

# Diversity: Cities battle reputations

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"To be honest, (it's not really diverse) at all," Tanner Earhart said. "I'd say 90 percent of our school is white. We have a very small population of minorities."

Earhart, an Asian-American, is a junior at Dallas High School, but the lack of diversity hasn't led to a negative experience.

"I never had any issues being left out or anything like that," Earhart said. "From my case and my brother's (Treve) case, everyone has been welcoming to us."

Harkey Bal, a senior at Central High School, had a different experience growing up.

"I think (racism) still goes on," Bal said. "It never really ends. Some people think of you negatively. They don't like you or put you down in some way. In my past, that happened many times."

Bal is a Sikhi, an Indian religion that originated in the 15th century. Prior to high school, Bal experienced racism from some of his peers and from those older than him — especially during his middle school years.

"(Some examples were) how some people misunderstood me as an 'Arabian' and didn't like my skin color or the thing I wore," Bal said. "Also how I was such a bad person and (they) didn't like me because of my culture and just misjudged me as a person."

Things improved significantly when he entered high school — so much so that after Bal attended West Salem High School for a year as a junior, he chose to return to Central for his senior year.

"I believe (high school) is a more mature environ-

ment where people have some sense of respect," Bal said.

Earhart agrees. "I don't think race matters as much with (our generation)," Earhart said.

As Bal's peers became more understanding and accepting, it's his hope that younger generations continue to promote a feeling of openness and welcome to all — a goal he's much more hopeful is realistic than ever before.

"I think with every generation where people are understanding that everyone is the same and equal, they become parents and teach their kids that everyone is the same," Bal said. "They'll see everyone is a human and has a brain and a heart. No one is different except for their skin."

Dallas residents KellyAnn and Anthony Garthe, an interracial couple — Anthony is black and KellyAnn is white — with four children who moved to town four years ago have experienced what can happen when people notice a difference in skin color.

Anthony Garthe said while shopping at a local store, a female employee asked all male employees working to watch his movements and referred to him as a "dark-skinned person." When confronted about

the misunderstanding, they said the woman continued to be rude and didn't apologize.

"Once you've blurted out ignorance, it's hard to suck it back up," Anthony said.

In an even more egregious example of racism, the couple said someone scrawled the N-word on their car.

Anthony and KellyAnn describe those incidents as "isolated" and consider Dallas their home.

"In general, I think Dallas is great," KellyAnn said, adding there's hope for an even better future.

"It's a changing society. Our kids approach that differently. Our kids are way more OK with diversity," she said.

**Seeking acceptance**  
Like Dallas, Falls City suffers from a reputation of being narrow-minded.

Lori Sickles and Laura Britton, the owners of The Boondocks in Falls City and a lesbian couple who have been together for 15 years and married since 2004, said that perception is unfounded in their experience.

"I've been 'out' most of my life and I've never had

any, any kind of repercussions," Sickles said. "No one has tried to make me feel uncomfortable. Nobody had felt uncomfortable around me, I don't think."

"It's probably there and they just don't say anything," Britton added. "But you know what, we don't really see it."

There have been a couple of instances in which people have been made comments, such as someone referring to The Boondocks as "The Boondykes." Britton responded she thought the comment was funny and wanted to put it on a T-shirt.

Britton and Sickles use a live-and-let-live philosophy in their life, which they believe has helped people see them not as a gay couple, but one no different than any other.

"I never try to hide my relationship, ever," Britton said. "Because I know that ignorance is all around us and the more that we just be ourselves, the more that people say, 'hey, they are normal just like I am. They have kids. They have pets. They own a business. They work their tails off. They are just like us.'"



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Dori Showell is happy to volunteer to help.

# Heart: Showell is an inspiration

**Continued from Page 1A**  
Showell was among the delegation from Independence who traveled to Denver to present why the town is an All America City.

"You could see in the judges' eyes, she made a difference," said David Clyne, Independence city manager. "There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd."

At the 2014 National Civic League All America City convention in Denver, Showell shared how volunteering changed her life.

"When you give of yourself to enrich the lives of others, it isn't just for others, it's for yourself, too," she said. "It felt so good, I couldn't let it go."

Showell continues to be an inspiration to others through her volunteerism and cheerful countenance.

"I don't know that I've known a more giving person, a more selfless person," Clyne said. "She's fun, always cheery, in spite of how she's feeling."

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KRAMPUS (Digital) (PG13)	(12:10 2:35 5:00)	7:25	9:45
CREED (Digital) (PG13)	(12:45 3:45)	6:45	9:35
THE GOOD DINOSAUR (Digital 2D) (PG)	(12:00 2:20 4:45)	7:10	
THE HUNGER GAMES			9:30
MOCKINGJAY PART 2 (PG13) (Digital)	(1:00 4:00)	7:00	9:55
SPECTRE (Digital) (PG13)	(12:00 3:05)	6:15	9:15
SECRET IN THEIR EYES (Digital) (PG13)	(11:45 4:45)	7:15	
VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN (Digital) (PG13)	(2:15)		9:40
THE GOOD DINOSAUR (Digital 2D) (PG)	(11:30 1:50 4:10)		
THE HUNGER GAMES			6:30
MOCKINGJAY PART 2 (PG13) (Digital)			9:25
Sunday December 6			
THE NIGHT BEFORE (Digital) (R)	(12:15 2:40 5:05)	7:30	9:55
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THE HUNGER GAMES			6:30
MOCKINGJAY PART 2 (PG13) (Digital)			9:25
Monday through Thursday Dec 7 - Dec 10			
THE NIGHT BEFORE (Digital) (R)	(2:40 5:05)	7:30	9:55
KRAMPUS (Digital) (PG13)	(2:35 5:00)	7:25	9:45
CREED (Digital) (PG13)	(12:45 3:45)	6:45	9:35
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