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A CEO With a Heart

by [Lisa Dawson](#) in [Profiles](#)[Bookmark](#)

It was a chance encounter with the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg that influenced Marianne Radley, whom Ms. Radley credits in her recent career change to Chief Executive Officer of The Boys and Girls Club of Collin County (BGCCC). Ms. Radley, who started her position in June, says a random seat assignment next to Justice Ginsburg on a flight to Washington, D.C. turned into a thought-provoking conversation. Afterward, the words they exchanged impacted her decision to trade years as an executive in corporate America to focus on shaping youth and helping her local community. "When Justice Ginsburg boarded the plane and sat next to me, I could not think of where I knew her from. She was casually dressed and unassuming," Ms. Radley says. "It wasn't until about 45 minutes into the flight that it struck me as to who she was. We spoke briefly about the need to serve others and the power of service to one's community. It may have been just another conversation for her, but it was so meaningful to me." Justice Ginsburg, who passed away this past September at age 87, dedicated her life's work to inclusion and equality. She once famously said, "If you want to be a true professional, do something outside yourself," which is precisely what Ms. Radley is doing.

For more than fifty years, BGCCC has allowed youth to discover their great futures. Part of a national organization, BGCCC has been operational since 1968, serving Frisco, McKinney and Plano. The very first Boys Club was founded in 1860 by three women in Hartford, Connecticut. It was an idea born to give boys aimlessly roaming the streets a purpose in life. Elizabeth Hammersley, Mary Goodwin and Alice Goodwin (sisters) decided boys needed a positive alternative to street life and wanted to instill character development. This has been the club's cornerstone philosophy ever since. The name was changed to the Boys and Girls Club of America in 1990 and is now one of the most successful national nonprofit organizations in the country.

Chief Operations Officer of BGCCC Debra Sweezer has been with the club 26 years. She says the Frisco center, known as the Bob & Joy Darling Branch located on McKinney Street, picks up children from Frisco ISD schools and brings them to the club five days a week. Staff helps



six through 18, Ms. Sweezer says she's seen many kids who grew up in the club and are now volunteers at the centers. "I've known kids from the first grade through adulthood. They're attorneys, doctors, nurses, teachers ... all types of professions. Those kids I knew when they were first grade are now adult leaders in their community."



Ms. Radley is no stranger to being around lots of kids, as she comes from a large family. Growing up in the Bronx as one of eight children, Ms. Radley and her husband Paul are parents to four children: Liam, 21, Kieran, 20, Sean, 18 and Maeve, 15. She says she's always had a love for children. "Getting to work and engage with the kids at the BGCCC is so great, and it really helps to put things in perspective. No matter how challenging things may be, there is always a spirit of optimism and resilience with our club kids and such a foundation of strength. They all help me be a better person."

Ms. Radley and her husband have been married for 22 years and lived in various places across the country. Mr. Radley says they met in St. Louis while she was working for Anheuser-Busch. "We met at Rigazzi's, a restaurant on 'the Hill,' just prior to me getting hired on with Anheuser-Busch. She was with a group of colleagues and a friend and I met up with them one evening," says Mr. Radley. "A short time after that, we ended up working in the same region (she in Philadelphia and I in New York) and we began a relationship after she asked me out on a date. I will want to make that point clear, even though I had every intention of asking her out first, but she beat me to it."



neighborhood feel, warm and welcoming, with great shops, restaurants and live music. Just being able to walk around and enjoy it all is something really special.”

A graduate of Clemson University, Ms. Radley has worked for many national companies, like Anheuser-Busch and Pizza Hut, all of which have led her to where she is now. “My experience and the incredible lessons I have learned along the way have made me a much more empathetic and compassionate leader,” she explains. “I have become strong at building communities within the workplace, of empowering teams I lead and I continue to strive to bring humility and kindness into all I do. I believe these experiences and developed traits will be a tremendous benefit to me in this role as well as to the Boys & Girls Club organization.”

Radley says joining the BGCCC amidst a global pandemic proved to be an interesting time to come into the role. To better serve parents, kids and families during the last few months, with schools closing down, summer break and now remote learning for some, the club is now open from 7:30am as a virtual support center for students. The club offers assistance to students with virtual school, help to teachers, serves lunches and snacks and checks to make sure homework is accomplished, along with the typical day-to-day club activities. All aspects of the club have been redesigned to meet CDC guidelines.



Radley says she and her staff rose to the challenge quickly to meet the needs of their families. “Many of the families we serve did not have the proper infrastructure at home to support their child’s virtual learning – whether they did not have Wi-Fi access, the ability to troubleshoot technical problems or having to return to work. We decided to offer the Virtual Support Program. Families can bring their children to our clubs with their school-issued computer and headphones. Their children can do their necessary online learning while in a safe and nurturing environment,” she says. “We worked closely with the ISDs to ensure we were following their curriculum and bell schedule and our staff was

during such a difficult time.”

“When you work with Ms. Radley, you want to bring your best ideas to the table because you know she will really listen to your point-of-view and help build upon them,” says Stephen Miller, managing partner at TracyLocke, a downtown media and advertising agency. Ms. Radley worked closely with Mr. Miller while she was the Chief Brand Officer at Pizza Hut. Mr. Miller says while they worked together, Ms. Radley treated each member of their team like family and her empathy for others will benefit her in the CEO position at BGCCC. “What sets Ms. Radley apart from most other professionals is not just her knowledge base: her biggest asset is her heart.”

Lisa Dawson is a professional writer and mom of three. She is grateful to call Frisco home since 2013.

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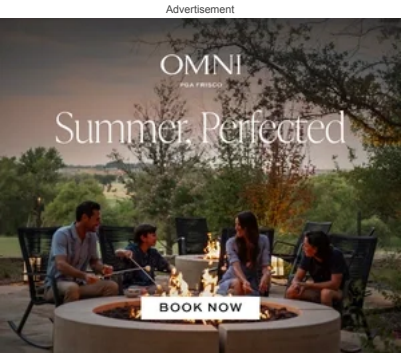
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It is almost unreal to think that we are already in the eleventh month of this year that has been anything but what anyone expected it to be. There was so much anticipation and expectation to see January 1, 2020, because it was a new day and the beginning of a new year and decade all at once! Who would have foreseen that it would turn out so greatly disastrous for some and so highly illustrious for others?

In the course of this year, two key issues have become foremost on the mind of a large swathe of our demography: these are COVID-19 and racial injustice. One would not have thought these two things would have anything in common, but it turns out they have a linking thread. Be that as it may, even without these two elements at play, "life is truly a box of chocolates – you never know what you are going to get!"

The Bible in Job 14:1-2 says, "How frail is humanity! How short is life, how full of trouble! We blossom like a flower and then wither. Like a passing shadow, we quickly disappear."

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For believers in Christ, this is not something to get depressed about because our times are in God's hands. Our lives may be fleeting in comparison to eternity; however, God has a plan and a purpose for every moment of every day of our lives, however long or short those are. What COVID-19 does for us all is remind us of our mortality and remind us daily to live each day like it is our last.

No doubt the COVID-19 pandemic has played a major role in the way we do things these days. Each one of us have had to adjust to rules of survival and living above COVID-19 and yet maintain the balance in caring for others in our community and helping many who have suffered losses during this time. The last few months of racial divide across our nation has raised volumes of fear, insecurities and uncertainty, especially



supremacy. God gave dominion and responsibility for all His creation to all mankind equally, not dominion to one segment of humanity over another. That is a man-made construct. No human life has more value than another in the eyes of God.

The fact that you and I are alive and well in these difficult times is a reason to give thanks to God. I am thankful for the phenomenal contribution and sacrificial love of our front liners (health workers), police workforce and many volunteers in the community risking their lives on a day-to-day basis to save lives despite the COVID-19 pandemic. I also appreciate our schoolteachers and educators in their efforts to educating our kids, while adapting to the new norm. The generosity and continued communal love and impact of several businesses, public and private charities, some of which opened their food pantries, provided free clothing, paid portion of bills helping several families in need that lost their jobs and means of livelihood during COVID-19. The unending support and encouragement of the various places of worship to their members or congregants has been quite amazing and a show of kindness to all in need of faith.



Looking with the eyes of faith in our community one thing stands sure; it has been the constant love that transcends beyond racial differences and color. The profound richness of communal love spreads over our community and has been quite comforting. This is to assure us of the hope we have in God and our Frisco community. A hope of a brighter tomorrow if we continue to do good and love one another despite our differences. Knowing this, that the hope of a great community is often tied to the willingness of the people to remain in unity and love.

I, therefore, encourage you to continue to be a love bearer, in the spirit of gratitude and continue to lend a helping hand to all in need of this assurance. As we approach Thanksgiving, let us take the time to be love bearers in our community. Let us share and carry each other's burden regardless of what is happening all around us. Remaining ever grateful and appreciative of the life God has given us. May this period be a time of laughter, joy and restoration for you and your families. A time of refreshment and hope for our community and precious grace to keep sharing the love of Christ to all.

Senior Pastor of Resurrection Chapel Frisco, Pastor Emmanuel Olaniran has an unquenchable passion for the gospel of Christ and people of God. He loves God, his family and also passionately loves life.

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