award Winners



HOLLY MCDANIEL

Executive director of Austin Diaper Bank

ASHLEY CAMERON

Owner/founder of Love and Cookies bakery

Written by Marty Farmer

Holly McDaniel and Ashley Cameron are both married with three children and proud residents of the Austin area. The other commonality they share is a passion for helping others, which has garnered them recognition as this month's Extraordinary Women award winners, presented by the Austin Statesman and Thomas J. Henry.

HOLLY MCDANIEL

The Austin Diaper Bank is celebrating its 10-year anniversary this year. The non-profit organization gave 1.9 million diapers to needy families in 2022. It also provides approximately 400,000 period supplies per month and serves 30,000 babies per year.

While Holly McDaniel, executive director, is proud of these statistics, the impact made by the Austin Diaper Bank is profoundly personal.

"We're here to uplift moms and help with raising healthy children, which is a very rewarding feeling for me and our staff," she said. "I can't meet a mother in need and turn her away; it's impossible. Sometimes, it's really difficult hearing the weight of these [family] stories, but we are here to help them take care of addressing some basic needs."

"Our mission is pretty simple – providing diapers, wipes, and period supplies to families that can't afford them. It's important to note that mothers can't get diapers through a federal or state program. They can't get diapers through food stamps or WIC, so diaper food banks provide invaluable help for a basic needs item."

McDaniel has worked at the Austin Diaper Bank for five years. Her support, compassion, and love for others merit recognition as a winner in our Extraordinary Women series.

Before joining the Austin Diaper Bank, McDaniel worked for a variety of non-profits, including stints



Holly McDaniel is executive director of the Austin Diaper Bank.

Submitted

as director of individual giving and philanthropy at radio station KMFA 89.5 in Austin, director of annual fundraising at Polytechnic School in Pasadena, California, and special events manager for the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) in Los Angeles.

McDaniel, an Occidental College graduate, enjoys spending her spare time with her husband and three children. She is also a voracious reader.

"I love the human condition, with all its beauty and challenges," she said. "I love stories; that's why I enjoy reading so much. I really enjoy learning about other people's lives and sharing my own. As a commu-

nity member, wife, and mother, I try to help others as best I can. Nobody can fix the world in a day, but we can all make efforts to make it a little better."

For more information about the Austin Diaper Bank, visit www.austindiapers.org.

ASHLEY CAMERON

The tagline for the Lakeway-based bakery Love and Cookies is "Life is what you bake it."

For founder/owner Ashley Cameron, an honoree in our Extraordinary Women series, the slogan also serves

as a synopsis of the emotional roller coaster ride her life seemed like in the past three years.

Cameron's son Charlie was diagnosed with Kawasaki disease, an acquired heart condition that attacks the coronary arteries of the heart, in 2019. After he was released from the hospital, Charlie asked his mom if they could bake cookies together. Fast-forward three years later, and those fun, therapeutic baking sessions have morphed into Love and Cookies, a popular bakery located at 200 Lakeway Dr., Suite 3, in Lakeway Village Square.

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NOMINATE AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN THAT INSPIRES YOU AT
statesman.com/ExtraordinaryWomen

All nominees will be showcased in our online gallery and our monthly spotlights will be invited to our Celebration Luncheon in January to be recognized for their inspiring leadership and community contributions. Each month we will feature more extraordinary women in different professional categories in our community.

Extraordinary Women Award Winners

Holly McDaniel | Ashley Cameron

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“Obviously, no parent wants to see their child hurt or sick, but we are a family of faith, and the good thing is my son got the treatment he needed and he’s better,” Cameron said. “I cherished the time baking with Charlie. My husband said, ‘You should consider selling these cookies.’ We started relatively small with some social media promotion via Facebook groups [and] having small cookie bakes for friends, family, and others, and the response was very positive.”

Cameron was a registered nurse before becoming a cookie entrepreneur.

“When my business took off, my family and I felt compelled to reach out to the Kawasaki Foundation and spread the word,” she said. “It’s a disease that’s treatable with early detection, so if we can help even one other family, it’s an honor.”

In addition to thriving as a storefront business, Love and Cookies will offer its frozen cookie dough in 250 H-E-B stores in February. Cameron raised funds and awareness for the Kawasaki Kids Foundation (www.kawasakikidsfoundation.org) via an annual fundraising golf tournament. Love and Cookies also provides gift cards in backpacks given to children being treated for Kawasaki disease.

Cameron, a Texas Christian University graduate, enjoys spending



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Love and Cookies founder/owner Ashley Cameron with her son, Charlie

her spare time with her husband and three children.

“We love living on the lake,” Cameron said about Lakeway. “Whether it’s water skiing, hiking, or mountain biking, we are a very outdoorsy

family.”

Of course, it’s Cameron’s love for her children that inspired her involvement with the Kawasaki Kids Foundation.

“My family is a proud ambassa-

dor for raising awareness about the Kawasaki Kids Foundation,” she said. “It’s truly an honor that we can do that by making people smile with delicious cookies.” For more information about Love and Cookies, visit www.cookiesilove.com.