

Southeast

KANSAS

Fall 2019 ■ \$4.95

Living

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**Orchestrating
Success in SEK**

Outrageous Outhouses

LOCAL ROOTS, GLOBAL IMPACT

**ICONIC OAK RIDGE BOYS
COMING BACK TO SEK**



This Southeast Kansan has one foot on land, one at sea and her head in the stars



Growing up in Independence, Kansas, Jami (King) Sunkel was always a go-getter. An avid athlete, she was an award-winning tennis player at both the high school and college levels. Ambition is in her blood, and achievement, you might say, was in the stars for Jami all along.

The daughter of Chuck and Nancy King of Independence, Jami graduated from Independence High School in 1997 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Missouri Southern State University, followed by two master's degrees - one in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs and the second in Educational Leadership from Regis University in Denver.

Jami began her professional career as a seventh-grade science teacher in Colorado Springs, where she still makes her home today, along with her 11-year-old daughter, Izzy. In recent years, her career has launched in directions she dreamed of but never fully expected.

Teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) concepts led Jami to develop a passion for a particular discipline of STEM application - space exploration - and she witnessed a similar heightened interest among her students.

"Once I got to the space unit with my students, they just lit up. They absolutely loved to learn about exploration. They started imagining that they could work for NASA and follow these paths," she recalled.

Classroom teaching was gratifying for Jami, but she wanted to "expand her audience." She followed up her teaching job with a three-year stint at the Space Foundation in Colorado Springs, where her new-found fascination with space exploration blossomed as she worked side by side with NASA astronauts in the company's educational outreach program.

It was there she met her future business partner, astronaut Dr. Leroy Chiao, the former commander of NASA's International Space Station. Together, the two founded the *OneOrbit* company to deliver STEM education, as well as leadership training and character lessons, to audiences worldwide.

"(The concept for the company) came from an idea where I wanted to expand STEM education. I wanted to bring space exploration to more students and more communities."

Launching her own business was a giant leap for Jami to say the least and required hustle, perseverance and support from longtime acquaintances, her "champions," as she calls them. In fact, the company's first official client was Textron Aviation in Independence, who hired OneOrbit to assist with education outreach in Southeast Kansas schools.

From SEK to the rest of the world, much of Jami's time today is spent traveling from her home in Colorado all over the United States to China and beyond to provide ▶



Courtesy Photos: Jami and her business partner, astronaut Dr. Leroy Chiao, spent six weeks of their summer aboard luxury cruise ships in China, where they led astronaut camps for Chinese children and families.

keynote speaking engagements, leadership training and STEM/space camps to thousands of learners of all ages. This summer, Jami, Leroy and other astronauts associated with their company provided 21 STEM events at universities across the country and piloted a successful aviation and aerospace camp at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Jami's summer also included six weeks at sea in China operating astronaut camps for Chinese children and families aboard luxury cruise ships. (It was her fourth trip to China this year.)

Exciting work, no doubt, but remember, she's ambitious. Jami will be returning to China for more camps next summer, and the company hopes to be the first ever to offer STEM camps at

sea for both American and Chinese families. Additionally, the aviation/aerospace camp proved to be such a success that Rice University has contracted to double the amount of camp time offered next year.

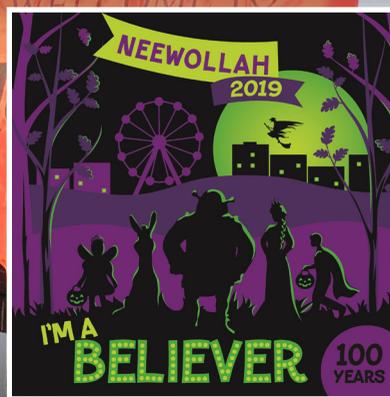
In recognition of her hard work in the field of science and STEM education, earlier this year, Jami was presented with the American Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics Educator of the Year Award.

Where will she go next? "We're always looking for new projects and new ideas. We have some feelers out to run our programs in the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and continue to grow OneOrbit," she said.



100 YEARS of NEEWOLLAH

- OCT. 18 7:30pm Shrek the Musical
- OCT. 19 8:30am 5K/10K Run
- 10:00am Fun Run & Corn-Hole Tourney
- 11:00am Chili Cook-Off / Sampling
- 12:00pm Medallion Hunk Kick-off
- 7:30pm Shrek the Musical
- OCT. 20 2:00pm Shrek the Musical
- 7:00pm Neewollah Night at the Movies
- OCT. 21 6:30pm Queen Neelah Talent Show
- OCT. 22 7:00pm Queen Neelah 78th Coronation
- OCT. 23 11:00am Food Stands Open
- 5:00pm Carnival Opens
- 6:00pm Bandstand Entertainment



- OCT. 24 5:00pm Carnival Opens
- 6:00pm Doo Dah Parade
- 6:30pm Bandstand Entertainment
- OCT. 25 3:00pm Carnival Opens
- 4:00pm KIDDIE PARADE
- 5:00pm Bandstand Entertainment
- 7:00pm MARINE FORCES RESERVE BAND CONCERT
- OCT. 26 8:00am Arts & Crafts Fair
- 10:00am Carnival Opens
- 11:00am GRAND PARADE
- 1:00pm Bandstand Entertainment
- 1:30pm Marching Band Festival
- 7:30pm CHASE BRYANT CONCERT



OCTOBER 18-26
INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS



www.indkschamber.org / www.neewollah.com

Zoolloween

Ralph Mitchell Zoo
OCTOBER 12
5 p.m.-7 p.m.

TRUNK OR TREAT

Downtown Independence
OCTOBER 31
6 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

VETERANS DAY OF HONOR

Multiple Times & Venues
NOVEMBER 9
Downtown Parade-2 p.m.

Holiday Celebration

Downtown Independence
NOVEMBER 24
Open House: 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
Parade: 5:30 p.m.

Oak Ridge Boys Christmas Concert

Memorial Hall
NOVEMBER 30
7:30 p.m.

Truly, Jami has personified her company's tagline, "Make the most of your one orbit."

"The name OneOrbit is like one 'at bat,'" she explained. "You get one shot, this is your life, your one orbit. What will you do with yours?" ♦

**Courtesy Photos
Opposite Page**

Left: Students in the aviation and aerospace summer camp at Rice University in Houston designed balloon satellites.

Center: In China, Jami had opportunity to meet Yang Liwei, China's first astronaut to travel to space.

Right: Jami's daughter, Izzy, is a 6th grader this year. While time apart from one another when Jami is traveling is sometimes difficult, Izzy also thinks it's "pretty cool" that her mom gets to work with astronauts!

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AND DON'T MISS THE...

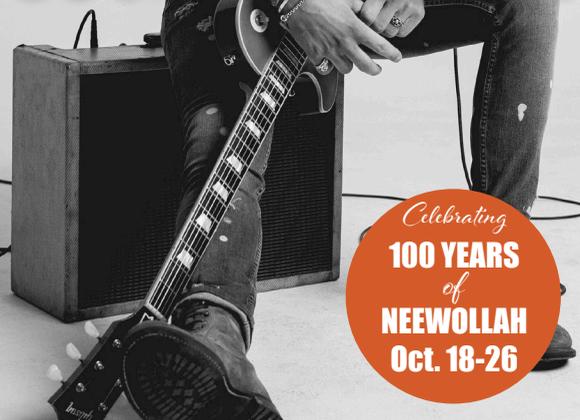
**MARINE FORCES
RESERVE BAND**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25
7 p.m. Memorial Hall

Free Admission but Tickets Required



CHASE
BRYANT
COUNTRY ARTIST



Celebrating
100 YEARS
of
NEEWOLLAH
Oct. 18-26