

The Women of Oklahoma

The Newsletter for Every Oklahoma Woman

Spring 2021
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*Healing in 2021
It's ALL a Mindset!*

Cookbook Author, and
Fitness & Health Guru

Tanjie Brewer

Photography by Vern West



Vitality Takes Flight!!!

by Cheval Parker,
WOO Contributing Writer

If you have had the opportunity to travel by air, the goal is to take flight and land safely. After all passengers have boarded the aircraft, all carry-on bags are stored, all seatbelts are secured the flight attendant gives safety instructions over the intercom. On every flight you will hear the rules of the oxygen mask before departure, *"Should the cabin lose pressure, the oxygen masks will drop from the overhead area. Please, place the mask over your mouth and nose before assisting others."* This rule emphasizes that, in order to ensure the well-being of others, you must first ensure your own well-being.

Just as flight attendants remind us of this rule in the air, **Tanjie Brewer** reminds her clients to embrace the importance of placing their mask of *self-care* on first before turning to help others. She is on a mission to promote wellness, personal development, motivation and vitality.

Tanjie is a licensed fitness instructor, certified personal trainer, nutritionist, speaker, author, model, fashion designer and mother. She is Founder and CEO of **Stylish and Fit**, and her fitness and nutrition programs, **Lifestyle of Vitality (L.O.V.) Challenge** and the **Circle of Vitality (C.O.V.) Virtual Challenge**, have helped transform the lives of numerous people. She has passionately been on the forefront of fitness since 2010, using exercise and nutrition to improve the bodies and lives of her clients. Tanjie's mission, which has led her around the country, all began here in the state of Oklahoma.

Tanjie attended Oral Roberts University in 1995 and lived in Oklahoma for 17 years before eventually moving to Chicago. Over the years she has conducted events and workshops in addition to speaking at various schools, universities, churches, and other organizations. In 2012, the Oklahoma State Legislature presented Ms. Brewer with a citation of appreciation from Senator Jabar Shumate acknowledging how she has "throughout her career she found ways to improve the Greater Tulsa community and empower those around her to grow in knowledge about health and fitness for a better quality of life."



Tanjie Brewer's passion all began with the loss of her mother due to high blood pressure and heart problems. *"If my mother would have done things differently, I would have her here,"* Brewer stated. Overtime she realized that it was time to take action and she left her job at a prominent Fortune 500 company to pursue her purpose: health and wellness. Tanjie then launched **Stylish and Fit** to promote optimal health, wellness and self-care. She emphatically expressed, *"We can control the very health direction of our bodies."*

Self-care can be defined as anything we intentionally do or abstain from doing with our own well-being in mind. Unfortunately, it is something we often overlook and neglect. For many of us, it is easy to neglect self-care because we were taught to help others and to put their needs first. Although altruism is a virtue, we are not any good to others if we ignore our own emotional, mental, physical and spiritual well-being. Audre Lorde, an American writer, said it best, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation."

Managing our self-care is key to maintaining our happiness, as well as our physical and mental health. We must intentionally plan to include time to address our own needs and make that a priority.

During the global pandemic of 2020, many individuals saw their lives increasingly moved online. Many sought human interaction and communication through the web to ward off loneliness, to stay positive, and to stay connected. Tanjie began online fitness workouts during that time in order to aid those in need of the health benefits and the social connection that her classes offered.

As she stated, *"I started the online fitness workouts as a way to connect people and break down the walls of isolation. Not to mention that working out helps to boost the immune system which helps battle COVID. I wanted to serve the world around me in the midst of a pandemic that was causing fear. I knew that working out would send healthy endorphins to the body and increase everyone's joy."*

"I also wanted to show everyone that just because the gym was closed, that didn't give them an excuse to not workout. I'm a firm believer that the world is our fitness playground. Although gyms are great, we do not need them to stay healthy. I was blessed to give people another avenue to stay fit and keep their immune system strong."

With the first day of Spring approaching, everything in nature begins to change. As spring comes and the plants that provide our oxygen begin to bloom again, the season represents a breath of fresh air for all. Spring is the season of new beginnings, warmer weather, longer periods of sunshine and flowers in bloom. These changes tend to bring more of us outside to engage in physical activity.

Tanjie gives us a fresh perspective on the health benefits of regular exercise, *"Once we turn 25 years of age, we lose muscle. Therefore, strength training is a part of regular exercise and has very many benefits. It helps the body to restore muscle, which in turn helps to prevent osteoporosis, arthritis, and other ailments. Cardio is another very important component of regular exercise. This helps to keep the cardiovascular system strong and it increases your VO2 Max which is your body's ability to utilize oxygen."*

Although it may not cross our minds, we need good balance to do many things in life and the American College of Sports Medicine recommends that we incorporate flexibility exercises in our overall fitness program and Tanjie reiterates, *"Balance training and flexibility are also important when it comes to regular exercise, it improves stability and prevent injuries."*

Tanjie shares her wisdom on how we can pivot, reset our mood and add vitality into our lives.



"Studies show that exercise improves our mental health and mood in a powerful way. Our bodies are miracles and made to heal themselves. Depression is a disease, and it can often be an imbalance in the body."

"When we work out, healthy chemicals are released called endorphins which help to fight depression and mental illness. Exercise also releases and increases serotonin levels in the brain. This is called the happy hormone. It's like a switch that turns on positivity and gives you a more optimistic look on life and your situations. Regular exercise also strengthens inner strength. When you achieve goals set through exercise, it makes you realize your power and gives you the feeling that you can conquer anything."

Tanjie, the ardent trainer, has insightful advice on where to start for those who have not exercised in a while. "First, write your reason why. Many will find that their very life depends on it. Next, carve out at least three specific times each week that you will pen in and not erase if you don't get to them. You have to remain flexible and know that if something comes up, you still have to do that workout."

"Those three days will hopefully increase but it's good to take steps and realize that there is power in progression. If you are not going to a gym, it's important to purchase items that will benefit you in your journey. For example, purchase a treadmill for cardio, get a variety of weights, and resistance bands. This is a great place to start."

Her journey of understanding the importance of nutrition began at an early age, "In high school, I ran cross country and track. I began to notice that the success of my race was dependent upon how I ate the night before as well as that day. Processed food slowed me down and foods that contained life helped me to maintain my stamina. That began my nutrition journey at a very early age. It was from then on, I'd be known as "picky." My response would be that I am "picky." I realized that I was given the opportunity to choose what food I wanted to enter my body. I began to study the world of nutrition and acquire certifications to sharpen my knowledge."

As a nutritionist, Tanjie believes that combining nutrition and fitness is crucial, "I often say that they are synergistic. They both support one another in very important ways. You cannot focus on one without the other. It's like a marriage. It takes 50/50 to make it successful. Therefore, you must be married to both and give each the same level of attention. For example, both must be intentional and thought consciously about daily. What we eat helps our body during our workouts and it maintains the muscular structure. There are certain macronutrients that the body needs such as proteins, carbohydrates, and fats during our workouts. You cannot obtain success without them."

"On the same hand, in order for your body to process nutrients and rid the body of toxins, you must exercise. Both nutrition and exercise working in perfect harmony to keep the body, mind, and spirit in optimal health." Your health is your number one asset and Tanjie always encourages her clients to rise to the occasion of wellness through explaining what total wellness means.

"Total wellness is very much mental and spiritual, as it is physical. It's having the ability to make proper decisions, it's having the knowledge that wellness is taking care of your purpose, it's nutrition/exercise, and having a spiritual compass to which all actions are prompted. Total wellness is key for optimal health."

Disclaimer: This Newsletter is for educational and entertainment purposes only. The opinions expressed in our published works are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Women of Oklahoma Team.

Tanjie and I first met around 2010 at a local church, The Rock Church, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. I immediately noticed something special about her. She was always full of energy and positivity. I eventually attended one of her Zumba classes, the room was full of energy, great music, motivation and sweat. Now, as our paths cross once again in 2021, she remains positively energetic.

Though she now lives in Chicago, she is still connected to the Tulsa Metropolitan area and has accomplished so much more. I recently asked Tanjie what is next on the horizon and she shares, *"I am absolutely so grateful to do what I love and help people to rock their purpose with vitality. I have just launched a Cookbook called 'Serving You Life'. There is another book that I have worked on for over six years that is currently with the editor now. I do believe that both will be instrumental in changing lives. I do believe that I bring a fresh perspective on wellness and exercise which will give me the opportunity to speak on stages across the globe. I also have a community initiative that I will be launching soon. Therefore, operating in my purpose and passion is on the horizon for me."*

Tanjie also informs us that her newly released cookbook **'Serving You Life'** is more than just a cookbook, *"It is full of information to help others increase their energy and serve the world around them on a greater level. The recipes are what many would say are "vegan." I say they are "Vivacious!" I wanted to simply serve as many nutrient dense dishes to your table as possible, while providing the benefits of those meals. I love food and I think that you should not sacrifice flavor for nutrition. One of my mottos is that I make food to make your taste buds dance and your body too. I believe people will find this cookbook extremely beneficial to increasing their vitality."*

As Tanjie continues to spread seeds of vitality and transform lives globally, she echoes the message that, self-compassion is more than pampering ourselves. It means following through with our wellness checkups, getting adequate sleep, exercising, eating healthy, meditating, removing unnecessary stress, participating in enjoyable extracurricular activities and even learning to exercise the art of saying "No."

In 2021, as you take flight in life with wellness being your destination, intentionally place your O₂ (oxygen) mask on yourself first to ensure survival. Ensure your own well-being so that you are prepared to be fully present and ready to help others. Contrary to how it sounds, self-care is not a selfish act, it is necessary for you and those around you.



Tanjie's new cookbook, **Serving You Life**, can be purchased at www.stylishandfit.com.

Breast Cancer Fact Sheet



1 in 8 women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with **breast cancer** in her lifetime.

IN THE UNITED STATES

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the U.S., accounting for 30 percent of newly diagnosed cancers.

Every 2 minutes, one case of breast cancer is diagnosed in the U.S.

In 2020, more than 276,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women and more than 2,600 cases in men in the U.S.

In 2020, more than 42,000 women and men in the U.S. are expected to die from breast cancer.

Improvements in early detection and treatment led to a 40 percent decline in breast cancer deaths in the U.S. between 1989-2017.

In the U.S., breast cancer mortality is about 40 percent higher in black women than in white women.

In the U.S., it is estimated more than 154,000 women are living with metastatic breast cancer.

There are more than 3.8 million breast cancer survivors in the U.S.

AROUND THE WORLD

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women around the world, with an estimated more than **2 million new cases** recorded in 2018.

Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women around the world.

Every 50 seconds, somewhere in the world, someone dies from breast cancer. That's more than 1,700 women and men every day.

There are more than 6 million breast cancer survivors around the world.



Sandy Finestone, PsyD
*Scientific Advisory Board and
AIS Steering Committee*

Marian Johnson-Thompson, PhD
*Komen Scholar and
AIS Steering Committee*



[komen.org](https://www.komen.org)



National Women in Agriculture Association

<https://www.nwiaa.org/>

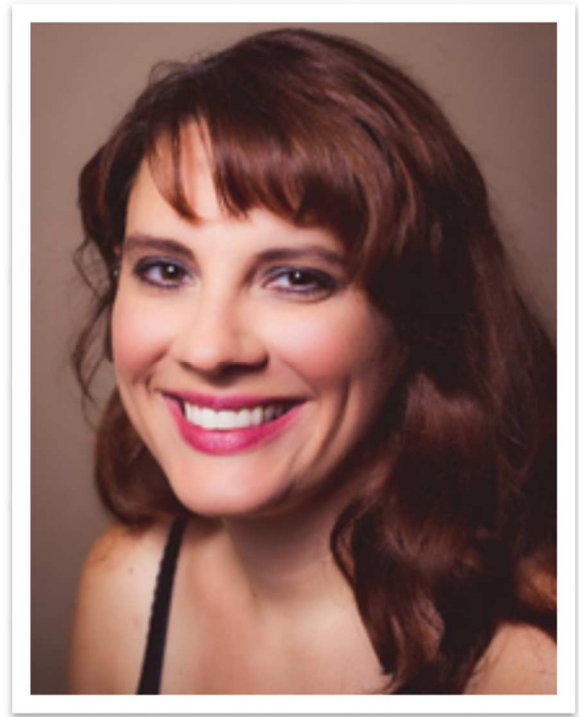
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Time Out for Poetry

April is National Poetry Month and Oklahoma has its share of wonderful poets. Poetry is relaxing for the mind and has wonderful effects on the brain! The website Mindwise Innovations states, *Poetry allows us to use the nuance of language to talk about some of the most difficult feelings that humans can experience. It forces us to confront our innermost thoughts and feelings, and provides a comfortable format to be able to share them with others* (<https://www.mindwise.org>).

The Women of Oklahoma caught up with Oklahoma poetess, **Jessica Isaacs**. Her book of poems will have you laughing, crying and reminiscing about the past and thinking about the future.

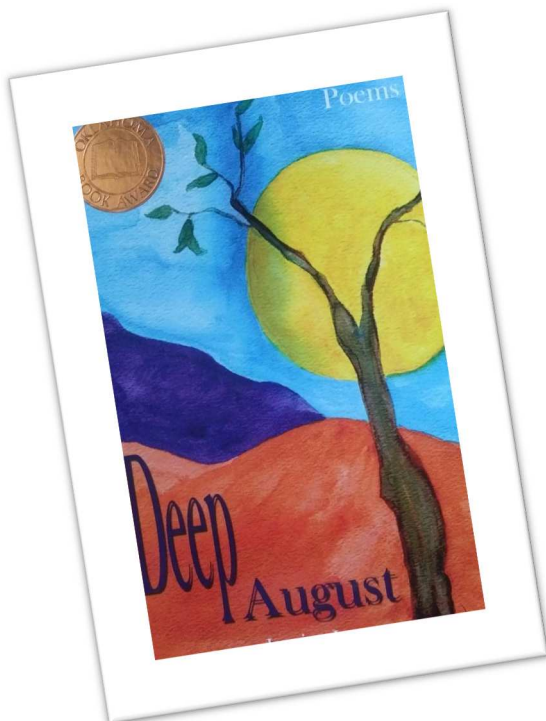
ISAACS' book, *Deep August* (Village Books Press), received the 2015 Oklahoma Book Award for Poetry. Her poems appear in various publications, including *Oklahoma Today*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Oklahoma Humanities* (online), *Poetry Bay*, *Mothers Always Write*, *One Sentence Poems*, and *Malpais Review*.



She is the founder and co-editor of *Dragon Poet Review*, an online literary journal, and a member of the Woody Guthrie Poets coordinating committee.

She is Division Chair of the Language Arts and Humanities division, Professor of English, and Coordinator of Accreditation at Seminole State College, where she teaches Composition I and II, Creative Writing, Introduction to Poetry, Introduction to Theatre, Speech, and Literature, and directs the SSC Howlers & Yawpers Creativity Symposium.

On the next couple of pages read selected poems from her book, *Deep August*.



"Jessica Isaacs' makes her points incisively and passionately based on what she observes and experiences as wife, mother, teacher and poet. She gets down to business without any detours or disguises. She shakes you awake and tells you how it is!"

—Dorothy Alexander, poet and poetry promoter

The Truck

It was the first time in months they'd had any time at all to themselves, without the kids for once on a Friday night, without somebody sick or having to work late, without being too flat broke to afford to go anywhere or do anything, without having to mow, or do seven loads of laundry, or without being too worn out to care.

He opened the door for her to their old Dodge pickup truck, helped her inside. She buckled her seatbelt, and watched him settle into the driver's seat across the bench from her, watched his shoulders flex under his shirt, watched how the muscles in his long arms still stretched and made her ache to touch them, to slide her lips across them... and she saw the expanse between his seat and hers— remembered how twenty years ago, she always rode the hump right next to him in this same truck...

Now, the distance lay between them like the years of new trucks they never bought, roads they never traveled...and the scenery of the seasons they simply existed alongside each other flew through her mind...all the time they lost, so busy spinning orbits around each other just to keep their universe in motion, using all their momentum to keep moving forward, always moving forward, like they were moving forward even now, together in this truck as old as their marriage, and both hurting for some much-overdue maintenance.

She must have seemed to him, just then, like a sensor in a motor, signaling her need for repair, for all it took was his long arm, reaching across the seat's great divide to her, one gentle stroke of her neck, steering her like he steered the wheel.

She unclicked her seatbelt, and slid across to nestle under his arm as he drove them down the old country roads, the expanse of years between them disappearing like the distance on the bench seat, and all that mattered was his arm, long and warm, sliding across her skin, pulling her to him like he did so many years ago, the dust of past and future billowing in cloudy orbits behind them, as they drove time away for the present...just a guy and a girl, sitting too close together in an old, beat-up, pickup truck.

The Garage Sale

We were choking on the clutter,
shoved to the rafters in the attic, piled all pell-mell
in the corners and every spare inch of the garage, so jam-packed
we couldn't even park our cars in there anymore—

we were choking on too many clothes,
books, toys, dishes, movies— just too much stuff—
looking like a family of hoarders, navigating our way
through closets and cabinets congested with junk piled on top of junk—

so we rose at four a.m. and hauled our clutter to the front yard
for a garage sale, because, we told ourselves,
people *had* garage sales—

I pulled your old stroller down from the attic,
its wheels unused for these last five years—
I knocked the cobwebs and dirt daubers' nests
off the handle and seat,
and opened it up again in the sunny air, cleaned and ready to roll
with a fresh, five-dollar price tag stuck on the top—

We hauled down the old crib you and your brother both used,
in pieces and missing one board, but still complete with memories
of lullabies and checking on you both
to make sure you hadn't stopped breathing in the night—

and I reminded myself to breathe now—
that we were having this garage sale, that people did in fact, do this,
people had garage sales—

and we hauled down a mystery box from the attic,
packed away long ago with an assortment
of your size 18 month baby clothes:
a red and white frilly bathing suit,
sundresses with matching bloomers
in a green and yellow pineapple print—
ruffled short-sets with Strawberry Shortcake T-shirts—

and two pairs of pink sandals
that stung my eyes with the sharpest image
of your little sweet pudgy baby legs
sticking out from that stroller
as we walked around the block, the park, the zoo, and the lake—
your baby-fine hair in pigtails
sticking straight out from the tippy-top of your head
under two powder-pink bows— your sweet baby-girl face smiling
around your chapped, chubby thumb stuck firmly in your mouth—

and when I came to, in the middle of our garage sale,
I saw your big-girl hand shove a five-dollar bill
down into the pocket of your skinny, big-girl jeans,
and I watched, helpless,
as your stroller was carried away by strangers
down the road in the back of some evil, red pick-up truck—
I tried to breathe—
my eyes stinging like hell under my dark sunglasses,
but I choked up again on all our clutter,
remembering with a vengeance
why I hated the guts out of garage sales.

Worn

My father's worn Bible
is stapled together at the seams
where the leather cover
has pulled apart from use.
He holds his bible gingerly,
like a difficult prayer,
and I wonder if he's found
what he's been looking for.

Betrayal

is a hard sport;
it first requires you
to give up on yourself, and then,
once you have lost yourself,
losing others is easy.

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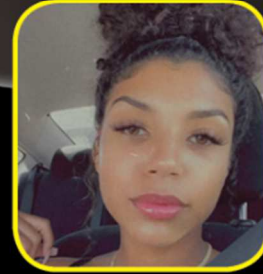
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