

# INSIDE



SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUMMER 2021



> Strong Schools,  
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Bond Update

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ON THE COVER: Students break ground on the new Westwood View Elementary School.

### #KeepingSMSDStrong

Help us share the good news from our district on social media.

#### INSIDE

Shawnee Mission School District  
8200 W. 71st Street  
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204

Inside Shawnee Mission School District is published by the Communications Team in the Shawnee Mission School District.

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# Sticking Together for Students in 2021-22

*A Message From the Superintendent*

August is here again, and it brings me great pleasure to welcome all the Shawnee Mission families to the 2021-22 school year. After all of the hard work that took place last year, hopefully all of you have had a great relaxing summer and find yourselves excited about the new school year! Each year, the summer seems to go just a little more quickly. I am excited about the work ahead. I look forward to seeing familiar faces and getting to know those of you who are new to the community. Most of all, I look forward to the many new opportunities this year holds for all of us.

District staff have been hard at work this summer, preparing for the upcoming school year. The Shawnee Mission School District is fortunate to have received approximately \$10 million dollars in federal Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Funding (ESSER funding). Recognizing the difficulties many students faced during the pandemic, both academically and socially, teams of stakeholders have formulated a plan to support students as they return to full in-person learning this fall. This plan includes the hiring of approximately 50 new SMSD team members, including additional elementary teachers to lower class size, social workers, instructional coaches, and building substitutes to continue to support our students. You can find the full plan on the district website under Information Central. We are ready to support our students!

New team members reported on August 3, 2021, along with the rest of the staff on August 6, 2021. Please join me in making all of our new and returning team members feel welcome and ready for what lies ahead. After an extremely difficult year for everyone, it will be important for our district teams to “Stick Together” to be successful. With a summer of rest, I have no doubt our team members in Shawnee Mission will return rejuvenated and ready to support all students in reaching their personal learning plans. As a district team, we will continue to focus on the district’s Strategic Plan, and work to maintain the great tradition of excellence for the Shawnee Mission students and community. We are very proud of the progress we have made implementing the first two years of the plan! As we begin year three of our plan, stay tuned for continued growth in all five areas of the plan as we work to master the three learning objectives!

Again, I am excited for this school year. Honestly, I am thrilled for students and staff to return and for us to begin having some of those amazing learning experiences we haven’t been able to enjoy this past year. We will continue to work to ensure a safe environment through our SMSD mitigation plan, while at the same time letting kids experience some of the amazing opportunities they missed this past year. I’m looking forward to seeing kids arriving on the big yellow bus, learning in classrooms, performing in fine arts, and excelling in the sports arena.

Again, it is with great pleasure I welcome all of you to a wonderful new school year within the Shawnee Mission School District. Please stay connected and help us to support all students in the 2021-22 school year! ♦



*Dr. Michelle Hubbard*

## Staff Spotlight on Joe Gilhaus

As the new deputy superintendent for the Shawnee Mission School District, Dr. Joe Gilhaus is looking forward to the opportunity to make a positive impact.

“With this position comes the responsibility to lead and to support others in their jobs as we all work to help all kids succeed. It’s humbling and exciting,” stated Dr. Gilhaus.

While deputy superintendent is a new role for Dr. Gilhaus, he has been in the district for 43 years, beginning his SMSD journey as a student at Hickory Grove Elementary School, attending Old Mission Junior High School, and graduating from Shawnee Mission North.

He obtained his undergraduate degree in secondary education from Kansas State University, a master of science degree in education administration from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and a doctorate in education from St. Louis University.

Dr. Gilhaus began his work as an educator in SMSD in 1991, teaching social studies at Hocker Grove Middle School. He has also served as an assistant principal at Westridge Middle School, associate principal at Shawnee Mission South, and principal at Shawnee Mission South. For the past six years, Dr. Gilhaus has been the director of secondary services, overseeing all middle and high schools in the district.

As deputy superintendent, Dr. Gilhaus will support superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard and the district leadership team, as well as focus on supporting initiatives in the strategic plan. One of his responsibilities will be to oversee bond-funded projects. That work could include interviewing and hiring construction companies and architectural firms, and supervising the work from groundbreaking to move-in. Dr. Gilhaus shared that envisioning how each building and project can best serve students, staff, and community members will be an exciting challenge. “Each area and each school has its own personality, and it’s important to meet all of their needs to help students reach their goals,” expressed Dr. Gilhaus.

Dr. Gilhaus began his new role on July 1. ♦



## Staff Spotlight on David Stubblefield

On July 1, the Shawnee Mission School District welcomed David Stubblefield as the new associate superintendent of leadership and learning.

“I’m excited to meet people and learn more about the opportunities that are here in Shawnee Mission. Overall, it starts and ends with being able to provide a world-class education for our students,” said Stubblefield.

Stubblefield brings over 23 years of educational experience to the associate superintendent role. Originally from Dodge City, Kansas, he attended Missouri State University where he first “caught the teaching bug,” earning a degree in education with an emphasis in biology. He has a master’s degree in technology from Mid-America Nazarene University, a master’s degree in school administration from Baker University, and is currently finishing a doctorate in school leadership from Kansas State University.

He began his professional career teaching biology at Center High school in Kansas City, Missouri. He taught biology and coached football and baseball at Blue Valley North and then Blue Valley Northwest. Stubblefield has also served as administrative intern at Blue Valley Northwest, assistant principal of activities at Blue Valley West, assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at Blue Valley Northwest, principal of Blue Valley North, and executive director of school administration for the Blue Valley School District.

Stubblefield is looking forward to jumping into the work of the strategic plan and making sure it remains a focal point for educators.

“You can tell a lot of collaboration went into the document from building leaders, district leaders, and community members,” Stubblefield shared. “From the plan, you get a sense of what is important to Shawnee Mission. It’s so well done.”

Stubblefield shared that in education there are always challenges. “The key,” he said, “is to believe that there is never a challenge too great to overcome with the right attitude and a growth mindset.” ♦





# SMSD STRONG

Strong Schools, Strong Community

*Bond Construction Underway*



Kathy Keith, principal at Westwood View Elementary, joined by Westwood View students, thanks community members for their support at the school's groundbreaking event.

Thanks to the \$264.22 million bond referendum approved by voters in January 2021, it is a busy summer of construction in Shawnee Mission schools. Upgrades have been underway across the school district. We thank our community for voting in favor of this bond, which supports our goal to have Shawnee Mission be ranked among the finest school districts in the nation, employing exceptional educators, who work in state-of-the-art facilities where learners achieve their full potential

### Elementary Rebuilds

Construction is currently underway on a new Westwood View Elementary School. Community members gathered on Wednesday, May 26, 2021, to hold a ceremonial groundbreaking for the building. Westwood View students performed songs and took a shovel to the construction site, drawing the applause of educators, family, and community members in attendance. Westwood View will feature:

- Flexible learning spaces for student collaboration

- Technology integrated throughout the building
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification
- Outdoor classrooms and dining area
- Safety and security installed to district standards
- A soccer field, walking trails, and playground equipment that is ADA accessible

Westwood View is among five elementary school buildings that will be rebuilt as a result of the 2021 bond. John Diemer Elementary School is also scheduled to begin construction in 2021, followed by Pawnee Elementary School. Rushton and Tomahawk elementary schools are planned for rebuilds in 2023.

### Building Additions and Renovations

In the next few months, weight room additions and restroom renovations will be made at Shawnee Mission North High School. Shawnee Mission Northwest High School's restrooms and commons are being remodeled. Indian Woods Middle School will also undergo a restroom remodel and add a three-story addition.



Sunflower Elementary School was one of several to receive playground replacements over the summer.

### Additional Upgrades During Summer 2021

TYPE OF UPGRADE	LOCATIONS
HVAC	Indian Woods, Hocker Grove, Sunflower, Bluejacket-Flint, Rising Star, Indian Creek, and SM South.
Playground Replacement	Belinder, Overland Park, Prairie, Roesland, and Sunflower.
Roof Repair and Replacement	Shawnee Mission Early Childhood Education Center (SMEC-EC), Broken Arrow, and SM West.
Asphalt Repair and Overlay	Apache, Briarwood, Brookridge, SMEC-EC, Comanche, Corinth, Indian Creek, Indian Woods, Overland Park, Trailridge, Career and Technical Campus (CTC), Operations and Maintenance Building, SM South, and SM West.
Security Upgrades (Started in April 2021)	Replacement of more than 2,000 cameras, 700 monitored doors, and multiple server upgrades/replacements across the district.
Furniture Replacement	SM North, Trailridge, Horizons
Carpet and Floor Tile Upgrade	Belinder, Ray Marsh, Nieman, Overland Park, and Westridge.



### Supporting Student Learning

As a result of this bond, money that had previously been spent out of the capital fund for new facilities will now be covered by bond money. This allows the district to shift some custodial and maintenance salaries into the capital fund, freeing up money in the operating fund to hire additional secondary teachers and better support student learning. The district has affirmed its commitment to phasing in this adjustment beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. ♦



# What Are MVAs in the SMSD?

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) is preparing students for college and careers with Real World Learning, in partnership with districts across the KC metro area and with support from the Kauffman Foundation.

The Kauffman Foundation selected the SMSD to join the first cohort of Real World Learning school districts because of the emphasis on college and career readiness in the strategic plan. The partnership goal is that by 2030 every graduate will receive a diploma and have at least one Market Value Asset (MVA).

The Kauffman Foundation defines Market Value Assets in four categories:

1. Work Experience
2. College Credit
3. Industry-Recognized Credentials
4. Entrepreneurial Experiences

“It is our intent to make MVAs an integral part of our curriculum and culture,” Dr. Ryan Flurry, principal of the Center for Academic Achievement and the Career Technical Center and coordinator for Career and Technical Education, noted. Businesses, industry, and non-profits in the community are invited to participate in providing MVAs for high school students in the following ways:

## Work Experience

Work experience is the MVA where businesses can best support students. The school district relies on business partnerships to support students with:

- a. Client-Connected Projects
- b. Internships

The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation hired a Business to Education Program Officer to generate and coordinate work experience opportunities for all Shawnee Mission high school students.

“Real World Learning supports and intersects with our other programs: Leadership Shawnee Mission and Scholarship Shawnee Mission. Businesses and secondary schools are all integral to preparing our students for college and

careers,” Kim Hinkle, Shawnee Mission Education Foundation executive director said.

## Client-Connected Projects

A client-connected project is defined as 24 hours of meaningful or “resume-worthy” work that can be completed by a student or student team. Four hours must include engagement with a mentor or coach who provides guidance.

- A team of Engineering Design and Development (EDD) Signature Program students built a tactile map of Westridge Middle School to help an incoming student with a visual impairment. The engineering students designed maps using Autodesk software, and used a 3-D laser engraver to create each model and brought three prototypes for their client to test.

“Having a real client made the experience authentic and meaningful for the students,” Greg Thiel, Engineering Signature Program instructor said.

- Students in the Culinary & Hospitality Signature Program worked with Seaboard Foods to create a recipe for a proprietary cut of pork to be featured on the menu of an upscale restaurant. Second-year culinary students created a unique entree while considering the sides, sauce, and garnish. “This is an excellent opportunity for our students to work with a client,” Chef Stephan Venne, culinary instructor shared. “We look forward to more client-connected projects in the next school year and value our continued partnership with Seaboard.”

**Internships** An internship provides an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the world of work, performing meaningful tasks at a worksite or approved location with a qualified supervisor. Successful internships provide access to authentic problems and opportunity to build essential skills. “We have 16 different pathways with everything from construction to culinary to business where students could be immersed in an internship,” Flurry shared.

- **Cerner Scholar Intern** Owen Laipple, a junior at SM North, worked on the server patching team as a Cerner Scholar Intern. “I really enjoyed taking my theoretical knowledge and applying it to real projects and experiences with a team of professionals who worked



Seamus McMahon, SM East senior, welds at Midtown Signs.

collaboratively,” Laipple shared. He will continue at Cerner during the 2021-22 school year, where 16 SMSD students have been placed in internships.

- **Midtown Signs** During three decades in the sign business, Dennis Baughman, owner of Midtown Signs, noticed fewer young people interested in the trade. To get students interested in manufacturing, Midtown Signs partnered with SMSD engineering students on a client-connected project where students designed paint carts for Midtown to use.

Midtown also hired two SMSD high school interns in the summer. Afa’anwi Akwanka’a, SM East junior, helped out in the graphics department and Seamus McMahon, SM East senior, put welding experience to use building signs. “Having these students in our shop adds a new perspective and energy to our work environment,” Baughman said. “I encourage other businesses to do the same.”

## College Credit

The college credit MVA is defined as nine or more college credit hours. Many students are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program classes that qualify. SMSD is expanding college credit to provide more opportunities. The district has hired one RWL Counselor for each high school. Their focus will be to help students pursue classes at Johnson County Community College (JCCC). There are opportunities at JCCC for students to take free classes in certain pathways and earn an Associate degree.



Afa’anwi Akwanka’a, SM East Junior, works with a mentor on a project at Midtown Signs.

## Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs)

IRCs are specific to an industry or career field. Recognized IRCs are published by state education departments, reviewed with employers, and validated for applicability and relevance.

Examples of IRCs currently available in the district include, but are not limited to:

- Adobe Creative Cloud (InDesign, Photoshop, Premier Premiere) - pending Adobe updating exams
  - Autodesk Certification
  - Certified Nursing Assistant
  - Emergency Medical Technician
  - OSHA-10
  - ProStart Foundations of Restaurant Management
- Potential new credentials are also being reviewed.

## Entrepreneurial Experience

To obtain this MVA, students identify a social or market problem, research it, and solve it. They work with multiple stakeholders, develop prototypes, and adapt solutions based on professional feedback.

Their work includes a market and stakeholder research summary, a business plan, and obtaining feedback from relevant external stakeholders in exhibitions or pitch opportunities.

- **SM West Pitch Contest-** SM West business teacher Tiffany Dixon engaged students in the process and a pitch competition. Five student teams identified an opportunity and were matched with a professional mentor to help. Student participants in these semester-long pitch competitions earned the MVA for entrepreneurial experience.

The winning team created an app to help make the outdoors a welcoming and safe place for everyone. It will include hiking and biking trails and hunting and fishing seasons and locations. “This would be a wonderful benefit for people wanting to explore the outdoors of Kansas,” Alaine Hudlin, pitch mentor, Wildlife Education Coordinator for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism shared.

If your business or organization is interested in connecting with the SMSD to help students earn MVAs, please contact 913-993-9360. 📍



Engineering Signature Program students share a prototype of a tactile map to help a Westridge student prepare for middle school.



# The Next Great Idea

R&D Forum Launches Student Entrepreneurs

## THE NEXT GREAT IDEA

### SMSD R&D FORUM Pitch Competition

Presented by  
The Regnier Family



George Tiffany, a Roesland Elementary student, earned the Idea of Promise Award.



Left: Manvir Kaur, SM Northwest graduate, presents to judges in the pitch competition. Right: Award winners are joined by Cathy Regnier and Bob Regnier, members of the Regnier Family, who provide support for the forum.

### The Next Great Idea Winners

(With a \$2,500 prize, including \$1,500 to be applied to further the idea)

Presented to: Alex Blickhan, Grade 11,  
Shawnee Mission East  
Project: Desalination Operation  
Teacher: Amanda Doane

Presented to: Gabby Lickteig, Grade 7,  
Indian Hills Middle School  
Project: Ficus for Clean Air  
Teacher: Jamilyn Bertsch

Presented to: Nathan Mestel,  
Grade 7, Westridge Middle School  
Project: The Milk of Human Kindness  
Teacher: Victoria Wellman

### Idea of Promise Award

(With a \$500 prize, including \$400 to be applied to further the idea)

Presented to: George Tiffany, Grade 2,  
Roesland Elementary  
Project: George's Chore App  
Teacher: Heather Berthelsen

### People's Choice Award

(With a \$500 prize, including \$400 to be applied to further the idea)

Marc Janda, Grade 8,  
Westridge Middle School  
Project: The Safety Pot  
Teacher: Parker Guidry

The Next Great Idea is coming from students in the Shawnee Mission School District.

This spring, eight finalists pitched their ideas to address a problem they would like to solve in the Research and Development Forum (R&D Forum) Next Great Idea competition in partnership with Startland. Competition winners were awarded prize funding to help turn their ideas into reality.

Wanting to address fresh water scarcity Alex Blickhan, a Shawnee Mission East junior, asked for funding to build a scale model of a desalination invention, and to connect with engineers. He was one of three students who won a \$2,500 prize to advance their idea and work on next steps.

"This is something I've been working on in the back of my mind and when I heard about this it sounded like the perfect place to pitch my idea and bring it to life," Blickhan shared

In the weeks leading up to the competition, students worked with

industry experts to strengthen their presentations. Throughout the process, students of all ages gained confidence, made connections, and challenged their thinking, Veronica Alvidrez, experience manager at Startland expressed.

The R&D Forum is one of Shawnee Mission's biggest student showcases of innovation and achievement. The Next Great Idea competition was a new event in 2021. Community members also were able to view a digital showcase of student work.

The Shawnee Mission School District is grateful for the vision and continued support the Regnier Family has provided for our students through the Research and Development Forum.

"This was a great pivot by the school district to come up with something relevant," Bob Regnier shared on behalf of the family. "It is important we keep the R&D Forum moving forward, allowing students to become the best they can be and helping them achieve beyond their imaginations."

### Save the Date:

Shawnee Mission's 60th annual Research and Development Forum will be held on April 30, 2022.



### To view the competition and showcase:





# SM North Teacher Named Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist



Natalie Johnson-Berry works with students in the hallway at SM North. Johnson-Berry is a finalist for Kansas Teacher of the Year. (Archive photo).

When Nkemjika Glory Obi entered Shawnee Mission North, she shared what she calls “a big, impossible dream,” with her teacher, Natalie Johnson-Berry. Obi will realize her dream this fall as she enters Stanford University.

“She was the first to believe in me and even jump in on the idea with me,” Obi, a recent SM North graduate said. “She made it feel like it was really possible for me and I’ll never forget that.”

It is this devotion and care for students that makes Johnson-Berry one of the best teachers in the state, Obi said.

Johnson-Berry was named a Kansas Teacher of the Year Region 3 Finalist by the Kansas State Department of Education. As a finalist she is among eight eligible to be named Kansas Teacher of the Year (KTOY), to be announced during a ceremony in September.

Johnson-Berry said she is grateful to all leaders, colleagues, parents and students who have shown an “unwavering belief” in her.

“They’ve rooted me on as I’ve tried new approaches in the classroom, even when these were not all successful,” Johnson-Berry shared. “Being able to grow from these ex-

periences has made me better. This speaks to the supportive culture in our schools and in the SMSD.”

Johnson-Berry fosters an inclusive atmosphere where students can authentically be themselves, recent SM North graduate Hananeel Morinville shared. Morinville will attend Vanderbilt University and was named a recipient of the exclusive Coca-Cola Scholarship. She said Johnson-Berry’s support helped her achieve this success and helped her find her true self.

“Her compassion and ability to see the best in everyone is the reason many students reach their full potential and is the reason she’s been named one of the best teachers in Kansas,” Morinville shared.

The individual who is named Kansas Teacher of the Year becomes eligible to be the National Teacher of the Year and joins a network of teachers who are leaders in the improvement of schools, student performance, and teaching. Each district in Kansas is eligible to nominate one elementary and one secondary teacher for KTOY. In addition to Johnson-Berry, Crystal Brower, a kindergarten teacher from Shawnee Elementary, was recognized as Shawnee Mission’s elementary Kansas Teacher of the Year nominee. ♦

# The Fall Breakfast is Back!

The Shawnee Mission Education Foundation is thrilled to announce the return of the annual Fall Breakfast. Join us to celebrate the start of the new school year, to be inspired by the stories of Shawnee Mission students and educators, and to hear Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard’s vision for the district.

The mission of the Foundation is to advance scholarship and leadership in the Shawnee Mission School District to ensure that all students have a remarkable education. We believe that working together, the district, foundation and community can help all students reach unlimited possibilities.

The breakfast will be held at 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at the Overland Park Convention Center, 6000 College Boulevard, Overland Park, KS 66211.

Sponsorship opportunities are now available. For more information, please contact the Foundation at [www.smef.org](http://www.smef.org) or call 913-993-9360.

We appreciate your support and hope to see you on September 28! ♦



# Join us in Read Across SMSD!

Everyone in SMSD is invited to join us in a community-wide celebration of reading called Read Across SMSD.

“We are so excited to kick off Read Across SMSD,” Superintendent Dr. Michelle Hubbard shared. “Reading is one of the most powerful ways we can support student success. The stories we’ll be reading all go back to our district belief that our community’s strength is derived from its diversity.”

The Shawnee Mission School District will be sharing monthly themes and reading lists. In a manner similar to the national Read Across America program, titles are selected so that “readers can see themselves reflected and so readers can see a world or a character that might be different from them.”

Our schools will continue to ensure that reading is a priority, and we encourage all in our community to do the same, especially with the students you know. It will also be a great chance for us to get to know and celebrate each other.

This initiative is inspired by the National Education As-



## Read Across SMSD

sociation’s Read Across America program, and readers will be engaged throughout Shawnee Mission in partnership with NEA-SM and educators and librarians, families, students, and community members.

Join us for Read Across SMSD and find out more on [www.smsd.org](http://www.smsd.org). Don’t forget to share your pictures and experiences: #ReadAcrossSMSD! ♦



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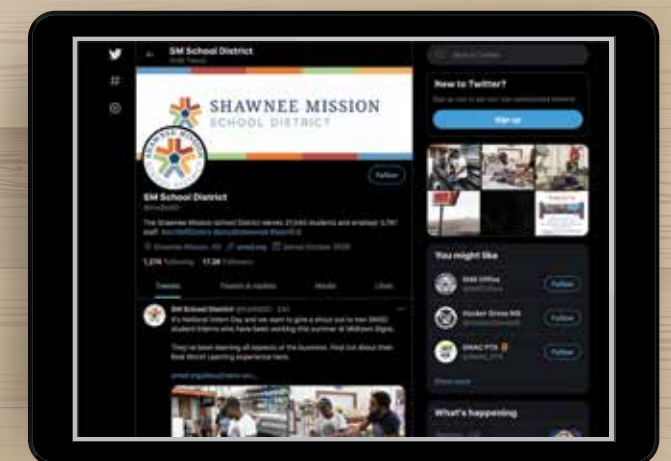
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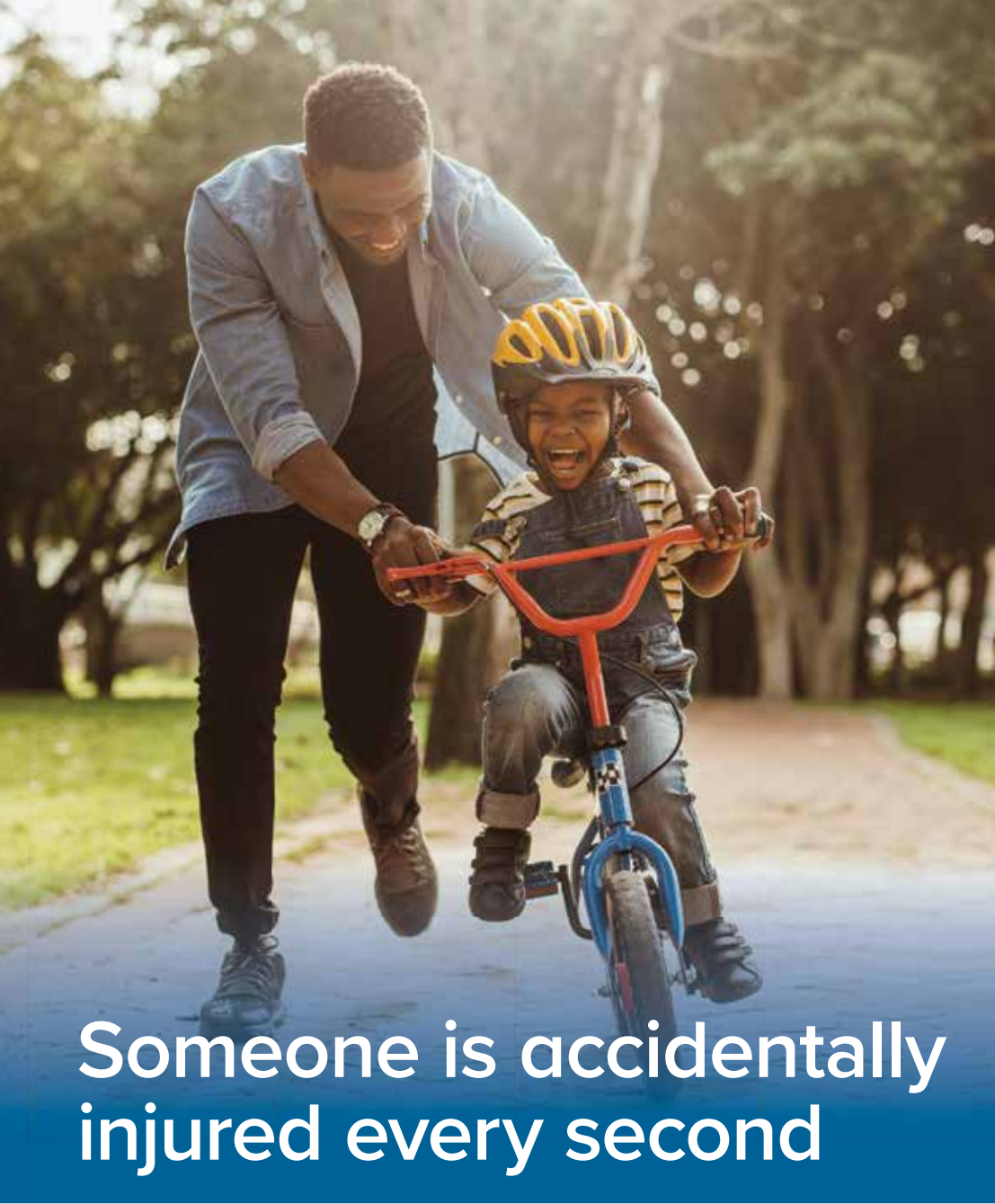


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