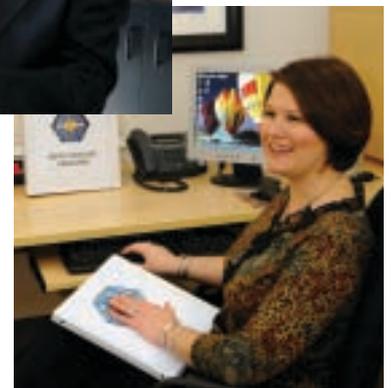


Eight for '08

They are chefs, judges, teachers, and techies. They are entrepreneurs and community advocates. For some, their job is setting dreams aloft; for others, it is rewarding dreamers for a job well done.

With each new year, new leaders emerge in Collin County. We think you will enjoy meeting these engaging, hard-working individuals who are shaping our communities with vision and vigor. 2008 holds great promise!

Profile photography / Mike Newman



Byron Williams

Byron Lovell Williams, 42

Family: Wife, Robin and sons Ethan, 4, Quentin, 2, and Zane, 9 months

Occupation: Materials Scientist/Engineer, Texas Instruments

Civic Contributions: Leadership Plano Class 25, Sci-Tech Discovery Center, Career Seminar for Engineers and Scientists at Southern Methodist University, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Texas Instruments Diversity Committee

Chances are, if he's not mingling with the stars on the red carpet or being a seat filler for Clint Eastwood at the Oscars, Byron Williams is creating microelectronic chips for Texas Instruments (TI).

For nearly 10 years, Byron has worked for TI and is currently a Process Integration Engineer with four patents and over 10 publications to his name. "I work with design engineers who create new computer chips, cell phone chips, and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chips ... and process engineers in the fabrication facility who make the designer's dreams come true on Silicon," said Byron.

Before TI, the Plano resident obtained a Bachelor of Science in physics at MIT and interned at Intel, Motorola, IBM, and the Planetary Science Institute. He acquired a master's degree in Optical Science at the University of Arizona and worked at IBM in New York, before he realized that Materials Science was his passion.

While obtaining a Ph.D. in Materials Science at Stanford, Byron volunteered



to be a mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters. He tells the story of one boy who, when Byron asked what the child wanted to be when he grew up, the child said, 'What are you?' and Byron said, 'A scientist.' The boy said, 'Well, that's what I'm going to be then.' Byron realized the importance of giving back to the community, in particular to children who are in need of good role models.

Today, Byron reaches out to children through the Sci-Tech Discovery Center. Yet to be built, the center will offer children an interactive experience in math, science, and technology.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, on Wright-Patterson Airforce Base, Byron developed an interest in science when he was a child. "My parents bought me a 6-inch reflector telescope when I was around 10 years old, and my love for science exploded," he said.

Along with science and engineering, Byron loves sports, especially golf and fantasy football and basketball – his Leadership Plano team calls him "Golfing Byron." But the "best part" of his life, he said, is his wife Robin and three boys, Ethan, Quentin and Zane. "They all keep me busy but fulfill me in ways I never dreamed. I am truly a blessed man." – Britney Porter

"My parents bought me a 6-inch reflector telescope when I was around 10 years old, and my love for science exploded."

Caralee Gurney

Caralee Gurney, 39

Family: Husband, Jeffrey and son Austin, 10

Occupation: Community Educator, Collin County Children's Advocacy Center

Civic Contributions: Leadership Plano Class 25, Junior League of Plano

Caralee Gurney is one of Plano's most sophisticated blonde beauties, and she is a natural at networking. Caralee became the new Community Educator at the Collin County Children's Advocacy Center (CCCAC) after networking with a fellow Leadership Plano class member. "When I heard about the position, I was immediately drawn to the opportunity to do something meaningful in Collin County," she said.

Prior to CCCAC, Caralee received a bachelor's in journalism with concentrations in marketing and management from Baylor University. In 2003, she launched her own company called Creative Concepts Marketing Group, where she learned that "marketing just isn't on paper; it's in your actions and words. The way you treat people has a lot to do with your success."

Caralee's genuine concern for others emerged from various volunteer roles beginning as early as junior high school. Her current volunteer involvement is through the Junior League of Plano. "I am simply drawn to wanting to help others," she said. "It's great to now be in a profession where my salary is based on me helping other people."

As the Community Educator, Caralee fosters relationships with businesses, churches, schools, and other local organizations to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect in Collin County. "Relationships are everything in my line of work," she said. "Consistency, organization, and persistence are also important." Her strong values evolved from family and church relationships.



Caralee was an "Air Force brat" living in San Antonio, California, and Europe, before settling down in Waco. She and husband Jeff, and their son, Austin, now live in Plano, and her perfect day off would be spending time with them. "They are awesome!" she said. She also enjoys playing cards with close friends, like her Leadership Plano class. Just call her "Card-playing Caralee." – *Britney Porter*

"Marketing just isn't on paper; it's in your actions and words. The way you treat people has a lot to do with your success."