



## Way To Go Woman!

Read about what she's doing to  
move her community forward.

SEPTEMBER 2009

# WAY TO GO WOMAN!

Their amazing stories of courage and goodwill might inspire you to make a difference in your community. Consider stepping outside of your safety zone.

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Way to Go Woman! Winners are nominated through our magazine and website. Any woman under the age of 40 can be nominated. Selections are made by the editorial board of *Today's Woman*.

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## Heather Duncan

"If I can give (my clients) the healing, the stress relief, just half of what I was given, then I'm the one that's blessed."

Heather is wearing: Kenneth Cole multi top, \$21; Freedom of Choice jeans, \$178; Eileen Fisher black jacket, \$198; Jessica Simpson Genaviv black shoes, \$89; Erica Lyons silver bracelet, \$25; Lucky silver bracelet, \$39; Lucky silver necklace, \$32; Lucky silver earrings, \$22. Available at Dillard's, Mall St. Matthews, 502.893.4400.

**A**s a massage therapist, Heather Duncan is a touchy person. “It’s so natural. Nobody touches anybody anymore,” she exclaims as she reaches out and briefly places a hand on me with a smile. “You make this connection.” Her passion comes from a genuine belief in the importance and the healing power of what she does. The 36-year-old Charlestown, Ind. native is the mother of two sons, Avery, 7 and Rhys, 21/2, both of whom comfortably enjoy the benefits of their mother’s skills. Three years ago, Heather experienced firsthand that massage can do what other treatments could not, and it drastically changed her life. After struggling for years with chronic pain in her shoulder blade, Heather found a woman who, through massage, was able to alleviate her pain almost entirely. Heather holds a BA in psychology from IUS and worked in mental health for ten years. Desiring to have more time with her son and develop more hands-on skill, she applied for massage school “on a whim.” Heather has devoted herself to her practice, opening a studio in the space above her husband’s family pest control business, working in various salons, on retreats, and with clients she acquired almost entirely through word-of-mouth. Between building her practice and raising a family, Heather finds time to give back to her community. She does massage for members of her church and is participating in the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals’ “EveryBody Deserves a Massage” week. Donated proceeds will benefit “Supporting Heroes,” a fund that provides support to the families of police, fire, and EMS workers killed in the line of duty. “Like our men in the armed forces, these guys everyday lay their lives on the line, but they’re here in our community,” she says. “We take it for granted that they’re going to put their lives at risk.”



## Sarah Frankel

“Everything that happens is a learning experience.”

Sarah is wearing: Antonio Melani turquoise wrap top, \$129; Antonio Melani brown jacket, \$199; Antonio Melani brown skirt, \$99; Gianni Bini Jersey snake shoes, \$89; Erica Lyons turquoise earrings, \$9; Turquoise bracelet, \$30. Available at Dillard's, Mall St. Matthews, 502.893.4400.

**A**t 25 years old, Sarah Frankel felt like she was 80.

She was overweight, spending her time sitting on the couch and eating poorly. She had struggled with her weight for years, even when she played volleyball in high school, but now something was different. “Something in my head just clicked,” she says. “I just did a complete lifestyle overhaul.” A library assistant at UofL, Sarah took advantage of the employee “Get Healthy Now” program, which provides an on-site gym, personal trainers, and nutritionists. Through exercise and healthy eating, Sarah dropped 70 pounds in 2007. Two years later, she walks past panes of glass and still doesn't recognize herself. “I feel like I'm someone different,” she says. She and her husband, Josh, both grew up in Louisville and enjoy being surrounded by family. Now, the 27-year-old is even taking advantage of the closeness to get her family fit. She trained for several months with two of her aunts and her mom, and this spring the group completed the Triple Crown walk. “It made them feel good about themselves,” Sarah says. She keeps the weight off by eating well, walking, doing yoga, and running. She has participated in several 5K races and a mini-marathon. She believes staying positive is the key to, well, everything. comes from not letting the little things bother you too much,” she says. “Don't beat yourself up too much.” Sarah attended a mission trip to Nicaragua where she worked in a medical clinic. She was shocked by the juxtaposition of the impoverished population and the SUV-owning wealthy in the poor country. “Every now and then I think about



seeing the way some people have to live," she says  
as she shakes her head.



## Ashley Haering

“It can be stressful at times, but I like knowing that I’m at least letting people who are surviving domestic violence or sexual assault have a place to go.”

Ashley is wearing: Jan Warnock purple silk blouse, \$220; Michael Kors jacket, \$170; Liquid bermuda short, \$82; Rebecca Hook leaf necklace, \$184. Available at Croquis Boutique, 1201 Herr Lane Suite 140, 502.425.7212. Gianni Bini Eye Candy tweed shoes, \$89 and headband, \$13, available at Dillard’s, Mall St. Matthews, 502.893.4400.

Ashley Haering has traveled to as many countries as years she’s been alive. Holding a bachelor’s degree from UofL in Sociology and a master’s degree from the University of London in Human Rights, Ashley is a legal advocate for the Center for Women and Families. While in London, she worked directly with victims of domestic violence with Refuge, a UK organization offering assistance to women and children. Now back in Louisville, she is taking steps to restart the local chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW), and is the Big Sister (with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Louisville) to a lucky 9-year-old. And she is only 25! “Everything up to this point has been an accomplishment,” she said. “Everything has built up to where I am.” And to where she’s going. Ashley dreams of one

day influencing women's issues by affecting policy change on a national scale. "I'm just trying to build up enough experience so that I can one day do something. You feel like you're only putting a band-aid on the problem. I'm trying to work to a point where I can try to change things." Her lifelong dedication to women's issues took her to India for a month while researching for her dissertation, a study of sex-selection abortion. Her studies abroad, she believes, have made her more internationally conscious. She isn't opposed to relocating in the future if it will increase her power to instigate policy change, however for now she's enjoying her 20s with her family (she's the oldest of five children) in Louisville.

## Angela Hagan



“I think I’ve always known I’ve wanted to work in a public sector or for a nonprofit because that way I can make a direct impact in peoples’ lives.”

Angela is wearing: Anna Sui mustard sweater, \$305; Cass & Co. cami, \$72; Alexander McQueen purple pencil skirt, \$215; belt, \$185; earrings, \$119; cuff, \$265. Available at Peacock Boutique, 2828 Frankfort Avenue, 502.897.1158. J. Vincent Java tan safari shoes, \$101, available at Dillard’s, Mall St. Matthews, 502.893.4400.

This year, after eight exhausting years, Angela Hagan proudly completed one of the greatest accomplishments of her life. While raising two young children, 3 and 16 months, and juggling a full-time job in the nonprofit sector, Angela finished her doctorate in urban and public affairs. “I was determined to see it through, to finish something,” she says. Originally from downstate Illinois, Angela came to Louisville to pursue her masters in public administration from UofL. Her father is a graduate of the university, and she remembers always being drawn to the city. Now a resident of Old Louisville and the public and donor relations communications manager for The Cabbage Patch Settlement House, the 34-year-old serves as liaison with the neighborhood, most notably on a current

\$7 million expansion and renovation project. Now, this working mom is looking forward to a bit more time to spend with her family. “Now it’s just a two-way split between family and my job. I’m trying to spend more time doing the fun things that I missed out on while I was working on my doctorate,” she says. Where is she likely to spend her newfound free time? The Louisville Fencing Center. “It’s like physical chess,” she says of the sport, which she picked up alongside her husband, Ken Hagan, a 20-year fencer himself. “It’s mentally challenging but it has the physicality as well.”

## Rachel Meade



“I think it helps (the students) to see a group of 10-12 successful people who are right out of college.”

Rachel is wearing: Milly silk print blouse, \$288; Milly plaid jacket, \$408; Milly cream pencil skirt, \$288. Available at Clodhoppers, 3727 Lexington Road, 502.891.0079. Liz Claiborne pearl/gold brooch, \$22; Liz Claiborne pearl cluster earrings, \$25; Calvin Klein Dolly snake shoes, \$98. Available at Dillard’s, Mall St. Matthews, 502.893.4400.

Rachel Meade, 24, doesn’t shy away from being a role model. As a young and successful certified public accountant for the international accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, she has already proved that she has the discipline required to excel in her career. Now, she’s taking her knowledge to the classrooms. Rachel participates in a high school outreach program through Junior Achievement, an organization dedicated to educating children about the business world, entrepreneurship, and what it takes to reach their potential. “I think it teaches them that their goals are attainable,” she says about her accounting lessons, “just because they’ve never heard of accounting doesn’t mean they can’t achieve in it.” She also serves as PWC’s Junior Achievement “company champion” working directly with the organization to arrange volunteers. Currently she is planning the annual Bowling Classic, the primary fund

raiser for the local Junior Achievement. She has enlisted eight teams of five bowlers from PWC, an outstanding turnout for an office of only about 70 people. The Louisville native isn't all about work though. Her mantra: "work hard, play hard." The former Division I golfer continues to make it out on the green a couple of times a week. Although she admits that her golf skills have gotten her ahead in the business world (and encourages other women to get involved in the game), it is the time she gets to spend unwinding outdoors with her family and friends that she truly values.



## Anna Belle Pfau

“I feel like my purpose in life is to give back what I’ve been given.”

Anna Belle is wearing: Liz Claiborne brown cardigan, \$59; Jessica Howard shift dress, \$96; bracelet, \$40; Bandolino shoes, \$50; earrings, \$18. Available at Macy’s, Oxmoor Center, 7900 Shelbyville Road, 502.423.3000.

Every person owns her own destiny and determines her own future. It sounds cliché, but if you need real-world proof, Anna Bell Pfau, 38, is happy to share her story. Born “dirt poor” in Texas, she ran away from home and hitchhiked across the country five times before landing herself a spot at Maryhurst in Louisville, where she spent the next two and a half years being rehabilitated, supported, and inspired. Fast forward to today. Anna Belle is an English professor at Brown Mackie College working on her master’s degree at UofL. She runs a popular political blog ([peacocksandlilies.com](http://peacocksandlilies.com)), publishes a bi-weekly column about women’s history in *The New Agenda*, dedicates herself to her students, most of whom were not on the college track in high school, and is a wife and mother of daughter Clancy, 15. Her extraordinary achievements were

recently recognized with Maryhurst's 2009 Alumna of the Year award, but it is her impassioned, luminous spirit that makes her truly arresting. "I turn young women into feminists everyday without trying," she says with an easy laugh while speaking about her classroom. Her feminist roots run deep, but it was after taking a women's history class with Dr. Anne Kerney when she was 22 that she became dedicated to educating the public about women's issues. "Every single day I would think 'I can't believe I don't already know this!'" she says. "It lit a fire under me." Now she instills her knowledge in her students and as a volunteer at Maryhurst. "I credit them in turning me around and teaching me to make good choices," she says of the organization. It was also here that she met her mentor Holly Holland, who she credits with teaching her what a relationship should be. "When women don't have options, marriage is a trap that is easy to fall into," Anna Belle says. "She showed me that I had options. She was an example that I didn't have to compromise."

## Heidi Thiel

“It’s been really nice to see people do things out of the goodness of their hearts and not for monetary gains.”

Heidi is wearing: Lucia silk blouse, \$248; Stanton harem pant, \$188; Boheme bird feather vest, \$216; Cromer patent wedge boot, \$235; bangle pink bracelet, \$35; silver bracelets (2), \$50; earrings, \$65. All items available at Rodeo Drive, 2212 C Holiday Manor, 502.425.8999.



**H**eidi Thiel spent the first part of her career pursuing other peoples’ stories as a TV news photographer. When she switched paths to become a video specialist on a children’s TV program, the 36-year-old walked away with an ample number of her own stories to tell. There was the time she was in a helicopter that crashed into a lake during a snowstorm. Or another time when she was held by angry Ku Klux Klan members wielding shotguns. The former associate editor for the AAA magazine and winner of two regional Emmy awards now contributes to “Our Kids,” a program that airs on both MetroTV and KET. She also serves on the board for the Sudanese Refugee Education Fund, an all-volunteer organization that raises scholarship money for Sudanese refugees who have settled in the Louisville area. Since 2005 the group has raised more than \$100,000, all of which goes directly to scholarships, and has seen 29 college graduates. “It’s nice to see people who work hard, who may not have had all the opportunities, succeed,” Heidi says. She knows personally the challenges

