

A PUBLICATION OF VISIT THE WOODLANDS

# #SoWOODLANDS

THIS IS THE LIFE



David Phelps  
The Dreamer  
1995  
Bronze



FALL 2023  
VOL. 2, ISSUE 3



## Neighbors and Friends...

This issue's cover features "The Dreamer" by David Phelps, an iconic sculpture that has reclined at the intersection of Woodlands Parkway and West Panther Creek Drive since 1987. The bronze giant is a reminder of the peace and tranquility we can all find in The Woodlands. It's also a great reminder of how one person's dreams can create an infinite number of possibilities.

Our community began with an innovative vision from George P. Mitchell and The Woodlands Development Company – A dream that was realized, pursued, and brought to life. This laid the foundation for others to bring their dreams to life in The Woodlands, from starting a business to enjoying a much-needed vacation. In this issue of #SoWoodlands, you'll meet several individuals who have enhanced our community by pursuing their dreams. We hope that it will inspire you to do the same.



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Chairman of Visit the Woodlands

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Articles in this issue have been condensed.  
Find the full articles and more online at [visitthewoodlands.com/sowoodlands](http://visitthewoodlands.com/sowoodlands)

## Why The Woodlands?



*"Kendra Scott is grateful to have been a part of The Woodlands community for 9 years. When we decided to expand our Sips & Sweets Café concept, we knew our customers in The Woodlands would embrace it, and the concept would only add to the liveliness of Market Street. We're excited to offer an indulgent, in-store brand experience and feature exclusive offerings from local Texan female founded bakeries like Luliet Bakery and more."*

**Tom Nolan**  
CEO, Kendra Scott



Photo Courtesy  
Kendra Scott



Photo Courtesy  
Artisanat

*"The decision to open Artisanat in The Woodlands sprung from a heartfelt desire to bring a touch of craftsmanship, inspired design and bespoke furniture to this unique community. The Woodlands, with its amazing landscapes and vibrant spirit, captured our hearts."*

**Melissa Arteaga**  
Owner, Artisanat Home Decor

*"The Woodlands captures the essence of a dream community, reminiscent of my hometown of Melbourne – a city celebrated as one of the world's most livable. The harmonious blend of natural beauty, educational excellence, and a thriving sense of togetherness makes The Woodlands an exceptional place to call home."*

**Nick Stone**  
CEO and Founder, Bluestone Lane



Photo Courtesy  
Bluestone Lane



# Lovebeans Coffeehouse

## Giving Back, One Cup at a Time

For Lovebeans Coffeehouse, giving back to the community has always been the goal. Beth Ferester, CEO of Corcoran Ferester Realty, opened the doors to Lovebeans Coffeehouse in 2019. She wasn't planning on opening a coffeehouse, but when a space next to her office in Creekside became available, she saw the opportunity to create a place where people could gather and give back.

"I wanted [Lovebeans] to be something we could do for the community, because there weren't any coffeehouses here at that time," said Ferester. "We've been given so much. Giving back is the right thing to do."

Lovebeans Coffeehouse goes beyond coffee. It's a "Giving Back Coffeehouse," meaning that each month, they choose a charity to support. Profits from Lovebeans merchandise (t-shirts, hats, mugs, even a cookbook that Beth wrote) are donated to the charity of the month. They have supported 25 charities so far, including Montgomery County Women's Center, Compassion United, and Interfaith of The Woodlands.

They also host outdoor markets every third Saturday to raise funds for the selected charity of the month. During the market, 10% of all proceeds from Lovebeans' regular sales are donated to the charity, along with all the fees local vendors pay to participate in the market. Vendors often become regulars, returning each month to sell jewelry, candles, crochet stuffed animals, plants, and more.



Pictured left to right: Grace Petty and Beth Ferester



Photos Courtesy Lovebeans Coffeehouse



“We’ve been given so much.  
Giving back is the right thing to do.”

Even when it's not a market day, Lovebeans Coffeehouse sees its fair share of regulars who stop by for "the usual," or to meet their friends for book clubs and mom's groups. Top-notch baristas whip up seasonal drinks (with syrups made from scratch), and talented bakers start their day at 5:30 a.m., preparing homemade pastries, muffins, and bread for sandwiches.

Several of the menu items found at Lovebeans are family recipes, like the biscuits, chicken salad, and the oatmeal chocolate chip cookie. The cookie recipe – which is vegan and gluten free – is a special recipe from Ferester's son, Ryan. In the 2000s, Ryan also created a vegan chocolate spread called "Lovebean Fudge Spread," which became inspiration for the name of his mom's coffeehouse: Lovebeans.

Family ties extend beyond Lovebeans' name and recipes. Ferester's granddaughter, Grace Petty, manages marketing for Lovebeans and works alongside her grandmother as a realtor. Beth, who's been selling homes for 40+ years and has lived in The Woodlands since 1998, has always had strong ties to the local community.

This year, she worked with Grace and her team to create a float for the Fourth of July parade that represented Lovebeans Coffeehouse and Ferester's real estate company. Afterward, they donated the float – a miniature playhouse – to a family who fosters special needs children.

"We have a community [at Lovebeans] and a community [at Corcoran Ferester]," said Petty, "It really joins together to create one big family."



Lovebeans Coffeehouse  
8522 Creekside Forest Dr Suite D-100



# Reel Luxury Cinemas & The Audrey

## Lights, Camera, Action!

Omar Khan and his team have a history of raising the bar. They first started elevating dine-in movie theaters in 2005 with Star Cinema Grill, a Houston-based concept known for its top-notch hospitality and delicious menu items. When they acquired State Fare Kitchen & Bar in 2018, it brought them to their next venture: Culinary. The locally owned and operated hospitality group now has several restaurants under their umbrella, including two first-to-market concepts in The Woodlands.

Reel Luxury Cinemas and The Audrey are some of the newest additions at Market Street, opened in July 2023. The boutique movie theater and high-end restaurant are under the same roof (in the previous Cinemark location above Uni Sushi), but they’re two distinct brands, offering different menus and different atmospheres.

“Market Street was very selective in who they chose to go into the former cinema space,” said Jason Ostrow, Vice President of Development for Culinary Khancepts. “We told them we would create a new brand that wasn’t a Star Cinema Grill. In the beginning, I don’t think either of us knew that we were going to create The Audrey as well.”



As the team went from planning and permitting to design and construction, they realized this space at Market Street could also house the upscale, refined restaurant they had dreamed of opening in The Woodlands. This was their opportunity to try something new – To bring together the two sides of their business and open a movie theater and a restaurant as two separate brands under one roof.

For The Audrey, Culinary Khancepts removed the old concession stands that covered the windows overlooking Central Park, installed two grand chandeliers, and added a bar with gold accents and elevated cocktails. Behind the mirrored door next to the bar, they built a full kitchen to service The Audrey and Reel Luxury Cinemas’ two different menus.

The five auditoriums in the boutique movie theater were revamped with cushy heated seats, state-of-the-art laser projection technology, and Dolby sound systems. Even the hallways were intentionally renovated, featuring a carpet with a butterfly pattern to symbolize a new beginning and growth.

“This was something special for (The Woodlands), and I don’t think it could have turned out any better than it’s turned out.”

According to Ostrow, the team had two hopes for The Audrey and Reel Luxury Cinemas before they opened: That people would enjoy the two new brands, and that this project could act as a prototype for future expansion, especially in areas that didn’t have the square footage for a Star Cinema Grill.

“I think a lot of our hopes have been answered,” said Ostrow. “The feedback has been spectacular from our guests, and developers are already looking at the space. This was something special for [The Woodlands], and I don’t think it could have turned out any better than it’s turned out.”

Photos Courtesy Andrew Hemingway





# Q&A



Helping children who were going through difficult times – those moments meant the world to me.



The Woodlands Mall  
1201 Lake Woodlands Dr.

## Ted Harris

General Manager, The Woodlands Mall

Whether he's welcoming new tenants, overseeing marketing, or checking on maintenance, Ted Harris is always raising the bar for The Woodlands Mall. The born-and-raised Texan has been in the mall management industry for over 20 years, and his passion and dedication as General Manager have positively impacted the Mall and The Woodlands community.

**Q:** What are your primary responsibilities?

**A:** I oversee the day-to-day operations of the mall, which involves housekeeping, maintenance, security, marketing, some of the temporary leasing, landscaping, and the overall appearance. I'm also a conduit between the contractors and tenants, and the public and our tenants.

**Q:** What are some exciting recent developments?

**A:** Last year, North Italia joined our excellent restaurant selection in the Courtyard, and Fleming's did a complete remodel. So far this year, we've opened Psycho Bunny, North face, and Capitol One Café, and we're opening Lucchese Boots this fall. We're also in the process of discussing a mall expansion with the Township, but as of right now, it's just a discussion.

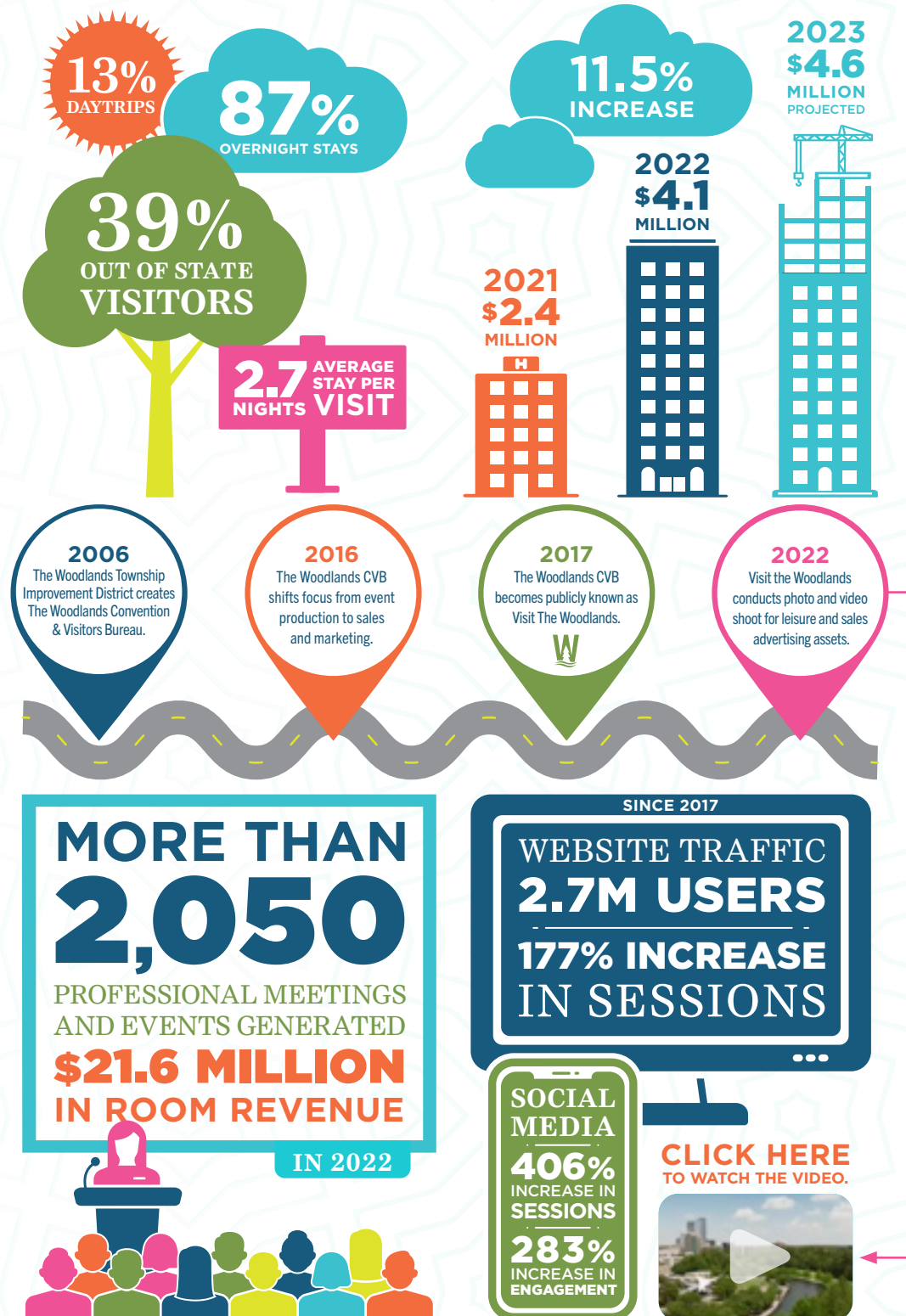
**Q:** Do you have a favorite memory from working here?

**A:** Over the last few years, we received a few requests from the Make-A-Wish Foundation for kids who wanted to shop at The Woodlands Mall. All of our tenants helped – even Alpha and Omega, the security company, braided their horse's hair and created a great experience for a young lady who wanted to shop and meet the horses. Helping children who were going through difficult times – those moments meant the world to me.

## THE IMPACT: VISITOR TRAVEL TRENDS SINCE 2021

Marketing The Woodlands as a Destination  
for Business and Leisure Travel

## HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX COLLECTIONS



Source: Visit The Woodlands





## This is The Life

Once upon a time we lived in a faraway land: Singapore. In April 2021, as the country started to open after 14 months of extreme lockdown measures, we decided to visit family in New York. During our short trip, Singapore went into another severe lockdown and closed its borders, not allowing us to enter the country despite being long term residents. Lauren was pregnant with Tommy at the time, and we were desperate to get back to our home of over a decade. We appealed to the government to no avail. Soon enough, Lauren entered her third trimester and flying was no longer an option, regardless. We were going to have to have Tommy here in the U.S.

It would have been easiest to stay in NYC, near Lauren's family, but after two home births in Singapore, we started looking for a birth centre (not hospital), which New York did not offer. So, we cast a wide net across America to find just the right birth centre, which is what ultimately led us to buying one-way tickets to Texas and landing us in The Woodlands in June 2021. We signed a short-term lease and settled into what we *thought* was a temporary stay, but during that time, we ended up falling in love with The Woodlands and didn't want to leave.

Tommy has since been affectionally nicknamed "Tommy Texas" since he is the one who brought our family home. The Woodlands is a wonderful place to raise a family. Everyone is friendly and warm, it feels clean and well-manicured, has all the amenities one needs, and above all, it feels safe. We also really enjoy all the community activities and events that are held throughout the year. During the summer, we enjoy taking the boys to the plethora of public pools in The Woodlands. This year we were the first team to complete The Township's High Seas Adventure program – we visited 14 pools in 14 days! We also love to explore the many parks and playgrounds in the different villages.

We think that there are several things that make The Woodlands unique. First and foremost, the natural beauty of the community, the way nature and modern living are blended so seamlessly. All the trails, parks, homes, and roads surrounded by endless green trees – I've not yet seen anywhere like it in America. Every village is well maintained, and all the neighborhoods are lovely. Secondly, the investment back into the community. I think the Township (and each of the villages) does an excellent job giving back. Today, our boys are 4, 3, and 2 – and we love living in The Woodlands.



**Simon & Lauren Yap**

@boysinthewoodlands

As featured in Visit The Woodlands' leisure advertising

Photo Courtesy Howard Hughes



Not everyone can say that they drive through a forest every day. In The Woodlands, we can...and we do! Woodlands Parkway is one of the main roads in The Woodlands, stretching from I-45 to FM 2978, weaving through part of the 28,000 forested acres that make this area so special.



Photo Courtesy Visit The Woodlands



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