MEMBER HIGHLIGHT





Have you met Laurie Breen?

in her own words...

It's hard for me to believe that it's already been five years since I joined the team at Villa Park Architecture and found the San Antonio Chapter of SDA. Growing up in a San Antonio "general contracting" family, it never occurred to me that one day I'd be working with those architects that the contractors were always grumbling about. But now I love seeing the designs and plans of my colleagues come to life, and feel lucky to have been on both sides of the fence.

I started with Villa Park after moving back to Texas from Australia. While living in Tasmania, I had met Keith, who had moved there from his home country of Ireland. We got married in Sydney and when our daughter was born, she was entitled to three passports: Ireland, Australia, and America. When we found out that we were going to have a second child, I declared it was time to go home to Texas - I needed my family! After some adventures in DIY green card applications, we made it home just 10 weeks before our son was born.

I started looking for work in 2015, and Villa Park was everything I was searching for - a small team, passionate about their work, with lots of opportunity to shape the business activities and growth of the company. Having not worked in A/E/C for 15 years, it took a few rounds of interviews to convince them that I was the one for the job, but as they say, persistence pays off! And I knew it was the place for me.

Every day I learn something new, and SDA has been an invaluable source of support and knowledge. Through SDA I've found mentors, friends, volunteer opportunities, business connections - all of which has rekindled my love for San Antonio. To share one of my favorite quotes: "There are two ways of getting home; and one of them is to stay there. The other is to walk 'round the whole world till we come back to the same place."

A Message From

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PRESIDENT OF SDA SAN ANTONIO



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one conversations, we can all catch up and hear updates together.

Expectation: Better Myself – I wanted all of the things this year and to better myself mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Reality: What A Rollercoaster Ride – The start of the year was hard for me for medical reasons, but I told myself I would bounce right back. That was probably my first reality check and I had to learn to be gentle on myself. Then COVID came along and I was grateful for the timing and for the opportunity to WFH. But the isolation from everyone and everything quickly took a toll, especially with all of the unknowns so early on. This year was the mental/emotional exercise no one wanted. But I found my confidence. Maybe it was speaking on the phone instead of a room of people. Maybe it was being relaxed in stretchy pants with my hair in a bun instead of trying to look pulled together. Who knows? But we are all a work in progress. I could not imagine handling this year in any type of essential worker field OR being a parent! Hats off to everyone managing work, home, AND school life right now!

Expectation: Leave SDA Better Than I Found It – I would hope that any person in this position would want to make a lasting and positive impact. I wanted to encourage our members all year and have amazing events with the biggest attendance because we had the best committees with the best ideas and yada, yada, yada.

Reality: A Different SDA – I am grateful to the members who continue to show up at every occasion. While adapting to our virtual world, I feel this will open countless opportunities we may not have considered yet. The ideas and the commitment are still strong, and I am continually amazed at the flexibility our members have demonstrated to helping SDA remain connected and looking to a brighter future.

PSA: Nominations are around the corner and I encourage everyone to consider jumping into the leadership waters. An even bigger election is around the corner and early voting begins October 13th thru October 30th. Sign up for notifications, find a polling location, make a plan, stick to the plan, and V-O-T-E!