

Kelly Ramsey
Community Innovator



Possibilities
Keeps It Real



MOORE
STRONG

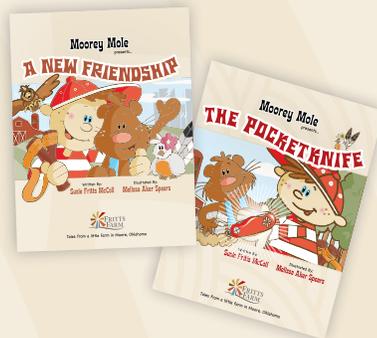
NURTURING *growth*

In 1950, seeking a good home for their young family, Alton and Evelyn Fritts built a simple farmhouse and chicken coop on a 160-acre farm at the southwest corner of what is now Southwest 19th Street and Telephone Road in Moore, Oklahoma. The area was rural, shopping was limited and services were few, but a supportive community made it an ideal place to raise a family.

Fast-forward over half a century, and Moore is still a great place for families, and Fritts Farm hosts a bustling retail development where neighbors find everything they need. As we plan for future generations, our vision is to provide a high quality, mixed-use development that will grow alongside our neighbors' families. Come join us.

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If you are a parent, you have probably heard the statement “So, you are raising children.” People make it sound as if raising children is like going to the store for bread. The reality of raising children is that it is full of terror, bewilderment and fear. And this usually sets in around the first week. Sometimes getting your family out of the house for school and work is like moving an entire army battalion. By the end of the day, many parents are exhausted, wondering if they meet the muster. There is the ideal of being a parent and the reality of being a parent.

Community work is very similar in what people may think happens and the reality. It sounds nice and noble. In reality, you’re involved in people’s lives, marriages, births and deaths. Our partners get discouraged. Sometimes they let themselves, each other and us down. Yet they stick with *Possibilities* and each other through it all. We laugh together, cry together and get mad together. Significantly, we remain together. If you asked any of the hundreds of people who have been through *Possibilities Innovation Program* about their experience, they would tell you how *Possibilities* has transformed their lives in some way. The scope of their community projects varies, but each of them has grown in their confidence to make change in their own lives and communities.

Just like parenting, sometimes you don’t know the fruits of your labor until years later. When you think about the impact *Possibilities* has had in our partners’ lives, think about your own life. Think about what it would be like to have someone who is walking beside you, coaching, mentoring, and encouraging you as you pursue your goals. Would it make a difference in our community? *Possibilities* and our partners know it does, and that’s why we keep it real.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Possibilities Keeps it Real is not just a catch phrase. The ability to relate on a personal level, literally one-on-one, to all of our participants and alumni is a unique feature of our organization. This was fostered by our founders, John Rex and Linda Lambert, who were honored last year with the creation of our Founders Circle. We believe that strong relationships are needed before strong communities can be built. Our community partners don't want us to tell them what to do or to do it for them. What they want and need is coaching, mentoring, encouragement and support. We can all look back to a time in our lives when someone we cared about had faith in what we were trying to do. People own the processes they make happen themselves; it is much more difficult to instill ownership when a process is designed and delivered by someone who does not have to live it. Small successes grow to large accomplishments, and we have seen our community partners blossom as their confidence in their own ability grows. The staff at *Possibilities* develops lasting relationships with the people going through the program, but more importantly they provide continuous training and support on how to build relationships. Many community efforts fail, or must be repeated as a result of the relationship building step being skipped or minimized.



Oklahoma City is in the midst of some very exciting times. We are seeing more inner city communities being rebuilt. Midtown and the Plaza District are two shining examples of recent business development, as well as substantial growth in Automobile Alley and the newer work in the 23rd Street Corridor. Community work in the surrounding areas has a unique opportunity to follow a similar path. That said, we continue to see not-for-profit agencies struggle to survive and carry out missions, especially in community outreach and improvement. Our organization has a significant need related to the investment in our ongoing and future projects of the seasoned community innovators in our program. Support for charities that primarily support immediate needs has continued to have a high priority in the eyes of OKC residents, but there is still a lag in getting adequate support to continue the work that has already been started. Our staff provides an amazing level of service and strives to cover all possible avenues to manage through the challenges which they must navigate. Like all organizations, we must find support from the area in which our

work is done. *Possibilities* continues to reach out in some new ways to develop additional support networks this year. Our second *In the Mood* event was exciting and fun and we hope to see all of you there in May!

Because we are in a period of reinventing our city and turning our older areas back into thriving communities, Oklahoma City is in great need of community involvement and connecting people who can and should work together for a better life in their neighborhoods and schools. Most people intuitively know this, yet there is a strong tendency to set aside goals that are difficult and require the support of others. Uncertain economic times have contributed to these pressures, and without the motivation and mentoring of organizations like ours, we cannot expect that community improvement will be strong and rise above the struggles that our Community Innovators are facing. Oklahoma City communities need the tools, training and moral support to lead their neighborhoods, schools and communities through improvement.

The programs of *Possibilities* are long-term in nature by design. The journey begins with our new participants, but the most critical use of the funding received is deployed into supporting community work and projects that are underway and showing successful results, in addition to supporting current projects for our latest community innovators. This support is critical in allowing community changes to become permanent, rather than resulting in the need for assistance from various charitable organizations again and again.

Continuing the homage to our founding board members, we have another *Founders Vision Match* to match December donations. Please join in the continued support of the permanent positive changes resulting from the work being done by *Possibilities*, so that together we can pursue constant improvement for Oklahoma City and its neighborhoods, schools and communities. Many of you have faithfully and generously devoted your time and financial support to our organization over the years, and for that we wish to convey to you our utmost gratitude.

Lucy Fritts

American Fidelity Assurance Company
President, *Possibilities* Board of Directors

Possibilities Innovation Program Community Innovators' Communities

See www.possibilitiesinc.org "At a Glance" in the About Us section for a full list of PIP Community Innovators' Communities.



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No successful leader achieves their success alone. When you consider your own success, you will likely see that others helped you gain skills and confidence along the way. *Possibilities* is a unique organization working with local people to build their leadership skills to positively impact their own lives and communities. Since 1995, *Possibilities* has trained leaders, provided support and facilitated projects from within challenged communities in greater Oklahoma City and beyond. *Possibilities* leadership methods not only create lasting community improvements, but do so through training people to make those changes themselves.

Possibilities, a United Way partner agency, is committed to its mission to strengthen the ability of people to work together for community change, and its core *Possibilities Innovation Program (PIP)* as the means to create lasting community transformations. *Possibilities* supports participants from all walks of life during and after the initial *PIP* year as improvement efforts continue. Participants, known as Community Innovators, experience a great deal of personal growth, empowerment and success that leads to a broadened scope for transformation projects. Numerous projects are carried out by graduated leaders annually, resulting in stronger families, safer neighborhoods, community schools and economic growth. Remarkably, the work of *Possibilities* trained community leaders impacts around 50,000 people annually.

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Yolanda Bryant *Keeps It Real*

Before I went to *Possibilities* I was very shy. *Possibilities* makes me feel like I'm somebody, and like I can do any and everything I want to do. They helped me to feel more comfortable to speak in front of large groups of people. Now I can let my voice be heard without being mad or angry, and can speak out and see how to help people the right way. *Possibilities* communication tools are important because they help you to deal with problems that come up and break the ice so you can get people to open up.

My life has gone through a lot of different changes, both emotional and physical, and I credit the things that I learned in *Possibilities Innovation Program* with giving me the tools to help get me through. The different tools that I learned helped me to be able to talk to different groups of people, like doctors, nurses, and case managers. *Possibilities* is important because it helps people like me and assists people to help others and improve their community. I want to THANK *Possibilities* for all you've done for me and Floyd. We love you all...



“Thank you for allowing us to do our small part for this wonderful community.”

Bruce Rinehart
Owner / Chef

Jason Bustamante
Executive Chef

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Possibilities Innovation Program

Engaging and Transforming Communities from Within



Great transformations occur through connections we have with others. *Possibilities Innovation Program (PIP)* Community Innovators come from all walks of life and share the dream for a better community. They make their dreams a reality by participating in the yearlong *Possibilities Innovation Program* to increase their confidence and skills to work with others to create community transformations.

An opening retreat kicks off the program where Community Innovators are immersed in *Possibilities* tools and learn to base their community work on a set of values and principles. After the retreat, these Community Innovators attend a series of training sessions on topics such as Building Participation, Effective Communication, Conflict Resolution, Creating a Collective Vision, and Raising Resources. They also participate in practice opportunities, putting the tools they have been taught to use. Then, Community Innovators assess communities and decide on a community project to work on with others. They create a vision, plan, implement and evaluate their projects, working in neighborhoods, schools, houses of faith and businesses throughout greater Oklahoma City and beyond. They celebrate and share their journey during graduation.

A few recent projects focused on connecting a neighborhood that struggles with gangs and crime, encouraging healthy lifestyles and enhancing resources for Hispanic families, supporting teens in making successful life choices and valuing education, and creating community, family and school connections to support successful young children and families.

Join us in thanking our *Community Innovators* who have the courage to explore the possibilities for their communities through *Possibilities Innovation Program*! As always, we can't wait to see what innovative transformations are in store for our communities next...



Possibilities Innovation Program is an intense commitment to a yearlong journey. You really get to know people over a year's time. People have many joys, hurts and tragedies in a year. People die, lose jobs, have children, get married, get divorced and move to new locations. Just like in life, the emotions we experience with one another cover the entire range. We get frustrated, sad, have joy and experience love. The amazing fact is, even with all of this, the organization and program partners stay committed to making a difference in the world. At the end of the day, our trust with each other is very present and very real. To say *Possibilities Keeps it Real* means we are involved in our partners lives over the long haul. In today's world, we can just switch channels, change locations or quit whatever we do that causes discomfort. The ability to stay constant in a person's life becomes a rare and treasured commodity.

Miraculously, at *Possibilities*, people reach beyond their limits and want to make their community better in the midst of the chaos of everyday life. Community work would be so much easier if we didn't have much going on and could do community work in our spare time. The reality is that most of us hardly have any free time at all. To see that there are people dedicated to making Oklahoma City a better city for all, no matter what is happening in their own lives, is truly inspiring.

Beyond a doubt our partners think of us as true partners. And no matter if they are part of the current class of *PIP* participants or are graduates from past years, they trust that *Possibilities* will stick with them. *Possibilities* keeps it real because *Possibilities* is constantly and consciously present, treating people with dignity and being inclusive, no matter what the external circumstances. Don't just take our word for it; keep reading to hear it from our partners themselves. Or better yet, ask our partners yourself and you will hear about the many ways *Possibilities* keeps it real.

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Possibilities Mission

To strengthen the ability of people to work together for community change.

Values and Principles

Dignity

We believe in the worth of each person.

Participation and Inclusiveness

We believe local people have the solutions to local problems & every person is a part of the solution.

Growth

We believe success & failure give opportunity to learn.

Responsibility

We believe people support what they help create.

Service

We start where people are & join their journey.

Trust

We believe people function best when they feel safe.

Integrity

We believe our success depends on our actions matching our words.

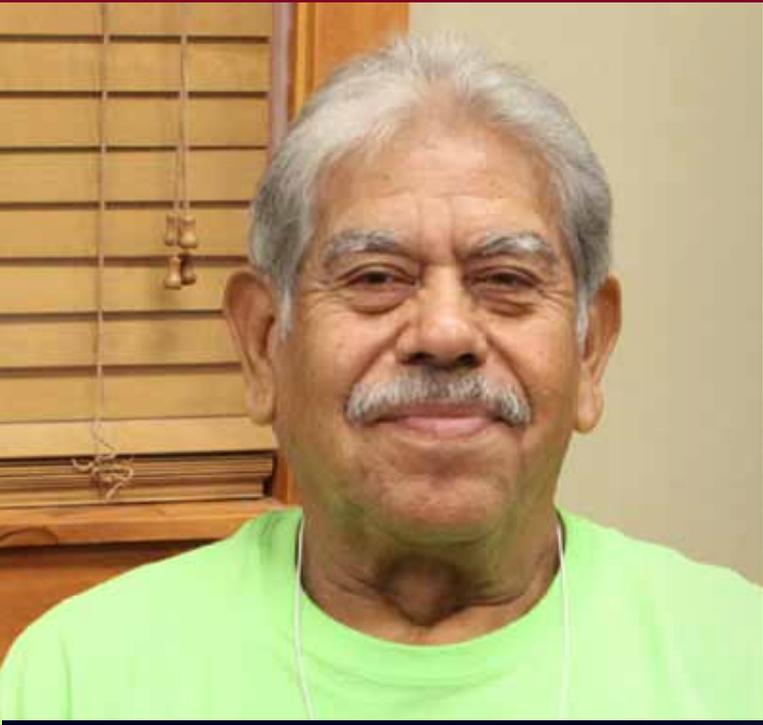
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Leo Marin

**DEL CITY COMMUNITY &
FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS
PROJECT GROUP**

Leo Marin Keeps It Real (Translated from Spanish to English)

Being involved with *Possibilities* has changed my attitude. I now have a positive attitude on all the personal goals I set for myself. I feel like I need to listen first before giving an opinion. *Possibilities* has helped me in giving me more knowledge, skills and focus so that I can best help my community. We should always have a friendly attitude to help us open doors that will help us identify ourselves and truly get to know who you are. We're always in the search of new things to learn and *Possibilities* offers an entire encyclopedia of optimal, excellent skills and knowledge. The existence of *Possibilities* is critical because of the opportunities it offers to improve our communication that will help us be more prepared to resolve community issues as they come up. *Possibilities* also offers a key factor of networking opportunities, and it actually provides a guide to a better future.

People who get involved with *Possibilities* should keep in mind that they're about to be transformed in different ways. They will be exposed to learning different ways of communication, volunteer opportunities and personal growth. We should always be well prepared before taking on any project, and *Possibilities* does just that for you. *Possibilities* offers you support and answers through teachings without expecting anything in return. *Possibilities* offers the gift of learning and belonging and we should go above and beyond to help support the organization.

Time comes, goes, and then it's remembered. At *Possibilities*, I got involved in things that I would have never imagined being involved with, and those are the things that I will never forget. An active member of the PIP program invited me to join, and before I knew it I was heavily involved, attending meetings and working on community projects. I was amazed to see the diverse group of people of different races, ethnic backgrounds and religions working together. We were just there to learn and create a journey together. You become so involved and connected with the people that time seems to fly. The most important thing is that we create this journey together where we accomplish projects, and we do it with the same enthusiasm as if it was the first day we met.



Christina Dobson

TEACH FOR AMERICA

Christina Dobson Keeps It Real

The first time I walked into my first People's Network Dinner, I could tell something was different about *Possibilities*. As I looked around the room, and especially when I started talking to people, I saw people of all different racial and socioeconomic statuses were coming here together to try to make a difference in their communities. Just seeing the way that *Possibilities* is able to break down barriers for people to accomplish what they really want to do in their communities is powerful. In the organization that I work for, we talk a ton about how to partner “with” communities instead of doing work “on” the communities, and we are still striving for that. I think that is something that *Possibilities* really has right! They listen to people's challenges, and empower them to find the change. I really didn't know how possible that was until I walked in their door. *Possibilities* has given me a true example of what it is to work “with” communities instead of “on” communities.

I work in several different schools across Oklahoma City Public Schools, and I feel in some ways each of those schools is my community. I now have a much clearer picture of how I can approach each place with an open ear to empower people to make the changes they see as necessary. I have already seen people that came into *PIP* with fears they were sure of. They stated them and have already started overcoming them. They have such a unique way of helping people find their strengths, so they can live through those to impact the change they want. That is not something that is easy to teach, but it is the most valuable lesson in life.

Interestingly, I've recently been thinking about how if I ever move away from OKC that I feel it's necessary to look into the ways to get a *Possibilities* in my community too. People that normally feel like they don't have a voice can have a voice at *Possibilities*. They can find ways to make change they may have never thought possible, and they can find strength in themselves and their communities. I'm all about authentically connecting people. I feel like that's why we're here on this earth, and *Possibilities* is able to facilitate that so seamlessly.

Everyone has something to learn in the area of connecting. There are opportunities to connect across lines of difference and really understand perspectives of others at *Possibilities*. If you need to feel empowered, it's the place to be. If you need to feel some positive energy, it's the place to be. If you want to make change, but don't know how, it's the place to be. If you want to drive change, it's the place to be. If you simply want to connect with others, it is the place to be! It's so important to invest in *Possibilities*, because this is a place that can really create fundamental changes in communities through the people that want those changes the most. People from all backgrounds and communities need to feel empowered, and I have never seen a place that can create that feeling for people so well. I can only imagine how much change could be accomplished if what *Possibilities* does is scaled up in a huge way based on increased funding!

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People's Network



The People's Network is your opportunity to meet partners hard at work in our communities. Neighborhoods, schools, non-profit organizations, businesses, houses of faith and individuals from central Oklahoma come together once a month to share a meal and discuss what is happening in local communities. People from all cultures, ages and economic backgrounds gather for connection and fun at this event like no other.

Want to know more about *Possibilities* work and the everyday people we work with who transform communities? Join us to meet our amazing partners and stay in touch with grassroots efforts right here in Oklahoma City. A delicious dinner is served at no charge. Optional on-site childcare is available – if you are bringing your children with you it is VERY helpful for you to give us a heads up on the number of children you are bringing and their ages so we can properly plan. All that is missing from the People's Network is **you!**

....A special gathering



Elton W. Horton, Sr. *Keeps It Real*

I heard about *Possibilities* when some of the staff members were on a local radio talk show. They presented *Possibilities* as an organization that welcomes people to come mingle, listen, enjoy a meal and learn how to effect positive changes in our community. As a graduate of *Possibilities Innovation Program*, I witnessed firsthand the staff's professionalism. They are indeed dedicated to their mission and always willing to assist.

Possibilities techniques can challenge your core values and beliefs. They equip you with tools for positive self-change, thereby enabling you to generate positive community changes. *Possibilities* use of tools such as the Personal Inventory Experience (PIE), brainstorming and other team building techniques proved to be valuable tools in my passion as a community volunteer. You too can experience the passion, the connection, the change. So contact *Possibilities* as soon as possible. It is paramount that *Possibilities* continues to amplify its vital mission. Keep in mind, the *Possibilities* staff don't do the work for you. They ignite the fuel within you to launch yourself and your group on to successful positive changes in our community.

When:

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Where:

Possibilities Office - 621 NW 20th Street

For more information, please call 405-525-3131
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Kelly Ramsey

OKLAHOMA CITY EDUCARE

Kelly Ramsey Keeps It Real

When I consider the impact that the *Possibilities* program had on my life, I smile each time. As an early childhood professional, my role is to impact the community of teachers and parents with knowledge about best practices for children and families. I have the opportunity to share families' stories on a daily basis, and to become their voice in the communities of influence that I work in.

When I joined *PIP*, it was because of my colleague Patricia Mays Caddell and her mom Helen. They were so excited about the community initiatives and being able to give back in new ways. I was aware of the program, but considered it a program for new leaders who were just joining community efforts. I was quickly changed by the wealth of the people in the group. My initial thought was, I will go, but just to help and aid others and share my expertise. At the time I signed up, my career was going well, and my family life was secure. By the time my program year was over, I was unemployed, and had three major losses in my life. I understood the commitment to the program but failed to meet all of them due to my life struggles. By the end of the program when I reflected on the year, I was taken aback by the sense of community that was built by the staff of *Possibilities* and realized that what I signed up for was so much more.

All throughout the program, I would get calls for reminders and understanding responses when I was not able to attend. These made me begin to question the program and consider the processes that they created for *PIP*. Could staff really be this nice? Was there really a group of people that were committed to strengthening communities, and not just about running their program? Surely not. But oh it was, and they were! Staff met me with the same smiles and warmth at every meeting and every greeting. *PIP* is much more than a program; it's a way of being. It's community at its best. It's a hug just when you need it and a gentle nudge when you are stuck.

That year, I lost my dad to a battle with pancreatic cancer, and it was tough to deal with. At the retreat I shared his story, and cried in the final circle as I realized how great of an impact he had on my life from childhood to adulthood. What reminded me of him was a gentleman in our group who lived in a neighborhood and committed to coming to the *PIP* program to take his neighborhood back. He wanted to create a presence on his porch and on his streets that told gang members, "No, not here." He had the courage to come, and even in his health status, he still chose to extend himself. He reminded me of Daddy, a hardworking man, taking care of his family, seeing the neighborhood deteriorate around him, and giving it a try to make a difference. Without *PIP* I would have never met him, or been reminded that community involves every person, every walk of life, all ages and backgrounds. Our group was representative of real community, college students, high school students, grandparents raising grandchildren, clergy, men, women, professionals, all education levels, all races and creeds.

In my life, I may not have crossed paths with many of the people that shared the year with me. But with *Possibilities*, they made it possible for me to really see the far reach of community, and that from every member in the group, I could learn something, and possibly be a resource to others as well. Thank you, *Possibilities*, for changing my life and enlarging my borders. I am forever grateful.

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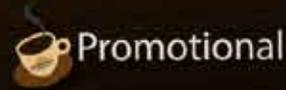
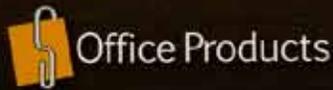
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Kali Cochran Keeps It Real

After living and working as a teacher in OKC for a year, I interned with *Possibilities* for the summer. With the staff, for the first time, I felt like I was a part of my community. They helped make Oklahoma my home. I've always had trouble opening up, making friends and putting down roots. Yet my time with *Possibilities* has given me connections to a fun, passionate, resourceful, loving and supportive community. *Possibilities* has given me a home away from home.

Working with *Possibilities* has helped me make connections to caring people within the city and my community. They have helped me to work on advocating for myself and my ideas which has made me a stronger person. *Possibilities* has given me support, confidence, excitement and determination to achieve my goals in OKC and at school. The tools that *Possibilities* teaches encourage people to become stronger individuals in their personal lives as well as in their work within the community. They enable people to push forward, face and overcome their obstacles, and see their own and others' self-worth. Through all this, *Possibilities* strives, and succeeds, in making stronger citizens and self-sufficient community leaders.

Possibilities is a light and beacon of hope when so many only see darkness. Often times, the struggles of a community seem insurmountable, yet *Possibilities* is able to thrive on people's passion to better themselves and their surroundings. *Possibilities* is essential to the OKC community because it gives tangible results to people who previously only had dreams. People must be involved in *Possibilities* because without those driven to better their community, we have no society. *Possibilities* gives a voice, a power, and a hope to people wanting to help themselves and others.

Throughout my summer working with *Possibilities*, I experienced a constant stream of people whose lives and communities had been changed because of the work, time, resources and effort that *Possibilities* had given them. *Possibilities* is a life changing and essential organization to the people of this community. *Possibilities* helps to transform people and communities into the best that they can be in every aspect. If people invest their time and money in *Possibilities*, there is no stopping what can be accomplished.



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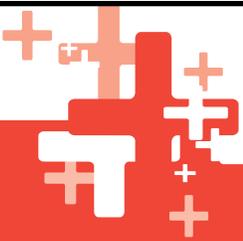


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Shannon Roper

S&B'S BURGER JOINT

Shannon Roper Keeps It Real



Shannon Roper is the “S” in S&B’s Burger Joint. One day, Shannon decided he wanted to make burgers at his club the Electro Lounge. Six restaurants later, S&B’s Burger Joint has become a staple among great metro area eateries. Shannon has always experimented with different ideas about burgers. “Sometimes I’ve even dreamed of different types of burgers,” he says. When he started the restaurant, Shannon knew he wanted a place where people could come in and have a nice, enjoyable meal in a friendly atmosphere.

Since the beginning, Shannon and his wife Camille have wanted to help those in need and to give back to the community. If you sit and talk with Shannon for any length of time, you will see that his passions are always about helping others. In this vein, *Pay It Forward Tuesdays* were born at their very first restaurant on 59th Street. Pay It Forward means putting something good in the universe to help make this world a better place. Every Tuesday at one Burger Joint location, they give 10% of the day’s profit to a worthy organization or person in need. Shannon and Camille also help out each Christmas season by getting presents for children who would not otherwise get any gifts. Camille also helps with school activities for their two children.

You may wonder how someone who sells burgers and *Possibilities* work together. S&B’s Burger Joint has partnered with *Possibilities* many times through the *Pay It Forward Tuesdays* program. As S&B’s Burger Joint grew to 6 locations in the metro area, *Possibilities* expertise at relationship building and connection was put to work. S&B’s Burger Joint has contracted with *Possibilities* to provide coaching for managers and staff training to achieve excellent customer service. According to Shannon, “*Possibilities* not only helped me to think outside of the box, they’ve taken the whole box away. Whether it’s in business, family or community, *Possibilities* encourages you to be bigger and better than ordinary.” Making our community better is not just a slogan or campaign to Shannon; it’s a part of who he is.



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Jerry Cable

MEDICAL COMMUNITY NEIGHBORHOOD

Jerry Cable Keeps It Real

When I was elected neighborhood association president of Medical Community in Northeast Oklahoma City, I said, “Hopefully, I can make our area better.” Through *Possibilities*, a non-profit organization that teaches leadership skills and helps transform communities, I’ve learned the skills to build a sense of community identity in the neighborhood. Over the past few years, our community has:

- Held eight crime prevention events, each attracting between 200 to 400 people, as well as many crime prevention meetings with isolated seniors
- Held regular block parties and National Night Out events to fight crime and drugs
- Hosted neighborhood garage sales
- Delivered Christmas Baskets to elderly residents filled with food, gifts, and other goodies

Our efforts have resulted in lower crime rates, numerous beautification efforts, increased property values (tripled since 1991), grants for neighborhood lighting, signage, and landscaping, and more neighborhood association members (from a few to more than 60). And, the Medical Community has received several prestigious neighborhood and city awards – including Neighborhood of the Year! Best of all, there is hope for the community – people who had once given up hope now notice changes. While there is still fear, now there is also hope.

With the support of *Possibilities*, I’ve become more confident leading my neighborhood and others to be the best that they can be. Specifically, I gained skills to work with others. I now stop and listen before making judgment or comments and think of others’ feelings. I learned how to handle complicated situations like persuading neighbors who first came to meetings to complain to become active block captains. *Possibilities* has helped me stay motivated, stay involved in my community, reach outside of my comfort zone, and apply “out of the box” ideas to encourage others.

I learned from my family that a person should give rather than receive, and I live that legacy by giving to my community and encouraging others to do the same. *Possibilities* is one of the greatest nonprofit organizations that I’ve ever had the privilege to work with. They teach people to be leaders in their communities, organizations how to resolve situations, and work on projects that benefit the community each year. I support them any time they need and do what I can to make them thrive in today’s world.



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MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO, Bill Cameron's father and grandfather started American Fidelity Assurance Company with the mission of **HELPING OTHER FAMILIES** face financial hardships. Now, with more than 1.3 million Customers worldwide, that vision **REMAINS THE SAME.**

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