

Under AGE PAGE

By local teens, for local teens

**SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:
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School's back and so is the UnderAge Page. If you're a teen living in Central Texas then you can send your thoughts, ideas and creative expressions to the UnderAge Page.

Send stories, illustrations and questions to:

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HOT TRACKS

TOP SONGS ON
BILLBOARD'S MUSIC CHARTS

HOT 100

1. "I Gotta Feeling" The Black Eyed Peas
2. "Run This Town" Jay-Z, Rihanna & Kanye West
3. "Down" Jay Sean feat. Lil Wayne



AP file photo
Fergie, left, and Will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas

MAINSTREAM ROCK SONGS

1. "Check My Brain" Alice In Chains
2. "Whiskey Hangover" Godsmack
3. "You're Going Down" Sick Puppies



Virgin/EMI/AP
Alice in Chains (from left): Mike Inez, Sean Kinney, Jerry Cantrell and William DuVall

COUNTRY SONGS

1. "Small Town USA" Justin Moore
2. "American Ride" Toby Keith
3. "Big Green Tractor" Jason Aldean

SOURCE: Nielsen SoundScan, Inc., Billboard/AP



Name: Melany Cox
Age: 17
School: Belton High School
Grade: 12
Parents: Scott and Jane Anne Cox
Grandparents: Joe and Janelle Baisden, Joe and Helen Cox

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH

Goals in Life:
Attend college at Abilene Christian University and major in journalism.

What's important to Melany?
"I believe that the best way to live a full life is to believe in yourself and believe in God's plan for you. Always trust that the Lord knows what is best for you and He will lead you if you are willing to follow Him."

Accomplishments:
Junior varsity tennis team ninth and 10th grade
Top five percent of class all four years of high school
Church mission trips to Mexico and the Metroplex
Four years of high school band
First lieutenant drum major,
band chaplain and uniform manager for band this year
Junior counselor at church camp this summer

Groups:
Church youth group
National Honor Society
French Club

THS play is on fire

The students of Temple High School's theater department put on their first play of the year, "The Triangle Factory Fire Project."

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'This is a special dad'

CTCS sophomore getting through high school with help from his father

BY LEXY GONZALEZ
CENTRAL TEXAS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Six seniors shared eloquent messages that had been laid individually on each of their hearts as Central Texas Christian School students began a morning in prayer.

The individual messages slowly morphed into one recurrent theme: "Don't let the world's standards and the people in it define who you are as a person."

For those struggling to understand, they need only to look at classmate Alex Thwing.

Thwing was brought into the world on June 13, 16 years ago. He was born three months premature.

Thwing spent the first five months of his life in an incubator. Soon after, he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, a disorder that affects movement, learning, hearing, seeing and thinking because of problems with brain development.

His parents knew at this point their life would follow a path far different from what they had expected.

Alex developed into a very bright young boy who possessed maturity far beyond his years. His father, William, was aware of his son's high intelligence. But he also recognized Alex's attention needs, and the necessity of an education that caters to his condition. Six years ago, he decided to quit his job to home school Alex.

Later, searching for a place that would provide Alex with interaction and new possibilities, Mr. Thwing and his wife decided to enroll their son in Central Texas Christian School. The school provided an answer to an incessant prayer.

When Mr. Thwing picked Alex up after his first day of seventh grade at CTCS, Alex looked at his father and uttered the words Mr. Thwing had waited his whole life to hear. "You know, Dad, I sure feel like I'm loved when I come here."

The acceptance Alex felt continued into high school. "People at school don't see me as this," Alex said (pointing to his body). "They see what lies beneath."

As a freshman, the work became more challenging. The demand for more one-on-one attention between Alex and his teachers increased. Mr. Thwing realized teachers would have to stretch resources to provide the assistance Alex needed.

Mr. Thwing said his prayer on the issue brought him to realize that "things have to change in order to ensure my son is provided for adequately ... and I myself have to fill the gap."

To fill the gap, Mr. Thwing attends school with Alex. His daily routine

begins with: waking up, sending his wife off to work, getting Alex showered, dressed and fed, and arriving to school at 9 a.m.

Then class begins, starting with biology, followed by algebra, English, geography and lunch. Mr. Thwing carries his son's books, transports him to class in his wheelchair and works with him on his schoolwork. They work as one unit. Alex greatly appreciates the enduring challenges his dad faces each day to provide him with the adequate assistance he needs.



Clint Bittenbinder/Telegram

William Thwing takes part in the learning process with his son Alex, who was born with cerebral palsy. Mr. Thwing decided to leave his job so that he could help Alex continue learning — and has been rewarded by learning a lot himself.

Alex said, "This is a special dad right here ... no other dad would do this for me."

But in Mr. Thwing's opinion, attending school with his son is nothing less than an absolute blessing. "This condition has provided me with such a tremendous opportunity to be with my

I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH HIM WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH

— Philippians 4:13

"That's what keeps me going. I never give up when I remember that verse."

Alex Thwing,
CTCS sophomore

son and partake in his life on a different level unlike many fathers," he said with a smile.

"I have a new respect for motherhood," Mr. Thwing said. "Being a father is like running a race ... there's a time for work and a time to come home and assume the duties of a father; but being a mother is like running a marathon ... it's ongoing and never lets up."

YOUR THOUGHTS

Belton High and I play defense for the Tigers, No. 33. It can be too much at times because he came over to Belton in my sophomore year from coaching at Temple High School and then it was expected of me to play football. I had not played football since junior high.

It is good at times because we ride together to and from school, which saves gas, and we talk. The pressure is there sometimes to perform at a higher level, work harder and stay late and do extra because my dad is a

Alex's gentle yet fervent spirit keeps Mr. Thwing in the race. He said, "I know that it is because of my son that I am a better husband, father, and a better person. He has taken the rough edges of my character and smoothed them out."

Mr. Thwing said with tear-filled eyes, "I wish I had half of his spirit. In the 16 years I've known him, I've never once heard him complain ... he has one of the biggest hearts."

Alex responded, "It's because my dad has taught me to never look down on myself and always respect who I am as a person."

Asked what motivates him to remain in such high spirits, Alex simply said,

"Philippians 4:13 ... that's what keeps me going. I never give up when I remember that verse."

The motivation they possess individually fuels their relationship. They enjoy each other and rely on one another's strength to remain emotionally and spiritually fit.

Mr. Thwing said, "What's my ultimate goal in all of this? I just wanna hear 'well done' from my Father in heaven."

Alex parallels the duo's close-knit relationship to that of Siamese twins. "Yeah ... I guess you could say we're joined at the hip," he said with a chuckle.

Mr. Thwing said, "Actually, there's not ever much separation between us. And when there is, I can't stand it!"

Nothing about their relationship is self-oriented. They seek only to provide love and stability for one another.

The world and its standards attempted to use Alex's diagnosis with cerebral palsy as a manner of enslaving him to only minimal accomplishments, but Alex Thwing has never allowed this disease to conquer who he is or the great person that he is sure to become.

Instead, he provides those who are bound by the chains of the world's standards with a motivational message: "There is nothing and no one that can keep you from being who you want to be."

coach and I do that.

Lately it has affected my grades and study time. However, I can say I have improved in football. Having a dad at school with you everyday can send the wrong message to other students, who think I may get special privileges all the time, but that is so far from true. It is a blessing and can be a curse also, but mostly a blessing to have the opportunity to look back 10 or more years from now and have those memories, for him and for me.

Editor's note: We asked teens what it would be like if their parents went to school with them. Here's what a Belton High School student had to say.

Mostly a blessing

CHARLESTON LEWIS
BELTON HIGH SCHOOL

My dad goes to school with me every morning. He is a defensive coach at

TV Review

music and sound effects. Much of the jokes are on the same level as "Scrubs"

ward to watch. In fact Dan Byrd, who plays her son Travis, outdoes her monologues and jokes in every scene they share.

"Cougar Town" has plenty of sexy scenes and although Cox still has the body to pull them off, she shares them with boys who are the same age as her on-screen son, adding a bit of awkwardness to the whole situa-

tion. She has trouble pulling off blatant sexuality with humor at the same time. In the past, she has only had to be one or the other.

Courtney Cox could do the role if she figures out exactly where she wishes to take this character in the end. Unfortunately, I am afraid it will end up like so many of ABC's past shows: canceled.

Courtney Cox plays an awkward 'Cougar'

BY DANIEL COMBS
BELTON HIGH SCHOOL

After the failure of her FX series "Dirt," Courtney Cox returns to television in "Cougar Town," an ABC sitcom written and directed by "Scrubs" writer Bill Lawrence.

The show is cluttered with fast-paced scene switching, coupled with repetitive