

Leake family grows through fostering, adopting



CATHERINE LEAKE with seven of her adopted children.

By Shane Schneider

She never intended to return to Kansas, let alone rural Kansas... to a town with barely more than 2,500 people. Yet, as we know, home is where the heart is, and when home means family, that's where we want to be.

"It's a great place to go to college, but I never thought I would live in this state, so after graduation, I went back to Colorado to teach," said Catherine Leake. "Then I taught in Mexico for a while, and then in California."

While teaching anger management in California, Catherine's home became a safe space and refuge for many of her students.

"I ended up with a bunch of them staying with me. They were living on the streets and had nowhere else to go. I knew nothing about fostering, but after a while, I thought that maybe I should get a license so I could start taking kids in legally. So, I got my first foster care license in California about 15 years ago."

Her college debt prompted Catherine to return to Sterling, home of Sterling College, her

alma mater. "I thought I'd just come back for a while and substitute teach while I paid off my student debt. Once I got here, I thought, 'I already know how to be a foster parent, and I have the room, so I may as well foster while I'm here.'"

So, 11 years ago, Catherine received her license through Saint Francis Ministries and has continued to foster children of all ages since. The children who have passed through the home of the special education teacher number in the triple digits.

"I have no idea exactly how many; it's been a lot," she said. "There have been dozens and dozens of long-term placements, but probably hundreds of emergency and short-term placements. Some kids have stayed here up to three and a half years."

About half of those children have been siblings.

"That includes both emergency and long-term placements," said Catherine. "I would say most have been sibling sets of two or three, but some emergency placements have been sets of four or five. That in-

cludes all ages, from a few days old to teenagers."

For any child, removal from their home is both disruptive and traumatic. It's difficult enough to be separated from parents, but losing contact with siblings adds to the distress. Siblings in foster care share an identity, and the bond between them provides a powerful source of comfort and stability, especially during difficult times like out-of-home placement.

Catherine takes sibling sets because she understands the importance of brothers and sisters remaining together in foster care placements.

"They have a biological connection," she said. "They share memories and experiences that, no matter how deeply others love them, no one else can understand. "Even if they're adopted and surrounded by love, just having someone else in the family who looks like them and understands their culture and history can give them a deeper sense of belonging and quicken their ability to heal."

Catherine is so committed to keeping sib-

lings together that she's adopted three boys and five girls, six of whom comprise three sets of siblings. And she does it alone ... well, with help from her church, friends, and family (her mother lives nearby). It's a communal effort.

"I'm blessed to have support," she said. "My church has been extremely helpful, sharing meals, hanging out with us, providing childcare, and praying for us."

She finalized her most recent adoption in February, two children she'd fostered.

"So, although they are Spanish speakers, and we speak Spanish, they came with a different cultural identity. They spoke to each other in Spanish, but they also shared a sense of culture. We could communicate with them, but that shared culture gave them a deep sense of connection, safety, and belonging that they wouldn't have experienced if placed alone. They know these special songs, and even now, something will trigger a memory for them, and they'll start singing together. I would never have been able to provide that to them."

After 11 years back in Kansas, Catherine remains committed to providing a safe and loving home to children who need it most. She's committed to her community, her family, and to ensuring that siblings remain together through one of the most difficult times of their lives.

"Can it be hard? Yes, sometimes. But, if we can give a child a chance to maintain the most stable relationship of their life, to stay with the one person they'll likely know their entire life, why wouldn't we? We could be the person who does that for them. Sure, it might be a little difficult, and we might be a bit inconvenienced for about six months, but we could provide healing to a child's life for the next 40 years. So, I think it's a very, very worthwhile thing to do."

—JOHNSON EARNS 2ND PLACE—



EVELYN JOHNSON placed second in the 1st-grade division of the Smoky Hills PBS KIDS Young Writers and Illustrators Contest with her book "The Kitty Rescue." Evelyn is the daughter of Andy and Lindsey Johnson.

Files—
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as soloists are Jeff Washmon, tuba; Mike Vogt, trombone; Eric Johnston, trumpet; Sheri Wade, clarinet; Kathy Morton, flute; Julie McAllaster, clarinet; and Carla Bickford, Teresa Willhaus and Michelle Sample as saxophone trio.

The high school spring vocal music production will present a varied program. Soloists will be Cindy Bray, Joan Coleman, Brian Detter, Mike Drake and Bobby Brownlee. Accompanists will be Kay McAllaster and Alan Wellman.

Mr. and Mrs. Lonnie Kruse, Kiowa, are the parents of a baby girl, Darci Lynette, born Sunday, May 4. She weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces and has a three year old sister, Lisa Marie.

F.H.A. Chapter Mothers, Mrs. Wilbur McAllaster, Mrs. Quentin Kilgore, and Mrs. Kenneth Bolton entertained last Wednesday evening at the McAllaster home with a formal dinner for the retiring F.H.A. officers.

75 years ago
May 4, 1950

The brass and tympani ensemble of Floyd Dill, Gene Park, Robert McFarland and Mary McGill, cornets; Lloyd Haney, Don Alspaugh, Jack Thompson, trombones; Jerry Partington, bass; and Sue Henry, tympani received a highly superior rating at the state music festival for solos and small ensembles at Emporia Saturday. Juanita Earle and Fulton each were awarded a superior rating in twirling and Marilyn Heter received a rating of excellent for her piano solo.

A group of young business girls who have been getting together periodically during the winter to play Canasta are planning something a little more strenuous for the summer months—namely, a softball team! Ione Farver and Margaret Parkes have been instrumental in organizing the club. Recruits include Elsie Mast, Betty Williams, Donna Morton, Virginia Dutton and Donna Groth.

Lieutenant j. g. Jim Brock and Seaman Dick Wyatt returned Monday morning from two weeks training duty with the Atlantic Reserve Fleet in Boston.

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Public Notices

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF RICE COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF)
THE ESTATE OF)
THOMAS DANIEL)
WEISENBURGER,)
DECEASED)

Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 59

Case No. RC-2025-PR-14

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that on April 22, 2025, a petition was filed in this court by Ann M. Costello, as an heir of Thomas Daniel Weisenburger, deceased, praying for the determination of descent; and you are hereby required to file your written defenses thereto on or before May 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. of said day, in said Court, 101 W. Commercial, Lyons, Rice County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon said petition.

ANN M. COSTELLO
Petitioner

MARK A. TREMAINE, SC#18838
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(First Published in Sterling Bulletin, May 1, 2025)

IN THE 20TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

DISTRICT COURT OF RICE COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF
Melissa Kay Desemo,
Present Name
To Change Her Name to:
Melissa Kay Beck
New Name
Pursuant to K.S.A. Chapter 60

Case No. RC2025CV14
Div. No. 1

NOTICE OF HEARING – PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL WHO ARE OR MAY BE CONCERNED

You are hereby notified that Melissa Kay Desemo, filed a Petition in the above court on the 10th day of April, 2025, requesting a judgment and order changing her name from Melissa Kay Desemo to Melissa Kay Beck.

The Petition will be heard in Rice County District Court, 101 W Commercial Street, Lyons, Kansas, on the 18th day of June, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

If you have any objection to the requested name change, you are required to file a responsive pleading on or before June 12, 2025 in this court or appear at the hearing and object to the requested name change. If you fail to act, judgment and order will be entered upon the Petition as requested by Petitioner.

Melissa K. Desemo
Petitioner, Pro Se
Melissa K. Desemo
314 N. 5th ST.
Sterling, KS 67579
620-793-2206

(Published in the Sterling Kansas Bulletin, Sterling, Rice County, Kansas, on May 1, 2025; May 8, 2025 and May 15, 2025). 7:00

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF RICE COUNTY, KANSAS

THOMAS R. BRONLEEWEE,
Plaintiff,

vs.

Kansas Department of Revenue,))
Rubin Stegman,))
1967 Volkswagon Trike,))
VIN #135684156,))
and all other persons unknown,))
claiming any right, title, lien or))
interest in the personal property))
described in the complaint))
adverse to the Plaintiff's))
ownership or any cloud upon))
Plaintiff's title thereto, and the))
unknown heirs, executors,))
administrators, devisees, trustees,))
creditors and assigns of such of))
the defendants as may be))
deceased; the unknown spouses))
of the defendants the unknown))
officers, successors,))
trustees, creditors and assigns))
of such defendants as are))
existing, dissolved or dormant))
corporations; the unknown))
executors,))
administrators, devisees,))
trustees, creditors, successor))
and assigns of such defendants))
that are, or were partners or in))
partnership; and the unknown))
guardians, conservators and))
trustees of such of the))
defendants as are minors or are))
in anywise under legal disability;))
and the unknown heirs,))
executors, administrators,))
devisees, trustees, creditors))
and assigns of any person))
alleged to be deceased, and))
made defendants as such;))

Defendants.))
))
Pursuant to Chapter 60 of Kansas))
Statutes Annotated))
))
Case No. 2025 CV 18))
))
NOTICE OF SUIT))
))
THE STATE OF KANSAS TO THE))
DEFENDANTS ABOVE NAMED))
AND DESIGNATED AND ALL))
OTHER PERSONS WHO ARE))
OR MAY BE CONCERNED:))
))
))
You are hereby notified that a))
Petition has been filed in the Dis-))
trict Court of Rice County, Kansas))
by Thomas R. Bronleewe, praying))
for judgment that the plaintiff is the))
owner in fee simple of the follow-))
ing described vehicle, to-wit:))
))
))
1967 Volkswagon Trike -))
VIN #135684156))
))
and that plaintiff's title thereto))
be quieted against you, and that))
you and all persons claiming by))
through or under you be forever))
barred and excluded from any))
title, estate or interest in or lien))
upon said vehicle; and you are))
hereby required to plead to said))
Petition on or before the 23rd day))
of June, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., in))
said court at the Courthouse in the))
city of Lyons, Kansas. Should you))
fail therein, judgment and decree))
will be entered in due course upon))
said petition.))

THOMAS R. BRONLEEWEE
Plaintiff

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Attorneys for Plaintiff

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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
STERLING HOUSING
AUTHORITY

There will be a Public Hearing on the 23rd day of June 2025 at 4:00 pm for the purpose of reviewing and taking comments on the 2025 Annual Plan and Five-Year Capital Fund Plan for Sterling Housing Authority. These documents are available at the Housing Authority Administrative Offices located at 220 N 3rd Street, Sterling, KS. Published by: Mandy Thomas, Interim Executive Director
Published in: Sterling Kansas Bulletin, Sterling, Rice County, Kansas on May 8, 2025.

(Published in the Sterling Kansas Bulletin, Sterling, Rice County, Kansas, on May 8, 2025). 3:00